'Jesus7' Evangelism

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Reintroduced Law Again Jeopardising Status of Some Churches in Hungary

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Sacred Music in Secular Opera

- Experiencing the Joy - This is a collection of 42 short drama clips in a variety of styles dealing with Adventist beliefs in a
Theatre

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'How to Read the Bible for all It's Worth!'
Featuring: Laurence Turner, Aulikki Nahkola, Cedric Vine and Jean-Claude Verrecchia Newbold College All-day Bible Conference
Sunday, 24 March 2012 9:45 am to 5:30 pm

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creative approach and asking current questions. Each video is designed to accompany a chapter from the book ‘Experiencing the Joy’ but can also stand alone as a resource for small groups, youth programmes and sermon starters.

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'Jesus7' Evangelism

18 January 2012 Veszprem, Hungary [tedNEWS] People in the 21st century experiencing the consequences of the multiple crises (economical, financial, ecological, ethical, relational, etc.) are searching for something more trustworthy.

Adventists in Veszprem, a University town in the West part of Hungary, understand how to build up trust and faith in Jesus and by continuous assessment and work they are willing to respond to some of the physical and spiritual needs of the people. By establishing a Health Club they have attracted those who would like to see improvements in their physical life. Adventists from Veszprem also started a Bible University to respond to the needs of spiritual hunger – introducing people to the basics of the Bible story.

There is no doubt that the Adventist Community has become more and more known in the town. Realising that coping with the results of the crises is one of the greatest challenges; in December 2011 they launched a series on “Life with Confidence”. During this series an audience of 45 visitors and another 50-60 Adventists was formed. Building up trust in the One who is an Expert in handling crises – Jesus Christ – was most essential during the year end presentations. The year concluded with the baptism of four people – a couple in their thirties, and two ladies in their fifties.

Knowing that many people make New Year resolutions at the beginning of the year, the Adventist community advertised a new type of approach called “Jesus7” which can be interpreted as seven stories of Jesus’ life, or seven days with Jesus. After a field trip to Israel in October 2011, 25 pastors under the leadership of Janos Kovacs-Biro – Evangelism director of the Trans-European Division – put together a compelling series on the life of Jesus. The Jesus7 approach used billboards similar to the Health Expo billboards to attract attention, educate and inform people on the seven sites covered by the series.

In the midst of the crises and the debate on the religious law in Hungary, the Adventist Church believes that what people really need is Jesus. The series led people from the birth of Jesus to His second coming. Topics included the godly face of Jesus (transfiguration), new principles of His kingdom (beatitudes); private talks with the woman from Sychar and Zacchaeus; Prince of Hope who can resurrect those who died; and the story of the Passion. The whole series was recorded and is being televised over the Internet and soon over the Hope Channel Romania – which covers the Central region of Europe.

The attendance of the series grew constantly and although a 200-seat hall was rented, by the end of the series approximately 250 people were attending, some even sitting on the floor. Through a survey sheet they were asked to indicate
their commitment and what decisions they have made regarding Jesus Christ. The plan is that this series be multiplied and run in about 50 locations in the country, covering most of the cities and towns in Hungary. The interest through the Internet and TV will be carefully monitored by the Duna Conference. “If the Adventist community is committed to meeting people where they are, responding to their needs, carefully assessing and walking with people on their journey to a close relationship with Jesus, people will gladly follow Him.” – concluded Janos Kovacs-Biro.

[tedNEWS]

tedNEWS Staff: Miroslav Pujic, director; Deana Stojkovic, editor
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Reintroduced Law Again Jeopardising Status of Some Churches in Hungary

09 January 2012 Silver Spring, Maryland, United States [Elizabeth Lechleitner/ANN; tedNEWS] The saga of securing official church status in Hungary continues, despite what religious liberty advocates called encouraging news late last year when the Constitutional Court struck down the country’s controversial Law of Churches.

Prior to that ruling, more than 300 minority faiths -- among them the Seventh-day Adventist Church -- were set to lose official legal status in Hungary on January 1, after which they would undergo a reapplication process.

With the New Year, those churches are facing a similar situation.

The country’s Constitutional Court overturned the Law of Churches purely on technical grounds, and on December 30 Hungary’s majority conservative party “easily” reintroduced and passed essentially the same law, effective January 1, said Dwayne Leslie, the Adventist world church’s legislative representative in Washington, D.C.

Hungary’s Parliament claims the law is necessary to weed out businesses or individuals posing as churches just to gain the accompanying rights and privileges. Furthermore, the majority government maintains that the law doesn’t infringe on religious liberty. It doesn’t “forbid” worship according to any faith tradition, Hungary’s minister of state for government communication, Zoltan Kovacs, wrote in a recent Wall Street Journal opinion piece.

Kovacs said the law merely outlines how churches can gain official recognition “if they show themselves to be popular enough.” One condition requires a church to prove a decades-long history in the country and count more than 1,000 members.

