

New quinquennium new beginnings

We are starting a new series in which each newsletter we will focus on one of our unions. We have asked all of you to participate and in this issue we are presenting the **British Union Conference**. We hope this will help you with new ideas and motivate you. We look forward to each issue.

Sharon Platt-McDonald

BUC Director for Women's Ministries, Health and Disability Awareness

Sharon is thrilled to be working with the Women's Ministries Department at the BUC. She counts it a privilege to be called to this work since her commencement in September 2011. With a passion for the encouragement, empowerment and development of women, she has produced resources and seminars to assist the various life events and holistic wellbeing of women.

Her biggest challenge is having to deal with the repercussions of abuse and its negative impact on women, their families, churches and communities and subsequently working with women to recover their lives and regain their self-esteem.



Additionally, supporting women who continue to experience discrimination and harassment in every sector of society can often be a painful and complicated task.

Her greatest joy is seeing women live lives that are victorious in Christ; achieving their full potential and life goals and positively impacting their families, churches and communities.

Her favourite bible text is: Mathew 6:33 "But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you". This has helped to shape her life, career and ministry and has been a tremendous source of encouragement through the years.

Sharon has been married to Denzle for 21 years (September 17th). He is a member of the London Adventist Chorale and they share a love for music through singing, playing the piano and violin. Sharon thanks God for Denzle's faithful support of her work and ministry and for his companionship as a life partner.

Women's Ministries News



British Union Women's Ministries department

Vision statement:

Equipping women to serve with excellence in their homes, churches and community and become effective evangelists for Christ as they prepare for the second coming.

Mission Statement:

Recognising the call of God on individual lives, we seek to encourage, challenge and engage women in active service for God as we disciple them in their Christian journey.

Realising the unique gifting and abilities of each woman, we aim to nurture and equip women to achieve their full potential in their personal lives, celebrating the contribution they bring to the lives of their families, churches and communities.

Addressing issues peculiar to women we seek to protect and nurture their wellbeing in ways that bring respect and value.

We identify the core values of this department as follows:

Values:

- Christian Service and Contribution
- Discipleship and Nurture
- Friendship & Support
- Giftedness and Development
- Personal Worth & Value
- Poise & Inner Beauty
- Respect & Protect



Single's Conference attendees and panel contributors



Team members Jennifer Rowell (Welsh Mission Sponsor) and Eirlys Broome (Welsh Mission) preparing for the Women of Virtue Exhibition





PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT FOR WOMEN:

Woman of virtue programme

The signature BUC Women's Ministries initiative for this quinquennium has been the creation and development of the Woman of Virtue programme.
What is the Woman of Virtue programme?

Mission statement

An empowerment programme and ministry tool to encourage and support women to accomplish their God given potential in every aspect of their daily lives and in preparation for heaven.

Vision statement

Women who are complete in Christ reflecting God's love to the communities that they serve.

Programme content

Based on the attributes of the Proverbs 31 Woman, the programme comprises 13 segments depicting the virtuous and productive life of this exemplary woman. These are: Women of Godly Character; Women as Singles; Women as Wives; Women of Strength (emotional resilience, physical wellbeing and spiritual stamina) Women as Homemakers; Women as Mothers, Women Maintaining their Appearance & deportment; Women as Providers; Women who are Industrious; Women as Investors; Women as Community Activists; Women and Personal Development; Women Encouraging and Affirming Excellence.

A suite of initiatives, training materials and events have been developed around these aspects of the programme.



Woman of Virtue programme material

- Woman of Virtue Programme manual
- Woman of Virtue Programme brochure
- Woman of Virtue Interactive Exhibition Experience Booklet
- The Virtuous Woman Commitment card
- The Virtuous Single Woman Commitment card
- Honour God, Honour Thyself (prayer card for inner and outer beauty)

- Gratitude and Prayer diary
- Spiritual Journey Journal
- Prayer Series: Because You Have Known My Name; Teach Me To Pray; My Heart An Alter
- Financial Tips for Women
- Women of Virtue programme bookmark
- Woman of Virtue Theme Song bookmark
- Woman of Virtue Signature Song bookmark
- Woman of Virtue programme segments bookmarks



Community outreach national leader for the Woman of Virtue programme

Women's Ministries News



Programme awards

Realising the importance of affirming development, acknowledging excellence and celebrating success, the BUC Women's Ministries director created the following award categories to honour women:

The Woman of Virtue Award – For a woman who have shown outstanding development in several aspects of her life and is a role model to other women.

