



PAGES *Women's Ministries*

News from the Netherlands Union

Madelon Comvalius, Women's, Family and Youth Ministries director

Leadership training week

A unique concept was born in the Netherlands last year. Normally the Women's ministries leadership training is spread over 4 weekends, one weekend a year. This time we brought all modules of the training together in one week. 8 days of training!

25 women from 18 different churches took a week off to attend this training. Not only did the women learn a lot during this week. Their faith life has also been enriched.

In addition, there was also time for small trips and creative workshops. Beautiful friendships were born. It was an intensive, but above all educational and beautiful week.



News from the British Union

Sharon Platt-McDonald

Director for Women's Ministries, Health and Adventist Community Services

Dear Reader

Warm greetings and abundant blessings to you!

We are thrilled to bring to you our Women's Ministries report, highlighting key events from across the British Union. We include in this Newsletter, reports from the SEC, NEC, Welsh and Scottish Mission and also the BUC.

Our BUC Women's Ministries Departmental caption is: Empowered – Reaching Women, Restoring lives, Reflecting Christ. Reflecting the focus of this heading, the key objective of this department is to equip and nurture women to achieve their full potential in their personal lives as well as in their families, churches and community outreach.

Values encouraged: Christian Service and Contribution; Discipleship and Nurture; Friendship & Support; Giftedness and Development; Personal Worth & Value; Poise & Inner Beauty; Respect & Protect.

Let's begin with a snapshot of some of the events our BUC Women's Ministries department. With a very full programme over the past 12 months, here are a few highlights:

ACTIVITIES:

- Women's Ministries training and workshops in Scotland (January 2018)
- Key presenter for Women's Ministries Prayer weekend – Manchester (March 2018 & 2019)
- Launch of Esther Institute of Excellent Curriculum training – 4 sessions (May 2018)
- Speaker for Women's Wellness Retreat – Wales (July 2018)
- Non-denominational partnership working for women's community events
- Emotional Resilience for women workshops
- Development of evangelistic resources for Women
- Women's Ministries Prayer Network development
- Speaker for Women's Ministries Day / Retreats / conferences across UK
- Departmental Resources launches Health Packs for Women's wholistic wellbeing
- Development of Women's Ministries Toolkit for Women's Ministries leaders and church membership
- Update of departmental resources for emotional / mental / physical / social and spiritual wellbeing of women
- Contributor to Women's Ministries Bible Studies for TED publication
- Speaker for Women's Ministries Retreat in Bahamas (October 2018)
- Women's Ministries Level 3 Leadership Certificate (November 2018)
- National launch of BUC Woman of Virtue Programme Chapter launch in South Africa
- Dissemination of related materials for women in their varying roles in the family, departmental church offices and community outreach work
- Continued mentorship of International chapter leaders for Women of Virtue programme Chapters in Botswana, Canada, Grand Cayman, Namibia & South Africa



Workshops undertaken:

- Card making workshop - 40 attendees



- Prayer workshop –
40 attendees



- Bereavement Care



- Healthy breakfast



- Crafts



- Ministry
boxes
workshop



• Women of Virtue workshops



Strategic departmental vision

Reviewing and refining our departmental vision, has enabled us to focus our attention on specific areas of needs within our church and community, and provide relevant resource, programmes and training to address those needs.

Here is a brief overview of how we undertake our ministry:

REACHING UP - Spiritual development and nurture

Encouraging and nurturing Christian values in women that will enhance their roles in their homes, churches and community.

REACHING OUT - Mission focussed activities and evangelism

Addressing issues peculiar to women, we seek to protect and nurture their wellbeing in ways that bring respect and value. This includes acting as advocates to stand for equality and justice in circumstances where women have been mistreated and undervalued.

REACHING IN - Development and nurture of leaders and membership

Realising the unique giftings 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. We also offer relevant training and opportunities for leadership so women are encouraged to enhance their skills.