The Hungarian government is “making efforts to explain to the international community that this is not a human rights issue,” said Ganoune Diop, the Adventist world church’s representative to the United Nations.

“The situation in Hungary is very complex, and there are several issues at play, from economic to judicial and legislative -- and in front of these issues, religion. The government sees the de-registration of churches as a response, in part, to the tremendous challenges the country is facing,” Diop said.

Some experts have even predicted a further recession on Hungary’s horizon, he added.
“We must voice our concerns over the de-registration of churches, but whatever we say about the situation in Hungary must be prudent and sensitive to the context and sovereignty of Hungary,” Diop said.

Many members of the international religious liberty community maintain that regardless of the country’s internal struggles, the law poses undue challenges for legitimate religious organizations.

“Now we not only have an objective standard of what constitutes a church, but we also need a two-thirds vote of Parliament just to become an official religion, and we think that’s problematic,” Leslie said.

Currently, 82 of the some 300 minority religions de-registered under the latest law have reapplied for official status, among them the Seventh-day Adventist Church, denomination officials in Hungary said.

Religious liberty analysts said provisions of the new law indicate that those churches that have already applied for status will not experience a gap in official recognition. They’ll maintain previous recognition while a decision regarding their ultimate status is pending in Parliament.

Members of Parliament have indicated that they’ll arrive at a decision by the end of February, analysts said. Church leaders in Hungary report that “communication with the government” suggests that the Seventh-day Adventist Church will regain official church status.

“One positive improvement in the new law is that it does not prohibit denominations to use the term ‘church,’ even if they are not accepted by Parliament,” said Ócsai Tamás, president of the church’s Hungarian Union Conference. Churches to which Parliament does not grant official recognition will receive a “religious association” status, he said.

“Hopefully some churches in Hungary -- including the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which has been operating in the country for more than a century -- will have a positive answer [next month],” said John Graz, director of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty for the Adventist world church.

“We encourage all believers to pray for religious freedom in Hungary, so our church and others can continue to operate for the good of the nation as in the past,” Graz said.

Top Seventh-day Adventist leadership in Hungary and the church’s Trans-European Division will continue to closely monitor the situation, along with the denomination’s global religious liberty community. [tedNEWS]

Photo: John Graz, director of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty for the Adventist world church, monitors the status of church registration in Hungary from the denomination’s headquarters. Church leaders in Europe report that the Seventh-day Adventist Church there will likely regain its official status at the end of February. [photo: Ansel Oliver]
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Sacred Music in Secular Opera Theatre

08 January 2012 Tirana, Albania [Andreas Mazza; tedNEWS] The New Year’s Eve gala concert is the most important artistic and musical event in Albania. Television and radio stations broadcast this event all over the country. Ambassadors, politicians, artists, and important personalities always take part in the great event.

Irida Dragoti-Mazza, an Adventist professional Mezzo-soprano, was unexpectedly asked by the director of the national opera theatre to sing the song ‘Lord’s prayer’ under his directions of the orchestra. Sacred music is not very common in secular theatres, especially in post-communist counties like Albania.

Irida’s performance was greatly appreciated by all the participants, above all, by several foreign ambassadors. The director commented to some TV channels: ‘Irida has prayed in a wonderful way for our beloved country.’

‘I thank God for the wonderful opportunity to witness in secular theatres,’ Irida said. ‘I love God and I’m always happy to sing for Him and my greatest joy is to sing sacred songs. I am proud to be an Adventist and want to thank the church also for giving me the opportunity to sing at Adventists events.’

Irida Dragoti-Mazza is a professional opera singer. She has studied in Albania and Italy, graduating with top grades. She has done master-level studies with some of the most important opera singers in the world, such as Renato Scotto, Daniel Dessi, Raina Kabaivanska. She has also worked with very important directors like Zubin Mehta, Claudio Abbado and famous artists like Andrea Bocelli and Ennio Morricone.

Irida is married to Andreas Mazza and they have a two-year old daughter, Christine. [tedNEWS]

Photos: Courtesy of Tirana theatre and Irida Dragoti-Mazza
How to Read the Bible

'How to Read the Bible for all It's Worth!'
Featuring: Laurence Turner, Aulikki Nahkola, Cedric Vine and Jean-Claude Verrecchia

Newbold College All-day Bible Conference
Sunday, 24 March 2012 9:45 am to 5:30 pm
"How to Read Narrative: Plot and Character in Biblical Stories"

Laurence Turner, PhD (Sheffield), is a Principal Lecturer in Old Testament at Newbold College. Laurence has worked as a pastor in the south of England and as a lecturer in Australia. He has also been a guest lecturer at higher education institutions in Europe, North America, Asia, and Africa. Laurence has published books and articles on Old Testament narratives, biblical interpretation, and preaching.