The Dr Deborah Harris Award – For women who are contributing significantly to the wider community through leadership, business venture or who have succeeded against the odds to make a mark on society.

The Heather Howarth Award – For women who have demonstrated excellence in leadership within Women's Ministries in their local church, Conference or Mission.

The Julia Smith Award – For innovation in Women's Ministries and encouraging the empowerment of women.

The Woman of Virtue programme has been endorsed by the General Conference Women's Ministries Department and earmarked for roll out globally in 2016

The first International Chapter launch of the Woman of Virtue Programme took place October 29th – 31st 2015 in the Cayman Islands. Attended by over 600 women from Grand Cayman, Little Cayman, Cayman Brac, Turks and Caicos Islands the Retreat captioned Women of Virtue Arise was held at the University of the Cayman Islands with Sharon Platt-McDonald as the Retreat speaker. A small team of women from the UK (Women of Virtue National Board members) also attended to facilitate the launch.

Subsequent Chapter launches of this programme has taken place in Canada and South Africa.



Attendees at the BUC Woman of Virtue Programme launch in Grand Cayman October 2015



Geraldine Farmer former NEC Women's Ministries Director and Sharon Platt-McDonald (BUC) with Cayman Island Women's Ministries leader at the launch of the Women of Virtue programme in Grand Cayman.

Women's Ministries News



Women and health

Bringing awareness of health issues impacting women

1. Production of resources on key health issues affecting women
2. Seminars and health updates / awareness focusing on female health related issues
3. Dissemination of the Little Book of Health for Women
4. Production of Emotional Resilience material for women
5. Presenting at Women's Ministries days, Retreats and conferences on topics such as Women and Cancer



Family Focus - Encouraging holistic wellbeing in families

Developing resources for women to share with their families

1. Little Book of Health Series – for women, men, children and seniors
2. Holistic wellbeing bookmarks
3. Emotional Resilience resources for families

Personal development series

Undertaking a range of seminars, workshops and briefing sessions to develop women. Topics covered include: career choices; budgeting and management of finances, business start-up and development, mentoring, self esteem

Integrating women in local and conference evangelistic programmes

1. Collaborative working with the Ministerial and Evangelism Departments to encourage the inclusion of women in ministry and recognition of their contribution to the progression of evangelism in the UK and Ireland
2. Working with the above departments to encourage the uptake of women developing in the delivery of bible studies
3. Improving the ratio of women participating and leading in evangelistic programmes and key church events

Women ministering to other women

1. 'Tell it' – Encouraging women to share life experiences and how God used it to strengthen their faith and development through testimonies
2. 'Testify' – BUC Light on The Path Devotionals Volume 1 & 2
3. Using female friendly resources for sharing Jesus (including GC WM Materials on outreach)

Women's Ministries News



Ministry to young women

This facet of ministry is important in regards to mentoring and supporting their growth and development in every aspect of their lives. It also aims to address issues and challenges they encounter in a way that is relevant to them and deal with the reality of those circumstances.

Esther Institute of Excellence

Focusing on younger women (girls, teenagers, young ladies). Compilation of course materials including programme manual that will address the critical areas of raising graceful, virtuous and strong daughters within our communities.

Single's Ministry

This aspect of ministry is being developed under the Women as Single's segment of the Women of Virtue programme. This includes programme materials, events and initiatives to affirm and support our singles in a way that encourages them to celebrate their completeness in Christ. One aspect of this ministry is to provide an environment and opportunities where singles can safely express their needs and the challenges that they face.

Our aim is to assist women to thriving in their current season of life in a way that enables them to grow in Christ, develop a vision for their life, embrace their purpose, become productive and encourage other singles to do the same.



Personal colour consultation at BUC WM retreat



Valuing your appearance exhibition



Women in business workshop



Abuse prevention

The BUC Women's Ministries department continues to build on the excellent foundation that has been laid to address the important issue of abuse prevention.