REACHING ACROSS - Whole church connectivity and engagement

Fostering initiatives and programmes that encourage inclusion of women, their gifts and talents into the life of the church and their function in the community.

Finally -

We give God thanks for the way He has worked through our department, teaching and leading us so that we can minister effectively to others. We ask your continued prayers as we fulfil the great commission of reflecting Christ to those we meet, and commit to praying for you likewise as you do the same.

With blessings to you all!

Sharon Platt-McDonald

Women's Ministries report - South England Conference by Pastor Maslin Holness, SEC Women's Ministries director

Our theme this year is 'Restored in His Image Reclaiming the Power' under the umbrella of the Conference's Reclamation theme. We began the year by continuing with our 'Woman of Faith' leadership programme under the School of Evangelism. The programme focuses on women developing their current skills, discovering spiritual gifts, creating/maintaining resilience and protecting their emotional well-being. Eight women graduated at Camp Meeting under the School of Evangelism's Woman of Faith Leadership programme.

Domestic Abuse

We have continued to tentatively address the issues of Domestic Abuse. A short presentation was made by Lorraine Anderson (member of Croydon Church) at our Evangelism Expo at Newbold College – January 2019.

At our 'Breaking the Trend' Day of Celebration (27th January) at the Rock Tower, Holloway we addressed abuse again in a more detailed workshop which included (a) defining abuse, (b) the different forms of abuse and (c) practical tips on how to respond to disclosures of abuse. We have established links with a local Woman's Refuge and raised £500 in support of abused women. Three resources have been produced that we hope will help educate anyone about the issues of abuse.

We are working collaboratively with a local Refuge, to build relationships, learn, exchange knowledge, share expertise and resources in the area of Domestic Abuse. We also presented a local Refuge with the funds raised at our 'Breaking the Trend Day of Celebration' earlier in the year. Our courses on Domestic Abuse and Safe to Date, continue yearly during the months of February and December.

Sewing School

I am happy to report that our Easy Sew Schools at Balham, Luton Central, Stratford & Hyland, are all doing well. In fact the sewing school has mushroomed; a number of our churches have started their own sewing schools. Sewing is truly a lost art; it is a therapeutic craft proven to be good for motor skills such as hand-eye coordination; it also relieves stress and anxiety.

More importantly it is a fantastic way of mentoring and building relationships with your children and young people and can be used as a witnessing tool to educate other women and men about Jesus in a relaxing environment. Currently we have approximately 2 to 3 persons from our communities in each of our schools.



Women's Day of Prayer

In March we worked in partnership with the Area 7's Women's Ministries team and held International Women's Day of Prayer at the Luton Hightown Methodist Church. Our focus was to simply strengthen spiritual bonds, learn more about prayer and reconnect with God. Over two hundred women attended the event despite very poor weather conditions. In the afternoon we tackled 'depression,' what it is, how it affects the mind and body, how to spot the signs of depression and seek help.

Communication skills

Sue Grosvenor from GBS Corporate joined us in July to train women on how they can improve their communication skills with practical tips to improve effectiveness and build confidence in communicating with others.

Some of the attendees shared their thoughts about the course. One attendee stated: "I am glad I came; this has really opened my eyes to my attitude about how I communicate with others." Another reported: "This course has really helped me think of other ways to be heard without being offensive."

WM's Retreat

The SEC Women's Retreat - Restored in His Image, Reclaiming the Power took place on the weekend of 14th – 16th September 2018 at the Mercure Hotel in Daventry. With a focus on Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships, the main speaker Dr René Drumm, Associate Dean for the College of Health in Southern Mississippi, in calm, caring and measured fashion, delivered the uncomfortable and rarely discussed topic of Domestic Abuse. One hundred and eighty women were in attendance.

Dr René empathic style and approach helped women to strip off the many layers that they had arrived with. Ice breakers and social interaction exercises were used to stimulate and encourage conversation to step out of their usual social circles.