"How to Read Prophecy: Amos 1-2. Next Time, Fire!"

Aukiiki Nkwoala, DPhil (Oxford), is a Principal Lecturer in Old Testament and Biblical Languages at Newbold College. Aukiiki has worked previously as a pastor in her native Finland and as a lecturer in Ghana, the United States, Uganda and several British universities and colleges. Her main interest is in biblical interpretation and her publications include a book and several articles.

"How to Read the Gospels: The Teachings of Jesus in Matthew"

Cedric Wise, MA (Andrews), is a Lecturer in New Testament at Newbold College. Cedric worked for nine years as a pastor in the north of England prior to his appointment at Newbold College. He is now in the final stages of completing his PhD thesis with the University of Sheffield on the Gospel of Matthew.

"How to Read Hebrews: Hear It. It's a Sermon!"

Jean-Claude Veretechin, Doctor in sciences religieuses (Strasbourg), is a Principal Lecturer in New Testament and Biblical Hermeneutics at Newbold College. Jean-Claude has worked previously as a pastor and lecturer in France and as a missionary in Cameroon. He is also an active member of the French Bible Society and has been involved in the translation and editing of the Study Bibles.

For further information, please contact Debbie McReynolds

Email: dmcreynolds@newbold.ac.uk  Phone: +44 (0) 1344 402420
Newbold College, St. Marks Road, Binfield, Berkshire RG42 4AN, England
# Newbold College Bible Conference:

**Saturday, 24 March 2012**

**St. Mark’s Rd, Bletchley, Buckinghamshire MK2 6AL**

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<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>9.05 am</td>
<td>Welcome</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.00 am</td>
<td>&quot;How to Read Narrative: Plot and Character in Biblical Stories&quot;</td>
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<td>11.15 am</td>
<td>Break / Refreshments</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.30 am</td>
<td>&quot;How to Read Prophecy: A Tour of 1-2: Next Time, Past!&quot; (Judith Naidoo)</td>
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<td>1.30 pm</td>
<td>Lunch in the Cafeteria</td>
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<td>2 pm</td>
<td>&quot;How to Read the Gospels: The Teachings of Jesus in Matthew&quot; (Geoff Wasi)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.15 pm</td>
<td>Break / Refreshments</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.30 pm</td>
<td>&quot;How to Read Hebrews: Hear It, It’s a Scroll!&quot; (Jean Claude Veerman)</td>
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<td>4.45 pm</td>
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**Early bird rate £78** (until 24 February)

**Includes:**
- Complimentary Copy of NRSV Bible
- Lunch
- Supper
- Refreshments

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For more details,
Gold Champs for 2012

05 January 2012 London, United Kingdom [Colin Stewart/BUC News; tedNEWS] Ten thousand tickets may have been oversold for synchronised swimming at the 2012 London Olympics but the 10,000+ members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the London area are gearing themselves up to synchronise their witnessing and community activities to coincide with the greatest sporting event that London will have ever seen.

Among the Adventists already committed to volunteer during the Olympics is Pastor Richard Daly of the Croydon church. As part of the chaplaincy team his role will involve working with the athletes, stewards and other volunteers of a Christian faith to provide worship services, prayer and Bible study in the Olympic Village and other venues in the Olympic Arena. He told BUC News, "As a former athlete and one who competed at national level, it is a privilege to combine my joy of sports and my calling as a minister. Above all it is a privilege to represent my Church." He adds that he is delighted to know that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is represented along with the usual mainstream churches of the UK in this position.

Pastor Colin Stewart is the Adventist representative on the 'Going for Gold' organising committee. He states that there are many ways that churches and individuals can get involved. You can find out more in his Olympic Outreach newsletter.

Many churches, particularly in the London area are gearing up for evangelism that will complement the Olympic spirit, as well as opening their church halls during the event so that the communities surrounding their churches can enjoy the Olympic spirit without the kind of spirit to be found in their local pub! Choir performances, drama and street witnessing are all part of the preparations.

South England Conference President, Pastor Sam Davis is encouraging church leaders and members to attend the SEC Evangelism Expo at Newbold College on Sunday, 15 January where ideas and resources will be shared. He states, "We cannot go through 2012 and miss the largest cultural party right on our doorstep – the 2012 London Olympics. Not all of us may be interested in sport, but we are ideally situated to make the most of this cultural celebration." He adds, "I urge you to be intentional in planning your outreach for July and August," noting that the diversity of our Church, and the many languages represented may be an asset to witness during the Olympic period. [tedNEWS]

Photo: Richard Daly & Lord Coe (Credit: Paul Tompkins)

