

Y's RETIRED OF THE UK
Affiliated to the World Fellowship of YMCA Retirees

NOVEMBER 2021

www.yretired.co.uk



President's ponderings

Julia and I are just about to move house! After 18 years living in the same Manse in St Albans we are moving on into 'proper retirement'! Although we are only physically moving 5 miles away it seems a much larger step!

Not only do we find ourselves moving into a smaller property in a new and different community, we suddenly find ourselves facing the realities of life that clergy such as myself are protected from – Bills! Council Tax, Phone and utilities have all been paid for by the church. Now we have to rethink our finances! So, we will be joining the majority of you all with that joy!

But perhaps the biggest challenge that we are facing is trying to decide what we want our new house to look like and feel like in order for it to become home! We have owned and maintained the property for a number of years and enjoyed an income from it, but now we are having to make decisions about the alterations that we want in order to turn 'The House' into our Home.

This has brought to mind a memory of a church service that I attended during a Regional Secretaries Conference in Germany in the 1990s.

The theme was 'Heimat', meaning home or homeland. 'Heimat' has no direct translation in any other language. It can be a physical location, your native country or region, or a place where you feel comfortable, feel rooted, a place with which you have emotional ties.

Despite my poor German, I remember the young people challenging each other to think about what 'Heimat' meant to them. What it meant to be 'at home' on earth and in heaven.

For most of us, I guess that 'Heimat' is where we feel secure, comfortable and safe. Where we know the love of others and are able to love others.

In this world of turmoil in which we live, the need for us all to experience the security and peace of home is so important. It is something that comes not from the bricks and mortar of the houses and homes that we live in; it comes through how we live in relationship with those around us with the world and with God.

I would also suggest that this idea of Heimat expands the meaningful words Jesus gives of assurance when he says, *'In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? (John 14:2 ESV)*

Never mind the paint charts or the furnishing catalogues, here is the promise that our ultimate experience of Heimat is yet to come!

Graham (Clarke)

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MEMBERS CORRESPONDENCE

Have just enjoyed my first 'summer holiday' since the 'lockdowns' invaded our lives. Lancashire was the venue visiting my brother. Various activities including Martin Mere, Morecambe with many memories of my youth, even waved to a statue of Eric Morecambe on the Seafrost, a Local Gala Day where I fully enjoyed an excellent Ukuleles Band playing my favourite Dixieland songs!

On the Sunday even I enjoyed attending Methodist Messy Church and singing with the children, "Now Zacchaeus was a very naughty man and a very naughty man was he, who climbed up a Sycamore Tree for the saviour he wanted to see.

Zacchaeus of course was a little man, not naughty! It made my day.

Warm regards, **Jim (Lamb)**

Hope all is well with you both. As you may know, it has been a difficult summer since Ann fractured a vertebrae early June. She will have an operation later in September.

Ron (Ingamells).
Hope the operation for Ann went well and that she is now on the road to recovery. (Ed)



HILARY PAGE

Paul Harper shares the sad news that Hilary Page, wife of Stewart Page passed away on Sunday 26th September 2021.

Stewart served the YMCA at Pontypridd where he married Hilary on 24th September 1964. They then served the YMCAs in Caerphilly, Porth, Hastings, Bristol, Wimbledon and the Barbican, in the City of London. Hilary has a daughter named Angela, who has YMCA contacts in Brazil and Chile.

Angela particularly wanted Archie Swan to know how grateful she was of the help he gave Stewart and Hilary. Their son Craig was living at Hilary's house in Wells and was her carer as she became more unable to get about.

May she rest in Peace and Rise in Glory

Paul (Harper)

Reverend John Mason

Ron Ingamells kindly writes a tribute to John Mason, who passed away in August 2021.

I first met John when he was Rector of Diss in Suffolk, but part of the Norwich Diocese and I was Diocesan Youth Officer. I don't know many people who have an obituary in the Times, so it caught my eye!

The heading was '**Parish Priest and Former Air Arm pilot during the Suez crisis**'.

Quote from the Times stated "*In 1954 he was appointed to 804 Squadron, Seahawks. Before the age of 24 John gained his wings and became a submarine detection specialist and a navy diver. Yet despite his love for the navy there grew the realization that he should become a priest.*"

After a curacy he rejoined the navy as a chaplain. John was a chorister at Norwich Cathedral. Then 30 years later he took the choir from Diss to sing at St. Paul's Cathedral and in Bruges. He also led a number of youth events and took a group to Taizé. During John's ministry at Diss he had a large congregation and is fondly remembered.