- Establishment of a Support System for Abused Women and Those who Abuse
- Working with Family Ministries, Ministerial Association and the Secretariat, a Policy was produced that deals with "Domestic Violence and Sexual Harassment", perpetrated by paid and voluntary church leaders.
- The End It Now campaign against violence/abuse to women was successfully launched at the 2010 Ministerial Association meetings.
- The resources for this ministry included the BUC End it Now BUC Quinquennial Session 2011 113 leaflet which gives guidance on how to get support.

In this term of office the following key actions were taken:

- Promoting the Abuse Prevention materials from the GC and the annual enditnow package for use in churches across the BUC on the 4th Sabbath in August annually
- Facilitating Abuse Prevention initiatives and Domestic Violence awareness events across the BUC
- Joint working with BUC Family and Children's Ministries regarding abuse prevention and Child Protection issues
- BUC Women's Ministries Director authored the 2012 Abuse Prevention package for the General Conference
- Promotion of GC Abuse Awareness Brochures.

Scholarshipping Our Sisters (SOS)

- During this term of office 4 BUC women received a SOS scholarship and have gone on to advance their education

Training materials and seminars delivered:

Emotional Healing resources for women developed/presented by the BUC Women's ministries director:

- Dealing with hurts
- Emotional Resilience for Women
- Emotional Resilience for Families
- Feeling Good Emotionally
- Forgiveness As Healing seminar
- 'Let It Go'
- Life management series:
- Managing crisis
- Overcoming trauma
- Overcoming Emotional Baggage
- Preventing burnout

Mental wellbeing:

- Mental Wellbeing training based on the BUC Mental Wellness Handbook for churches

Women's Ministries News



Physical wellbeing seminars for women:

The BUC Women's Ministries director developed / presented the following:

- Abuse – The Mental & Emotional Impact
- Breast Health
- Cancer an Overview
- Empowered for Health
- Family Health
- Handmaid for Health
- Health Matters – Uncovering Female Issues
- Restored
- Seasons of a Woman's Life

Departmental ministry resources

- Development of Women's Ministries Toolkit for Women's Ministries leaders and church membership
- Women's Ministries Evangelism resources for spiritual nurture
- Women's Ministries Evangelism resources for outreach including materials on building faith, relational enrichment, encouragement and support for individuals and their families
- Women's Ministries resources for outreach and support to women in crisis and those experiencing challenging life circumstances
- Development of resources for emotional / mental / physical / social and spiritual wellbeing of women
- Restoration worksheet on holistic wellbeing for women
- Resources for single women
- Resources for mentoring women
- Prayer resources for women
- Resources for women as lone parents

BUC Publications:

- Devotionals. The publication of 2 devotionals for women by women entitled Light On The Path Volume 1 & Volume 2 for spiritual nurture and growth and for outreach ministry. Contributors – women across the BUC. Since the publications of these devotionals we have had several testimonials of the significant impact they have made in the lives of women who are sharing it with family, friends, neighbours, work colleagues, prison and detention centres and sending them overseas. The books are accompanied with matching bookmarks.
- Books - Little book of Health for Women; His & Hers – The Little Book of Intimacy
- Ministry pamphlets. Reflections series pamphlets for in-reach and outreach ministry. These publications include: Reflections from travel experiences; Reflections from countryside walks; Reflections from the seaside; Reflections for times of illness and pain; Meditational Reflections for daily life; Reflections for quiet times
- Greeting cards of Hope and Healing which includes: Comfort In Your Time of Loss; Sorry For Your Loss; Praying for You; Thinking of You; For Your Healing; In Trying Times; Which Way To Turn?; New Beginnings
- Affirmation cards – In the category of encouragement and support are the following 7 cards: 'Missed you at church'; 'Thinking of You'; 'Praying for your healing'; 'Trust God'; 'For Such a Time as This'; 'Are You Discouraged?'; 'Remembering'. The other 5 cards for acknowledgement are: 'Thanksgiving'; 'Appreciation'; 'A friend like you'; 'Friends'; 'Happy Anniversary'