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God's Revelation in Albania

05 January 2012  Berat, Albania  [Sean and Brenda Mays; tedNEWS] 'Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, but they have cherished His principles. Through the influence of the divine Spirit they have been a blessing to those about them. Even among the heathen are those who have cherished the spirit of kindness; before the words of life had fallen upon their ears, they have befriended the missionaries, even ministering to them at the peril of their own lives. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God.' Desire of Ages

Although the religious repression was intense in communist Albania, and the atheist brainwashing had been mind-numbingly effective, Mustafa had never let go of his faith in the Creator. While the dictator had tried to outlaw God, and religious materials were strictly forbidden, the evidence of God's existence could not be erased. In the midst of a harsh and difficult environment, Mustafa noticed the loveliness and perfection of design in nature, and it encouraged and strengthened him with hope. Somehow, even with such suffering and pain all around him and even though he didn't understand why this was allowed to happen, he still trusted in God's goodness and mercy. No one could take away what he treasured in his heart.

Even without an understanding of the Bible, somehow Mustafa knew that God is love. He had been a hoxha, a Muslim cleric. And even though it had become impossible for anyone to openly speak about God, his son Dani remembers how, when some bad news came their way, Mustafa didn't fret. Whenever someone asked him why he didn't ever seem upset, he smiled and looked upward. After Albania became free, he added “God is good!”

During the latter years of the communist rule, his friend, an old Orthodox priest, came to Mustafa with an urgency in his manner. Though the two men had come from very different religious backgrounds, their shared belief in God had drawn them together during the heavy-handed atheistic oppression. “Mustafa, I trust you and I trust your good sense.” he whispered, “The strangest thing has happened and I need your advice.” “I know that some have been saying that the state is softening about religion, but this is very unusual” “I received an official invitation to open the old church and to speak to the people about God for only one time.” “Why would they ask for such a thing?” he paused to glance around nervously “Nobody has been able to even mention God for over 20 years!” “I fear that it is a trap, not only for me, but for anyone who may come to listen.” “What is your advice for me?”

“Well, my old friend, it may be as you fear.” “This could be a trap, and you know the possible consequences.” “Yet, this could be the will of God and the only opportunity you will ever have
again to turn someone to God's road with your words.” “If you decide to open the church, I will be there with you.”

The church was open that day and Mustafa was there as he had promised. Though neither ever knew why it was allowed or what purpose God used it for, it wasn't long before communism began to crumble in Albania and they were free to openly worship and pray.

Many years later, some Adventists from America moved into the neighborhood. Mustafa and his family welcomed them and helped them however they could. He noticed their kindness and that they prayed to God. When he was sick, the Adventists prayed for him. It was Adventists who helped his son set up the family shop each morning. Mustafa told Dani that he recognized God's love in them. When Mustafa was on his deathbed, the Adventists visited him and prayed for him.

Months after his funeral, his son Dani began to study the Bible. Over two years later, Dani was baptized. Today, Dani is learning how to introduce his Muslim friends to Jesus. There is no question that the Holy Spirit was at work in Mustafa for decades before we arrived in Albania. We have no doubt that He sent us here and that He is still at work today. [ted/NEWS]

Photos: Sean Mays

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Prayer Initiatives Around the Globe

As part of the General Conference Revival and Reformation initiative, the world church’s Executive Committee at the 2010 Annual Council held in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States, voted to make “Operation Global Rain” OGR’s 10 days of prayer an annual global event each January.

What is OGR? Church congregations, small groups, or individuals set aside one hour each day to pray together. Individuals are encouraged to pray by themselves or with a few friends if they are not near a participating church. During the hour of prayer each day, short sentence prayers are encouraged so each person can pray more than once and should be based on the Word of God.

Many churches and individuals joined the initiative across the Trans-European Division (TED). "Operation Global Rain may be a worldwide initiative, but it is only when it takes place in my heart and life that it makes a difference," states Pastor Victor Hulbert, Communication and Media director for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the UK and Ireland. He is not alone in those sentiments. Thousands of church members across the country, and millions around the world, are joining an initiative that helps focus our minds for the year ahead. Many churches are opening nightly for special times of prayer, but more importantly, individual members are spending time praying for themselves, their families, and specific neighbours or work colleagues who need to know Jesus.

Vili Costescu of Newbold church states, "We had our regular prayer meeting tonight and it was such a blessing. I expect great things to happen during these 10 days!" Pastor Weiers Coetser has been coordinating a prayer initiative across the whole of Ireland with different pastors contributing to a daily prayer blog. A young lady on Facebook shared how she is not only praying but is restricting her diet during the period, 4 - 14 January in order to focus more intentionally on the things of God.

Dr Bertil Wiklander, TED President states, “that only through humbled hearts, true repentance, and praying together we will experience revival and receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to be empowered to reach many people for Christ.”

For more information and to join others seeking God’s Spirit in their lives during the 10 days of prayer, January 4-14, 2012, go to www.revivalandreformation.org and click on “Operation Global Rain.” [tedNEWS]
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Vacancies at Newbold College

Newbold College of Higher Education is offering a number of staff vacancies all based on the campus. Closing date for all positions is **24 February 2012**.

