



Calendar 2019

- 6 June
Women's
Ministries
Emphasis Day
- 24/6-27/9
Long Service
Leave
- 24 August
enditnow
Emphasis Day
- 1-3 November
New Caledonia
Women's Retreat

Discipleship Ministries
Women

women.
adventistchurch.com

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Month Of Travel

by Danijela Schubert

Last month I was away from home more than I was at home. Or at least it felt that way.

Travelling is a great privilege but it's also taxing. It is a great privilege to visit different countries, to meet new people, to share God's work in my life, and to help others to experience God and share His love with them. It is taxing because different countries have different time zones to which your body needs to adjust, different food that you may or may not like or tolerate, and different weather, which you also may or may not like or tolerate.

I share with you today snippets of those travels and some lessons learned.



Hundreds of women at the Women's Ministries Congress in Tonga.

The first trip was to New Caledonia where I was the guest speaker for the youth week of prayer. The second trip was to the Kingdom of Tonga where I was one of the guest speakers for the TPUM women's congress. These are two very different experiences in two very different countries.

In New Caledonia, the people speak French in addition to their mother tongue (there are over 300 languages spoken), although many understand and can communicate in English. In Tonga, the people speak English and Tongan. New Caledonia is hilly while the island of Tongatapu is generally flat. French cuisine is prominent in New Caledonia while British influence in cooking is more prominent in Tonga — although both places enjoy the locally grown food, such as taro, yam, sweet potato, banana, watermelon and, of course, fish. Another major difference is that in New Caledonia vehicles are driven on the right side of the road while in Tonga they drive on the left.

One thing they have in common: the Adventist people love God, worship faithfully, want to grow closer to Him and to share the message of hope with others.

I'm glad I could take some time to recuperate as I brought back with me some insect bites, an elevated temperature, a sore throat and cough. These shall soon pass, and warm memories of meeting lovely people and places will remain.



Those involved at the New Caledonian Week of Prayer.

I've Been a Fool

Lessons Learned While Sitting Next To the Queen of Tonga

In an instant my brain deciphered what my eyes saw, and delivered this conclusion: "You are not dressed appropriately for the occasion."

Had the ground under me parted, it would have saved me from some serious embarrassment. Alas, the ground did not part.

So a Plan B momentarily formed in my mind. "I will run back to the hotel and change what I'm wearing", I told other dignitaries.

Before I leapt into action, however, another woman appeared and wrapped my hips with a lavalava, which fully covered my shorts and legs. I was pronounced fit to participate.

The sense of relief was short-lived. Two reasons:

1. As I started marching, the fabric loosened and I needed to keep adjusting the lavalava so it didn't unwrap completely and fall off.

2. When we arrived at the destination, I was among those asked to sit next to the Queen of Tonga.

Yes, you read it correctly.

I was asked to sit next to the Queen of Tonga! A real Queen. With all the pomp and protocol that goes with royalty. The other congress attendees were seated on the grass in front of us.

Perhaps your head is spinning from reading the past few sentences. Let me backtrack a little.

I knew there was going to be a march through the town and a gift presentation to the Queen of Tonga, since she had graced the opening of the TPUM women's congress "Transformed by Jesus". I also heard the instruction that no sleeveless tops were allowed. I had a rough idea where the march would take place so I hoped to join the crowd of about 600 women on their march through town. I anticipated walking somewhere towards the back — be

part of them, wear the same t-shirts as them — to show solidarity. I was eager to walk with them and support them as they carried EndItNow banners to raise awareness about stopping any form of domestic violence. From somewhere among the marchers, I thought, I might see the people who would be participating in the gift presentation ceremony — whatever that was!

As I checked my meagre selection of clothes for this trip, I prided myself for

3. Clarify and communicate.

Deeper reflections emerged afterwards.

I've been a fool.

That became glaringly obvious looking back at the past several days, and then years. I have said things and done things that have made me appear less than I am. Foolishly I thought that meant being humble.