Following various parishes in 1980 he became the director of Cambridge YMCA for 5 years where I met up with him again. He then moved to be Director of Dunford House. He died earlier this year.

Ron adds...

How sad that the YMCA had to give up that wonderful residential centre and a house full of ecumenical history!

I used to enjoy meetings there and especially when that wonderful Baptist minister and Bonhoeffer scholar, Edwin Robertson was present at my Christian Education Group meetings!!

Annual General Meeting of YMCA England and Wales

Please save the date for the National Council Annual General Meeting of Members, taking place both online via zoom and physically at Church House on Thursday 2 December 2021.

Lunch will be served from 12:00- 13:00 at Church House, with the meeting starting at 13:00.

The formal Notice for the meeting and all meeting papers will be found online from 11 November, at:- <https://www.mi-nomination.com/ymca>.

Registration for the event and voting will also be hosted via that site and accessible from 1 October.

YMCA of the USA Names Suzanne McCormick as Next President and CEO



McCormick will be the first woman to lead the Y in the United States

CHICAGO (August 9, 2021) — Suzanne McCormick has been named president and chief executive officer of YMCA of the USA (Y-USA). She will be the 15th person and first woman to lead the Y in the United States.

McCormick brings more than 27 years of experience as a senior and executive leader in nonprofit, for-impact organizations to the role, most recently serving as U.S. President of United Way Worldwide and a member of their global management team. McCormick's tenure with Y-USA will officially begin in September, replacing Kevin Washington, the organization's first Black president and CEO who is retiring after serving as Y-USA's president and CEO for more than six years and after more than 40 years of service to the YMCA.

"The National Board began the search for Kevin Washington's successor with the goal of finding a leader who will continue to advance our vision and our work to strengthen communities while ensuring equitable access for all," said Pamela Davies, Ph.D., national board chair, YMCA of the USA. "We knew that we also needed a leader capable of developing a clear vision for the future of the Y – one that leverages our scope and scale for national impact. The National Board strongly believes that the breadth and depth of Suzanne's community impact expertise, combined with her national and local leadership experience, make her the right person to build on Kevin Washington's accomplishments and lead the Y during this pivotal time in our country."

In McCormick's role as U.S. President of United Way Worldwide, she has been responsible for helping the 1,100 local United Ways across the U.S. address their communities' most pressing challenges. Prior to assuming this national role, she spent five years as president and CEO for United Way Suncoast and 13 years at United Way of Greater Portland in Maine, including four as president and CEO.

Her nonprofit leadership career also includes CEO roles at both the American Red Cross of Southern Maine and the People's Regional Opportunity Program. McCormick currently serves on the Board of Directors for Independent Sector, Tampa Bay Thrives and Carolinas Section PGA, and was just recognized by the Non Profit Times as one of the 2021 NPT Power & Influence Top 50.

McCormick holds a B.A. in Political Science from Duke University and spent three years in the Peace Corps. "Stepping into this role at this critical time in our history allows me to leverage every aspect of my experience and my expertise," states McCormick. "This once-in-a-lifetime opportunity perfectly aligns with my personal mission, my values, my passions and my commitment to equity. I'm excited to support and advocate for YMCAs across the country as they continue to improve the lives of millions of people every day and build more inclusive, resilient communities where everyone can thrive."

As president and CEO of Y-USA, McCormick will be responsible for leading the 170-year-old organization, whose brand is valued at \$8.9B, and the Chicago-based national resource office for the more than 2,600 YMCAs across the United States.

About the Y - USA

Driven by its founding mission, the Y has served as a leading nonprofit committed to strengthening community for more than 175 years. The Y empowers everyone, no matter who they are or where they're from, by ensuring access to resources, relationships and opportunities for all to learn, grow and thrive. By bringing together people from different backgrounds, perspectives and generations, the Y's goal is to improve overall health and well-being, ignite youth empowerment and demonstrate the importance of connections in and across 10,000 communities nationwide. ymca.org

NOTICE FROM YMCA PENSION PLAN

Several members of Y's Retired of UK will be in receipt of a YMCA pension, either paid via the Plan's administrators, XPS, or via an annuity provider such as Legal & General or Aviva.