**Lecturer, Pastoral Studies, Newbold College of Higher Education, United Kingdom (TWO Positions)**

Newbold College of Higher Education, United Kingdom seeks to appoint TWO full-time lecturers within its Department of Theological Studies (DTS). Newbold’s DTS is internationally recognised in Seventh-day Adventist Christian circles as being a centre of excellence in biblical, theological and pastoral education. Applications are invited from those with expertise in TWO of the following areas, with the willingness to contribute to a third area:

- Leadership
- Missiology
- Spirituality
- Youth Ministry
- Liturgy and Homiletics

**Selection Criteria**

- Committed member and credentialed employee of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
- Relevant successful teaching experience, including demonstrated pedagogical and IT knowledge and skills in designing and developing ICT-based instructional strategies and resources
- A minimum of a Doctoral degree in a relevant subject field
- Proven record of successful ministry
- Demonstrated understanding of current developments in the Seventh-day Adventist Church
- Demonstrated understanding of the European context
- Excellent people skills

**Starting date: August 2012**

Salary as per the denominational salary scale

A letter of application and a CV should be received no later than **Friday, 24 February 2012** and should be sent to: Dr John Baildam, Deputy Principal, Newbold College of Higher Education, St Marks Road, Binfield, Berks, RG42 4AN, United Kingdom. For additional information please contact [jbaildam@newbold.ac.uk](mailto:jbaildam@newbold.ac.uk)

**College Chaplain, Newbold College of Higher Education, United Kingdom**

Newbold College of Higher Education, United Kingdom seeks to appoint a full-time College Chaplain. The purpose of this position is to provide pastoral support and counselling to students and develop programmes, policies and structures that provide care and spiritual development for
all students on the Newbold College campus. These programmes, policies and structure will focus on faith development of young Christians and ways for students to internalise and share their Christian experience with others.

Selection Criteria
• Committed member and credentialed employee of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
• A minimum of a Bachelors’ degree in a relevant subject field such as theology, ministry or youth ministry
• Relevant experience and/or interest in working with youth
• Relevant experience in co-ordinating spiritual, service and out-reach activities for higher education students
• Familiarity with contemporary issues impacting on students in higher education
• Willingness to work on some evenings and weekends

The ideal candidate will have:
• Previous experience in working with young people who are studying for a higher education qualification
• A successful work history of developing programmes and initiatives that have been effective in reaching young people and developing their faith
• Wide and varied pastoral counselling skills focusing on working with young adults and their issues
• Experience in working with and within a team and proven experience in team building and development
• Proven public speaking skills and an ability to relate to multiple audiences especially young people

Starting date: August 2012

Salary as per the denominational salary scale

A letter of application and a CV should be received no later than Friday, 24 February 2012 and should be sent to: Pastor Henrik Jørgensen, Head of Student Experience, Newbold College of Higher Education, St Marks Road, Binfield, Berks, RG42 4AN, United Kingdom. For additional information please contact hjorgensen@newbold.ac.uk

**College Relations Officer, Newbold College of Higher Education, United Kingdom**

Newbold College of Higher Education, United Kingdom seeks to appoint a full-time College Relations Officer. This position oversees College-wide external and internal relations, including communications, marketing, branding, media relations and co-ordinates communications with key stakeholders such as the alumni association. The position directly reports to the Principal.

Selection Criteria
• Committed member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
• At least a relevant Bachelors’ degree in business, marketing, communications, law or related
field
• A proven track record of at least five years in such areas as marketing, branding, strategic communications and media management
• Demonstrated understanding of the private higher education landscape, challenges and opportunities
• Demonstrated skill in leveraging communication opportunities through different media e.g. social media
• Outstanding communication and team work skills
• Demonstrated competence in budget development, forecasting and decision making

Starting date: April 2012 or as negotiated with the successful applicant

A letter of application and a CV should be received no later than Friday, 24 February 2012 and should be sent to: Dr Philip Brown, Principal & Chief Executive, Newbold College of Higher Education, St Marks Road, Binfield, Berks, RG42 4AN, United Kingdom. For additional information please contact dmcreynolds@newbold.ac.uk
Women in Leadership

Preamble to the Motion on Women in Leadership

In November 2010, the Trans-European Division Executive Committee made four requests to the General Conference regarding Women in Leadership within the TED

(a) that the study of the theology of ordination is prioritised;
(b) that the General Conference would review and amend its policies so that the wording is gender neutral and all leadership pathways are open to male and female;
(c) that a variance to the model constitutions and bylaws be granted with the insertion of “conference and union presidents should be ordained/commissioned ministers” in its policy language;
(d) that the General Conference grants permission to ordain women to the gospel ministry within the TED.