Who am I? I am a daughter of His

Excellency and Majesty, the Most High King. As such, I deserve the best. I deserve to be treated by others with respect, to have the best clothes, best education, best health, best husband, best church community, and the list goes on. Jesus came so I can have the best life (John 10:10).



Conversation with the Queen of Tonga.

finding the perfect outfit to wear for the occasion, nicely fitting with what I assumed everybody else would be wearing: a red T-shirt with a message designed for the congress — which everyone received in their gift bag at registration — and comfortable knee-length shorts.

Except, I had never checked what others would be wearing.

"What will you wear for the march?" would have been an excellent question to ask prior to the event. Without those answers and based on my idea of marches, local climate, my anticipated involvement and the instruction about clothing I had heard, I thought I would fit in very well.

Now, as I sat next to the Queen of Tonga and observed the event, I had some time to reflect.

Some immediate lessons emerged:

1. It is much better to be overdressed than under-dressed.
2. Ask more questions.

If I don't believe this about myself, I act in foolish ways. I shrink myself to an image that does not belong to a princess. I cannot count the number of times I have put myself down.

Putting yourself down is also putting your Father down. And therein lies this foolishness.

Thinking less of yourself than who you are is not honouring God.

Not having the right picture of yourself gives you also a wrong picture of others. That too is not honouring God, because they too are His children, and therefore princes and princesses. They too deserve the best. They too deserve to be treated by others with respect, to have the best clothes, education, health, spouse, church community, and the list goes on.

Although we may not always have the best on this planet, we, as God's children, deserve the best. The difference is in the attitude and belief, not in current circumstances.
(continued next page)

Right Cheek First

Week of Prayer in New Caledonia

If you're wondering about the title of this article, keep reading. But first, about the event.

When the president of the New Caledonia Mission, Pastor Felix Wadrobert, approached me last year to see if I was available to be a guest speaker for the youth week of prayer, I first asked, "Are you looking for someone from the youth department?" "No," he answered. "We want you to come. There are many young women and it is good for them, as well as for the young men, to have a woman role model to preach." So, after consulting with my Discipleship Ministries Team leader, I said "Yes".

Let me share with you the basic format for the evening meetings:

1. Half an hour before each meeting, a group of people got together to pray.
2. Youth involved in the evening's program prayed before the meeting started.
3. Youth led the praise in songs and sang a special item they had prepared.
4. Attendees brought prayer requests

written on paper to a box at the front of the church. One of the youth prayed over these prayer requests. The following day a prayer group that met before the next meeting also prayed for these requests.

5. There was an introductory story to the evening's topic from personal experience.
6. The Discovery Bible Reading method was used to explore the Bible story on the evening's topic. All attendees participated.
7. There was a concluding story to the evening's topic from personal experience.
8. All prayed a united prayer of commitment.
9. Those participating in the evening's program gathered together to pray, after the rest of the attendees had left the building and greeted the presenter and the translator.

You have been patiently reading about the week of prayer, so let me not keep you in suspense any longer about the meaning of "Right Cheek First."

Greetings are very important in New Caledonia. People greet each other

when they meet and when they leave their meeting. I had plenty of greeting while there. Since it was my first time there it made an impression on me.

To greet someone, sometimes you shake their hand or touch their arm. But you always kiss each other. Yes, kiss. Gender, age or place doesn't matter. The routine is the same with all.

Mostly you don't kiss with your lips, but with cheeks. You offer your right cheek and touch each other at the cheekbone, or the whole cheek. Then you offer your left cheek. If you get confused and offer your left cheek first, it's major confusion all round. Right cheek first!

Back to the main focus of this article.

We addressed topics about identity, habits, health, love, friends, death, men's and women's relationships.

As much as this was a week of prayer for youth, it was also a week of prayer by youth, and a chance for them to practise their musical, speaking, prayer and testimony sharing skills, and to practise translating English to French.