Other speakers at the retreat included, Clair Sanches-Schutte, TED Women's & Children's Director who encouraged attendees to spend time focusing on mentoring younger women and girls. She emphasised the successful programme 'Girls for Christ', which seeks to bring the next generation of young women to the forefront to nurture and direct them in finding self-worth and value in Christ.

Dr Sarah Itam, from the Lewisham Church enthusiastically and innovatively conducted a live survey where everyone was able to take part and voice their opinions on the topic of Stress.

Report on 2018 Events in the North England Conference Women's Ministries Events, Training and Special Days

Beulah A. Plunkett

Sabbath School & Women's Ministries Director NEC

2018

January 14th 2018: Officer's Training for newly elected Women's Ministries leaders. The training was well attended and the women were introduced to the vision and mission of the NEC WM Dept., the Leaders handbook and information on how to work with their team and the women and the church officers, this was covered in the morning by Beulah Plunkett. In the afternoon Sharon Platt-MacDonald introduced the leaders to the Esther Institute of Excellence. There was much interest in this new initiative and the principles were welcomed by all.

25th February 2018: Leadership Training for the WM Leaders, led by Beulah Plunkett. The women were introduced to the principles of leadership by examining the leadership qualities of Moses and Jesus our Saviour. Servant Leadership was the key theme and practical ways that this could be realised, such as being willing to do the work as well as organise and manage the team.

30-31st March 2018: Women's Prayer Conference, Theme 'Come let us Pray'. Our main speaker was Sharon Platt-MacDonald. The event was a truly a special blessing. The women came by the hundreds; a total of 700+ were there. The women found great strength as Sharon enlightened them on the principles of prayer and how to thank God for answered prayers. We also had an hour of prayer led by four prayer leaders who directed the women in each of the four segments, this turned out to be a really wonderful



experience for the women, having the opportunity to pray together in such real ways. At the end of the Conference we were beseeched by the women to please hold this event annually, so we have decided that this will be so done.

The Women came in their hundreds to Pray!

The second annual NEC Women's Ministries Prayer Conference on the 23rd March, 2019 was hosted by Beulah Plunkett NEC Women's Ministries & Sabbath School Director and her team.

'Come let us pray' was the theme for the Conference. Sharon Platt-MacDonald, BUC Women's Ministries & Health Ministries Director – encouraged the women to pray with passion but also gave the call that women must 'come boldly before the throne of grace'.

The call was learned from recent experience as Sharon having recently lost her mother and then her father within a twelve month period. Her reliance on prayer gave her strength. Our speaker could speak the Word with holy power because of her recent experience.

The 700 seat hall was full to capacity, as the women poured in for the Conference. The numbers show that women really want to pray. There seems to be a deep need that brings women to pray. Our women want, 'fellowship prayers'; prayer that comes from the heart of one person to meet the needs of another person and reaches up to God, who hears and answers the prayers of His people.

The event is practical. The women get to pray together for one hour in pairs or small groups led by a prayer team, who take them through the four segments of 'united prayer'. The women also hear the Word of God as the need for prayer was called for in practical sermons. This whole day truly sets out to focus on prayer.

At the end of the Conference we had amazing news as Sister Grace Walsh, our Health & Community Services Director, came to give the closing prayer. Sister Grace told us about a man who came to the Prayer Conference from the community, because he saw that prayer was on our leaflet. He wanted prayer for his wife, who is very ill. The man later had to rush off as he had a call that his wife needed him. We prayed for him and his wife and were thankful that someone passing by called in for prayer.

'We need to pray in these times', one woman said, 'for there is so much happening that challenges our faith and freedom to worship'. "Prayer is central to the work we do in Women's Ministries because it was at the heart of what Jesus did while he was here on earth." It is only right then that His people, in this case, that His women should pray.

Thank God that there are opportunities provided for worship, praise, evangelism and service.