We recognise that meeting these requests may take some time. Therefore we see each of them as standing requests from the TED while we wait for their implementation.

Concerning our request for a variance in the model constitutions and bylaws by inserting the addition that commissioned ministers may also be elected as conference and union presidents, the General Conference Annual Council voted in October this year to decline a similar request from the North American Division, and by common consent this was taken as a negative answer to our request.

Motion on Women in Leadership

• We maintain our Bible-based conviction that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a fellowship of the “priesthood of all believers” and that the Holy Spirit calls and equips men and women with various gifts, including that of leadership. Ministry in the New Testament is based on spiritual gifts. It is the fellowship of believers that recognises and endorses these gifts and sends out women and men for service.

• We express our sadness and disappointment at the decision of the Annual Council. We prayerfully and sincerely believe it will damage the work of God’s people in many parts of the TED.

• We find it difficult to understand why the election of a commissioned minister by a local constituency could harm other world divisions, since a commissioned minister serving as president only impacts the local organisation.

• We believe that ordination or the “setting aside” of members, regardless of gender, for leadership in the church is made by prayer and the laying on of hands in order to confirm the presence of the spiritual gift of leadership, as the Bible teaches, and not to convey a particular quality of “priestly holiness” or spiritual status.
• We recognise that changes to the bold print in the model constitutions in the TED Working Policy must be approved by the General Conference. We have maintained this position within the TED when unions or conferences have been tempted to walk an independent path. However we request the General Conference to understand that for many this is an ethical and legal matter that strongly affects their consciences.

• We recognise that the World Church has approved a timetable for studying the theology of ordination with a view to bring a proposal to the General Conference Annual Council in 2014. We regret the extended timeline as it places some unions/conferences/missions/fields in an ethical and legal dilemma.

• We recognise that while waiting for the World Church to establish the Biblical theology of ordination, there are unions/conferences/missions/fields within the TED where the issues of women’s ordination and their election to leadership positions are matters of ethical integrity and individual conscience which may challenge the church and undermine our sharing of the Adventist message with the vast majority of the population. After consultation with the TED administration and approval by the appropriate church governance body, such unions/conferences/missions/fields may apply parity between male and female pastors on the grounds of the TED’s existing policies and guidelines for ordained/commissioned minister credentials. [tedNEWS]
'Good preaching – What is it?'

As a leader in God’s church, you will probably be asked on some occasions to deliver a sermon to a different audience and/or congregation. Wanting to do your task well, you will inevitably ask: How do I do this well? What is a good sermon? As a member of a local church and listener to sermons Sabbath after Sabbath, you ask that question too.

Is a good sermon a matter of taste, similarly to a good meal or music? Is it that our personal upbringing, culture, taste, how we are psychologically wired and other things, determine which sermons we consider to be good and which perhaps bad and boring? Any preacher who ever preached a sermon is aware of the enormous variety of different people’s perceptions in his/her audience.

A lot could be said about what is a good sermon, good preaching. For this article, let me just highlight two.

**Good news not good advice**

In my last church, one of my members came to me and said: “Pastor Duda, I am so disappointed with you. You have been our pastor for two years now and you have not preached against women wearing trousers yet!” Obviously, her idea of a good sermon was that it should tell people what to do (and not to do).

However, from my experience as a pastor and administrator, most people know what to do; they are just not very good at that. My problem is that I already know that I am not what I ought to be; I know I am doing things that I ought not to do and that I am leaving undone things I ought to do. Like most people, I do not live my life crippled by moral indecision, paralyzed for lack of good advice. Our problem is not moral indecision, but moral impotence (Rom 7:21-25).

That’s why the remedy cannot be just good advice about what we ought to do, but good news about what God has done – “What the law could never do, because our lower nature robbed it of all potency, God has done: by sending his own Son…” (Rom 8:30). Thus remedy and good preaching is not good advice about what we ought to do, but good news about what God has done. Ultimately preaching is about God, and what he has done, not just about us and about what we ought to do. Surely, our understanding of who God is and what he has done has implications for our lives. There will be some ethical imperatives based on that. But our self-understanding must flow from our understanding of God. When we speak of what we ought to do (and we must speak about it), these moral imperatives must issue from our knowledge of what God has done. Otherwise our imperatives become only pious moralizing, compounding in our hearers their burden of guilt.

If preaching is to be proclamation and not mere moralizing, the ethics of our preaching must be rooted in the theology of our preaching. We cannot make sense of who we are and what we
ought to do, unless we first know who God is and what he has done in Jesus Christ. Theology empowers the ethics; it does not just accompany it with an encouraging, heavenly-Father pat on the back.

There is a temptation for leaders (and not only for them!) to use preaching to tell people what to do and not to do and thus straighten them out and “force” them to follow what we consider good and useful. But this can easily border on spiritual abuse. A good sermon will inspire people and help them to do what is right and not just tell them what to do.