Information on the YMCA Pension Plan can be found on the website www.pensions.ymca.org.uk which does not require any password to access it.

To help with the ongoing administration, it is important to let the YMCA Pensions Administrator know of any changes to your circumstances, such as change of address. You can do so by contacting XPS Administration by email: YMCA@xpsgroup.com or telephoning 0118 918 5750 and ask for Balbir Sandhu.

Collect for Climate Change

Holy God, earth and air and water are your creation,
and every living thing belongs to you:

have mercy on us as climate change confronts us.

Give us the will and the courage to simplify the way we live,
to reduce the energy we use,
to share the resources you provide,
and to bear the cost of change.

Forgive our past mistakes
and send us your Spirit,
with wisdom in present controversies
and vision for the future to which you call us
in Jesus Christ our Lord.



Reg's story continues from mid 1963 as he helps create the future positioning of the YMCA in Zambia before eventually returning in 1966 to the UK

A new mainly post-war dimension came to Ghana with the influx of migrant workers from UK and South Africa to work in the mines or the railways. Mainly from labouring stock in their own countries, they had a vested interest in curbing the advancement of a black labour force. With their newfound wealth, some folk were often more radically prejudiced toward the black community than the long established settlers.

The social/cultural/recreational needs and lifestyles of the white population were well catered for by the facilities and amenities of Ndola. Such then was the setting in which YMCA developments were expected to take place.

The problem arose in deciding priorities. Having been presented with a town centre building, there was an expectation that it should be the focus of activity. It would have been difficult to 'look a gift horse in the mouth' but I had considerable reservations when quite clearly, the white youngsters had so many options whilst the majority of young black folk lived in the townships and from which not only transport but, it had to be said some prejudice against their presence in town, made their involvement questionable.

Initial users were mainly white lads with just a few Asians. Asians became a majority and the white lads disappeared. Then more Africans came and the Asians disappeared. The cycle continued by stages but despite every effort it seemed that our truly multi-racial goal was, for the time being at least, unrealistic.

I came to the view that a promising and needed development lay in the broad area of physical education/recreation, although for this we would need additional expertise. At the time the excellent but grossly underused sports stadium a memorial to Dag Hammarskjöld, UN Secretary General, killed in an air crash near Ndola in 1961 – offered all the facilities needed for a rather grandiose notion for a YMCA school of physical education.

The programme at the central building did in-fact expand gradually and while we did not exactly set the world on fire, we were able to recruit an African member from Kitwe YMCA as full time assistant. The intention was that he be trained to take over from me in due course.

As a result, we were able to make some headway with programme in the townships. I was able to help with leader training based on Kitwe YMCA and to give some support to the embryo National Council. In spite of my feeling of personal frustration others seemed to think I was earning my corn.

In family terms life was enjoyable and some progress was being made in YMCA programmes. Even so, I had begun to ponder about the relevance of our largely recreational activities in relation to the emerging political scenario.

I had in mind the declared object of the YMCAs' move to a non-federal organisation, namely 'to be able to identify with and respond to the needs and aspirations of an independent Zambia'. On the political scene the transition

to independence was well advanced.

While the country had been spared the excesses of bloody revolution, violence had not been entirely absent and internments had been metered out. In Urban areas especially, the seeds of social unrest remained.

There was some unease, especially amongst whites, about what change independence might bring. When I shared such concerns with the YMCA committee at a personal level we concluded that we should seek contact with the political power in waiting.

Wally Brookbanks, the interim Chairman of the YMCA group responsible for the projected development and I were invited to a meal with a small group of political leaders including and notably, Kenneth Kaunda, even then clearly destined to become the first President. In his opening statements, I thought Wally somewhat over generous in setting out my qualifications and experience together with our YMCA Aims in the developing situation. His comments included mention of my Ghana experience. As the conversation developed, I sensed that I was being drawn to enlarge on the Ghana experience rather more than about YMCA aspirations.

Long and the short of it was that I was to be seconded to help set up the Zambian Youth Service under the leadership of a Guy Arnold. My position was not without tensions. Meetings at Headquarters were never easy and there was much politicking. The tension was between those of us committed to personal development aim of our social groupwork and community development philosophy and others who favoured conformity to a centrally determined power structure. The situation was in many ways a repeat of my experience in Ghana.