By Beulah Plunkett, Women's Ministries & Sabbath School Director NEC

28th June 2018: NEC Women's Prayer Breakfast at the NEC Camp Meeting. The women were able to once again unite in prayer and share a special time of prayer and also eat together. This was a regular feature of Camp meeting that they looked forward to.

12-14th October 2018, Women's Ministries Annual Retreat: This event was held in Scunthorpe way up North. The women were blessed by Dr Nadine Collins who preached and taught on the theme 'Reflections of Ruth and Naomi'. The aim said Beulah Plunkett was to help the women build stronger relationships like the one between Ruth and Naomi. They were given time to go on walks and get to know each other, the atmosphere was filled with joy as they relaxed in the company of their fellow sisters in Christ. On the Sabbath evening we had a banquet and a concert filled with laughter, singing and much to be joyful about.



January – December 2018: Women's Ministries Emphasis Days are held throughout the year, led by Beulah Plunkett. The purpose is to support the local WM leaders and their teams by working with them to arrange a day where the church experiences the blessings of Women in Ministry. Eight Women's Ministry Days were held in 2018, and the feedback from the churches has been very positive. The men get to understand the purpose of WM and have a more positive perspective, and the women see the potential for doing so much for the Lord. From Sabbath School, to Midday service and AYS the women lead out. In one church the men formed a choir and sang for the women, and in some churches the men prepare and serve the 'fellowship' lunch. All in all these days are a blessing for everyone.

16th December 2018 'Singles Sundays'. The first SDA NEC Singles Sunday for the over 40's was held by the WM Dept. It came about as Beulah Plunkett was requested by the women that a mixed singles event was held as they wanted it to be about single men and women not just single women talking about men in their absence. The event was planned so that single men and women could come. It turned out to be a much welcomed event as a second one was requested for 2019. The aim for the event was to create a space for SDA single men and women to meet and build friendships and discuss the challenges and blessings of singleness. One attendee said that she thought the church didn't care about singles and she was so happy to be able to come to an event like this and meet other singles and make new friends. We had singles that were widowed, divorced, never been married, they were from all walks of life and everyone had a wonderful time. Plans for the second 'Singles Sunday' are underway.

Welsh Mission Women's Retreat 2019

On 26th -28th April 2019 the annual Welsh Mission Women's Ministries Retreat was held at Shallowford House in Staffordshire. Ladies came from North, Mid and South Wales to worship, pray, testify and fellowship together.

27 ladies attended for the whole weekend with 3 day guests attending on the Sabbath. The theme for this year's retreat was "Restored to Rise" which brought the Triennium theme of "Building up the Temple" to a Spirit-filled conclusion.

We were blessed with 3 speakers - Kathleen Hanson BUC Education Director, Fay Dindo, and Emily Tebbs-Oguto the NEC Education Director. Kathleen was our main Speaker on Saturday and presented on "Building up the Temple". The ladies were encouraged to build up the spiritual temple and reflect on this process. This led nicely into our afternoon programme which was led by Fay Dindo from the SEC who gave us some exercises to build Self Awareness. This culminated in a craft session entitled

"How do you feel God sees you". This session enabled the ladies to unleash their creative abilities, resulting in some interesting pieces of work being produced to represent their ideas.

Emily was the main speaker on Sunday and presented an empowering seminar on being effective mission workers. The ladies were given practical advice and strategies on how to reach the unconverted, how to retain those in church, and also how to reclaim those that may have left the church. Simply put we were encouraged to reflect the love of Christ to all.

All in all, the retreat was a blessing to all who attended and we in Wales look forward to what God will do for, and through us during the next Triennium.



Scottish Mission Women's Ministries report

WM's Retreat

On the weekend of 10th -12th August 2018, our Scottish Mission Women's Ministries Retreat was held at the Student Village - Galashiels in Scotland. The event was attended by 72 women.



WM's Day of Fellowship

A Women's Day of Fellowship was held on Sabbath 3rd November. The event was well attended.

Forthcoming event

A Women's ministry retreat is currently being organised, which will take place on July 19-21 2019