**Seeing yourself as part of God’s story**

Preaching is kerygma, the proclamation of what God has done in Jesus Christ. Preaching therefore must be biblical, or it is not preaching at all. The talk may be interesting or edifying, but it is not preaching. The sole source of our knowledge, of what God has done, comes to us through the text of Scripture under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

However, the fact that a sermon is rooted in a particular text or passage is no guarantee that what we are saying is authentically biblical. It is not the frequency of quoting the Bible (or EGW) that makes it biblical. For a sermon to be biblical, it must be rooted not only in a specific Bible text or passage, but also the immediate and wider context of the passage and in the cosmic sweep of God’s story as a whole.

I have been teaching Homiletics for over 20 years. In my enquiries with pastors, theology students and members about the sermons which they remembered after a year, 5 or 10 years, or even more after the first time they heard them, I found one common denominator – a memorable sermon was one that somehow “clicked” the Bible material with the current experience of the listener.

The Bible did not come to us as a collection of proof texts, system of fundamental beliefs, a recipe on how to know God’s will, or seven rules for successful leadership. It came to us as a story that has its beginning and its climax. Thus good preaching must recognize not just what God has revealed to us, but how he has revealed it. The gospel that we preach has come to us through the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments telling God’s story. This needs to be connected to our story, which is part of the bigger story.

The stories of the Bible are not merely illustrations of the revelation of God, they are the revelation. Biblical truth is the Event (not just cerebral doctrine) and the Event is what God has done in our creation and recreation (salvation), in what He is doing now and in what he is yet to do before the story ends.

Good preaching is telling and retelling God’s story and our stories from creation to the Second coming (not in one sermon hopefully!). The Bible speaks about this special type of remembering (OT zakar, NT anamnesis), a remembrance which does not merely call to mind the things past, but makes them real, present, potent and demanding here and now.
The gospel is no longer the story of something that God did once for all, far away then and there. It is now also the story of our world, our society our culture, our individual lives in all the complexity and strange mixture of glory and shame.

That’s why we need to do not only the exegesis of the Bible text, we need to do the exegesis of life. If we have no idea where people are today, the complexities of their lives, the demands of their environment and allurements of culture in which they live, then even the most brilliant exposition of historical details of Ezekiel is not going to connect with them. However theologically sound, however exegetically accurate, however historically informative, however interesting and inspiring it may be, until the saving acts of God which He accomplished once for all and there have become embedded in our experience, our culture, our history, our individual lives, we have not preached. We might have delivered a religious talk, but not a sermon, and certainly not a good sermon.

A good sermon is not just remembering His story, it is also the remembering of ours. And when our story becomes part of His story, His bigger story, we have a good and a memorable sermon. The two stories are not two anymore, they have become one as we begin to live, however imperfectly “in Christ”. As the apostle Paul put it: “the life that I now live is not my life, but the life which Christ lives in me” (Gal 2:20).

We preach the good news that in Christ God’s kingdom has come, a new kind of life has been made possible here and now, a new kind of humanity has been born, a new kind of community has been established. The critical and decisive battle with the power of darkness has been fought and won, not by us, by what we do, but by Christ and what he accomplished on the cross of Calvary 2000 years ago. The war is not yet over, but the outcome is no longer in doubt.

Our personal future may be uncertain, but the outcome is not unknown for those who know the story of God. We know for sure how His story will end. Paradise lost has been regained and will be restored by Him. And we all can be a part of it. That’s what good preaching is all about!

By Pastor Daniel Duda, Education Director, Trans-European Division
How should we treat the newly elected leader?

In the build-up to the average constituency meeting – whether it be at conference, union or higher levels – you will always find at least three groups of people involved: the speculators; the agitators; and the orchestrators.

The *speculators* are a benign group to which most of us belong. The agitators are usually a smaller and more focused group who have an agenda they want others to share, thereby hoping that they will be able to influence outcomes towards their bias. The *orchestrators* will always have sinister intentions, backed by strategic plans designed to put their candidates into power. Session delegates are very much aware of these things, and generally arrive at such constituency meetings with a touch of apprehension in the pit of their stomachs. The dominating question in the minds of most is: ‘Who will it be?’ Once the vote is taken and the new leadership announced, that tension quickly dissipates and many delegates leave immediately, thinking that their work is done.

**Does our responsibility cease once we’ve voted?**

Do we discharge our obligations and responsibilities to church leadership with a cross on a piece of paper, or by waving a voting card? Are we only there to determine who will lead us – or do we have responsibility to influence how they lead? To my thinking, the real question that we should ask ourselves is: ‘How should we respond to these new leaders, whether they are our choice or not?’