Towards the end of 1965, changes in HQs staff, with even stronger political appointments, it became easier for the Israeli to have greater influence. When early in 1966, the YMCA (Bob Roberts) wrote to say that they wanted me back to do "a real YMCA job" as National Youth Work Secretary replacing Norman Ingle, it gave food for thought. The post being offered, by YMCA was certainly a most attractive one. In all circumstances, I felt encouraged to investigate an earlier termination of my contract. The High Commission, with whom I shared my problems, were fully supportive and termination before term was agreed by all parties concerned.

With our earlier than expected return to UK, we had cause to be thankful for our foresight in purchasing 35 Onslow Gardens in Belfast, and for the financial position which made it possible. So, we arrived home, this time by boat, to a warm welcome, followed by many visitors and very many cups of tea! It was good to be home. Although on leave, I did agree to attend the Easter Youth Conference at Barry, this being an opportunity to get the feel of the new tasks and to meet or renew contacts with leaders in the youth work field. I little knew at the time that I was destined to spend seventeen consecutive Easters with what became the Young Members Assembly.

As I entered the London Central YMCA premises on Great Russell Street and made my way up to what was always known as 'The Corridor', containing the offices of the 'Top Brass' or National Council Staff, I was reminded of much earlier day visits from 'Lakeside' and when on return, I used to declare that if there was one place on God's earth where I would never wish to work it would be London. Yet there I was, with an office on the said 'Corridor' complete with my name on the door no less!

Again, I was to follow in the footsteps of Norman Ingle. Knowing his abilities and efficiency in all things and the respect in which he was held throughout the Movement, I found the prospect just a touch frightening.

More to come in the JANUARY 2022 edition of the Newsletter.....



Jose Varghese, 48, is the International Secretary General of Y's Men International, the International Service Club associated to the World YMCA which is about to turn 100. It's a milestone for this organisation, as well as for Jose, who reflects with us on his 30 years in different roles in the YMCA Movement. He has worked for us in India, in the Asia-Pacific region, and worldwide.

Jose Varghese was born in Kerala, India. He studied Mathematics and started his journey with YMCA at the university.

He says: "At the age of 21, I got my first employment as Secretary of the YMCA Campsite at Alluvia in Kerala. It was an open door for a young man with no experience to learn new things, interacting with different people, working with young people, acquiring new skills and facing the challenges of managing complex situations. For me, it was truly an empowering space for discovering myself and being mentored by professional colleagues and senior volunteer leaders."

Jose then joined the YMCA Training Institute in Bangalore, and studied for a post-graduate diploma in ecumenical youth work: "It changed my perspectives about life, faith, mission and action and enabled me to reread religious doctrines through the eyes of the poor, the young people, the women, the neglected and the weak. I could then relate all this to the contemporary mission of the YMCA".

Working for a visible and active movement



One of the projects of Y's Men: a charity shop in Kosovo

Jose Varghese then became Regional Development Secretary responsible for the extension and development of the YMCA in the state of Kerala. At the age of 28, he was appointed Regional Secretary/CEO of the YMCA South West India, managing over 300 local YMCAs. He remembers: "This gave me great leadership opportunities to build a team of staff and volunteer leaders. We were reimagining the future of the YMCA movement and working towards a mission oriented, self-reliant, visible and active movement. We achieved several new projects for sustainable resource mobilization through massive fundraising initiatives – these included the YMCA International Centre, the Development Study Centre, and the Ecumenical Centre".

Over the period of 7 years, more than 200 new local YMCAs and YMCA facilities were established across the region, and all were serving local communities.

In 2007, Jose Varghese was nominated Executive Secretary for programmes at the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs (APAY) based in Hong Kong.

"I was responsible for leading programmes related to Global Citizenship, Global Alternative Tourism, Peace building and Contemporary Mission", he shares. Four years later, he joined the World YMCA to lead its Global Citizenship, Leadership Development and Resource Mobilization work. "I continued in this position until I was appointed as International Secretary General of the Y's Men International from October 2018."