I pray that the experience will have lasting positive benefits in their journey with God.



The youth leading out at the New Caledonian Week of Prayer.

(from previous page)

I have no doubt that the Queen of Tonga was perfectly aware that I was not dressed in clothes that fit the occasion. But because she knew who she was and how she deserved to be treated, she

extended the same grace and love to me, regardless of the clothes I wore.

Similarly, God knows that by myself I will never be dressed well enough to be fit to sit next to Him, so He, like the woman who gave me cloth to cover my legs, provided

through Jesus my robe of righteousness.

If I continue soaking in His love for me, I will be less of a fool and more of a loving princess.

Are you acting as a fool, or as a child of God?

Women Transformed In Jesus

Trans-Pacific Union Mission Women's Congress

It's difficult to put into words what transpired at the 2019 Trans Pacific Union Mission women's congress in Tonga, held April 17-22. Over 600 women came from ten different countries across the Pacific, with the largest contingent from Solomon Islands. It is not surprising that SPD official publication, Adventist Record, has published several stories about it. You can find them online on the following links:

"Women empowered to be on the evangelism frontline." <https://record.adventistchurch.com/2019/04/19/women-empowered-to-be-on-the-evangelism-frontline/>

"600 Adventist women halt traffic in Tonga." <https://record.adventistchurch.com/2019/04/18/600-adventist-women-halt-traffic-in-tonga/>

"Tracey in Tonga." <https://record.adventistchurch.com/record-roaming/tracey-in-tonga/>

"How a young Niue mum's life was transformed." <https://record.adventistchurch.com/2019/04/22/how-a-young-niue-mums-life-was-transformed/>

"Bringing glory to God through song." <https://record.adventistchurch.com/2019/04/22/bringing-glory-to-god-through-song/>

"Getting ready for the harvest." <https://record.adventistchurch.com/2019/04/21/women-getting-ready-for-the-harvest/>

There could be, and will be, many more stories shared about this event. If not in print, then in the hearts of wom-

en who attended. Stories about how God worked miracles to enable them to attend the congress. Stories of how God is using them to reach others.

Guest speakers for evening and morning worships were Janet Page (GC) and Wendy Jackson (Avondale). Other speakers and workshop presenters were Anne Norman (TPUM), Ann Woolbridge (SPD), Phalguni James (VM) and myself, along with our male colleagues Ronald Stone (TPUM), Trafford Fischer (SPD) and Mavani Kaufononga (TPUM).

We look forward to the result of this gathering: more women involved in preaching and leadership roles across the TPUM, and more people following Jesus as a result of their witness.



Some of the faces at the TPUM Women's Ministries Congress.

Women's Leadership Workshop



Sycamore Lane is organising a Women's Leadership Workshop on August 3-5, titled "Lead like ... a Lifesaver". This workshop provides a space to gain new knowledge, reflect and think about your current leadership practice, come to new insights and become empowered as you lead. It is specially tailored for women of faith and values, who are bravely embracing leading themselves and others. The event has been crafted for all women who are on a journey and want to build new skills, learn new tools and want to understand how leadership thinking can benefit their life.

To learn more about the event, how to register and where it is being held, please contact leadlike2019@gmail.com or book at www.sycamorelane.com.au/events.

RESOURCES

For a list of great resources for the two major emphasis days this year, go to the website - <http://women.adventistchurch.com/events>. The women's emphasis day is June 6 this year. Written by Raquel Arrais, "The Call to Arise and Shine" will be of value to any group wishing to have a morning service and afternoon program.

The 2019 End It Now Emphasis Day programme packet "God's Path to Resilience: Religion as a Protector", is written by Dr. Julian M. Melgosa, associate director of GC Education. The alternate seminar, "Forgiveness: A Path to Resilience," is written by Debbie Maloba, director of East-Central African Division Women's Ministries.