Do we adopt an aloof ‘wait-and-see’ attitude, secretly hoping that they will make heavy weather of their new responsibilities? Then, if they do, we can smugly broadcast that we ‘knew it would happen!’ Or do we become more aggressive than that, creating complex issues that will put them to the test – so we can then ‘put them to the sword’!

**The ‘saints’ have had practice**

This strategy is not new. Regular upstanding churchmen tried it on Jesus 2,000 years ago: ‘*After dinner the Pharisees and the lawyers attacked Him with all kinds of questions, hoping He would say something wrong. From then on, they acted more like His enemies than His friends.*’ (Luke 11:53, 54, The Easy English Clear Word.)

**Ingratiation**

Another approach to new leadership is ingratiation. Those who employ this strategy are often masters in the use of subtlemcompliments that gently caress the carnal nature. Suggestions that
‘Things have never been so well-run before’, or ‘You fellows are a breath of fresh air’, can create dangerous illusions of success for new leaders.

It is human to want to be close to our leaders and count them as our friends. But ingratiation slides easily beyond compliments to tangible favours, and favours build obligation, and obligation may cloud objectivity!

**Beware of ‘courtiers’**

A ‘courtier’ was one of those people who once swarmed around the rich and the famous, especially royalty. The courtier couldn’t ‘buy’ the regent’s favour with gifts of money or land, but if he supplied choice information he gained a special status, and the protection of the king. Some leaders have an insatiable thirst for certain types of information. They want to know about the latest alliances, what people think of them and their leadership style, the moral blind spots of their colleagues and counterparts – anything that may give them perceived leverage over those they lead! But the real ‘leverage’ is in the clever courtier’s hand. He may use information selectively, mischievously, partially, or in any way he chooses, to manipulate the gullible leader.

**How does God want us to act?**

God can’t support aloofness, aggression, ingratiations, obligation or manipulation. So what does he expect from us? Perhaps these ideas will be helpful:

**Join them in ‘Gethsemane’** – Every leader is going to have moments of intense stress, or times when nothing runs to plan, and nobody seems to care. These are often very, very lonely moments – times when our leaders need to know there is someone else in their ‘Gethsemane’ with them – someone who is praying for them!

In Matthew 26 we see how much Christ would have appreciated the praying presence of Peter, James and John. Just listen to the sadness and raw human need in these words:  ‘Then Jesus came with the disciples to a place called Gethsemane and said to them, “Sit down here while I go over there and pray.” Then he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee and began to be in terrible pain and agony of mind. “My heart is breaking with a death-like grief,” he told them, “stay here and keep watch with me.” ’ (Verses 36-38, New Testament in Modern English, J. B. Phillips)

His vivid anticipation of the next day’s legal charades, public humiliation and inhuman torture, and the burden of humanity’s measureless iniquity, squeezed blood from his pores – but they slept. He was in severe turmoil – but they slept. Three times he urged them to ‘watch’ with him – but they slept!

So, loyal members and colleagues, let’s join our leaders in their daily ‘Gethsemanes’.

**Hold up the leaders’ hands** – On the way to the Promised Land, Israel was attacked by the Amalekites, and this is what happened:
‘As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. When Moses’ hands grew tired, . . . Aaron and Hur held his hands up – one on one side, one on the other – so that his hands remained steady till sunset. So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.’ (Exodus 17:11-13, NIV.)

Moses was holding up his rod, a symbol of God’s power and grace, but he could not do it alone. He needed the ongoing support of Aaron and Hur, because victory is always a team effort!

So, when our leaders are holding high the symbols of God’s power and grace, let’s support them tirelessly!

**Tell truth to power, but do it properly** – Bob Stone, a management consultant, makes the following observations:

‘*Telling the truth to the boss is the first responsibility of an ethical subordinate. . . . Speaking the truth isn’t just a matter of personal integrity; it’s crucial for organisational success.*’¹

And he is right on target. The one thing that our newly appointed leaders wish for is that we tell them the truth. We need to be open with them about what we think should be stopped, fixed or initiated for God’s work to be successful.

But we must make sure that we *have the truth before we tell*: that our motives are pure, our facts accurate and our perspectives balanced.

‘Telling truth to power’ is never easy. It takes courage – but it also needs to be done in a gracious spirit and with due tact. Time and place are also important. Many a true word has been wasted because it was said at the wrong forum. The rule of thumb for ‘truth telling’ is simple: the smallest audience will usually deliver the best results! Nathan confronted David about his sin, not Israel.

‘Tell truth to power’ – our leaders are waiting!

**So...**

Do we discharge our obligations and responsibilities to church leadership with a cross on a piece of paper, or by waving a voting card?

Are we only there to determine who will lead us – or do we have responsibility to influence how they lead?


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**By Julian Hibbert**

*Pastor Julian Hibbert is the Editor of MESSENGER, the British Union Conference journal, and this article is an expanded version of an editorial he wrote in the issue of 22 July 2011.*