The International Association of Y's Men's Clubs (Y's Men International) was founded as a Service Club for the YMCA, at the YMCA of Toledo, Ohio, in 1922. It is a worldwide fellowship of persons of all faiths working together in mutual respect and affection, based on the teachings of Jesus Christ, and with a common loyalty to the Young Men's Christian Association, striving through active service to develop, encourage and provide leadership to build a better world for all humankind. Its headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland, and it has a satellite office at Chiangmai YMCA in Thailand.

"Today there are 1600 affiliated clubs in 73 countries, working together with a common vision of serving the community and supporting the mission of the YMCA. Since the pandemic struck, 93 new clubs have been created", explains Jose. "Y's Men is a great place for Alumni of the YMCAs, young members, past and present Board members and staff, and active supporters of the YMCA. It's a platform for giving back to the YMCA and the community, while keeping up global connections and a network of friends and experiencing International Service Club life.

The Y's Men's clubs support YMCA's mission through their volunteer time and resources, and they connect up members and clubs worldwide. The members and leaders of the Club are both women and men working together in fellowship. Their motto is 'to acknowledge the duty that accompanies every right'.

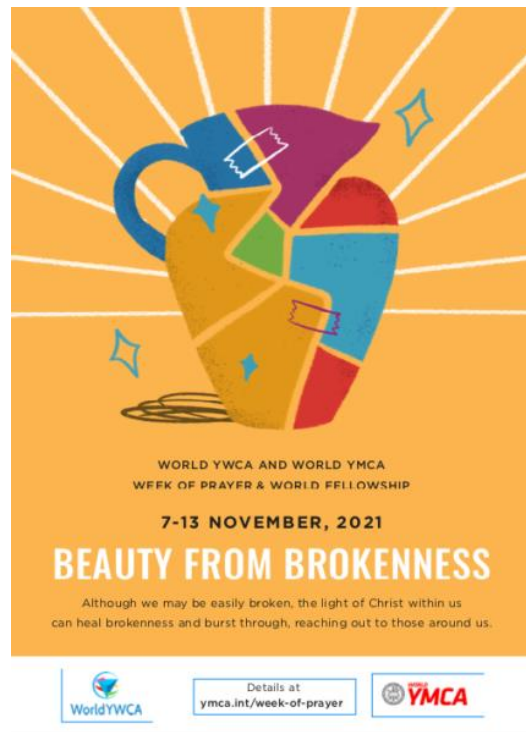
In 2022, Y's Men International is celebrating 100 years of service. Jose Varghese says: "Our centennial vision is first to extend our organisation to at least 50,000 members based in 100 countries, and second to strengthen Y's Men International at the global level by offering relevant services to the YMCA and community and increasing our international visibility. We hope and pray to have a major centennial celebration on 15-17 November 2022 in Taiwan".

After all these years at the YMCA, Jose Varghese is still full of enthusiasm as he looks into the future: "We believe that the YMCA Vision 2030 is close to ours. They both reflect the role of the YMCA today.

We embrace the strong internal solidarity of the Vision 2030, as well as the collective power of the YMCA Movement to influence, change and build a just, sustainable, equitable and inclusive world. As a partner in Mission, Y's Men International is looking forward to collaborate with this vision, and journeying together for a better future for all".

Since 1904, the World YMCA and the World YWCA have traditionally come together to deliver the World Week of Prayer and World Fellowship. Celebrated each year in the second week of November, the Week sees both organisations joining forces to produce a booklet with a theme, a set of Bible studies for each day, and an annual Bible reading plan so that communities around the world can unite in prayer for a specific cause linked to current realities

Week of Prayer 2021 - Theme: Beauty from brokenness



World YWCA-YMCA Week of Prayer and World Fellowship 2021

The World YMCA and the World YWCA invite the 'Y' Movements throughout the world to observe the World YWCA-YWCA Week of Prayer and World Fellowship, in the week of 7- 13 November 2021. The theme chosen for this year's prayer week is "Beauty from Brokenness".

The story of our Christian faith is that why we may be like pots of clay, ordinary and easily broken, but each of us has the capacity to contain the light of Christ within us, a light that can heal brokenness and burst through, reaching out to those around us.

As we are in the process of healing and restoration from the pandemic, we continue to serve our communities with the spirit of forgiveness and inclusiveness, ensuring dignity for all and celebrating God's unconditional love for us during this time of renewal.

Resources on the prayer week will be available soon on the [World Week of Prayer](#) webpage.