

## Responsibility and Accountability

The following true story recently took place in Africa. A man and his wife decided to go on a trip to a game park. They had children who didn't accompany them. On getting there the man decided to go on a walkabout despite the advice from his wife not to – he wanted some good shots of the wildlife. He was gone for a long time and his wife was naturally worried and went to find him. But on further consideration she went to find the park rangers, who went in search of her husband. What they discovered was the body of her husband: he had been killed by a wild animal.

Now, why are we telling you this? One day Chris was taken to a game park in Tanzania and recounts how a lion was seen, but you could only view it if someone showed you. The understanding was that you never really know what is lurking in the undergrowth. But the point at issue is not wild animals; it is responsibility and accountability.

It is so important to be responsible. All of us can speak or act unwisely or in haste with possibly serious consequences. Questions arise from happenings such as this one: *Do we have a previously agreed course of action in such circumstances? And do we act in line with agreed risk and crisis management principles? Or are our tendencies to act on impulse regardless of the consequences?* Perhaps this story says to us all that we should take due care and manage a crisis on the basis of previously discussed and agreed principles.

Accountability is something else that appears very important in the story. If only the husband had been accountable to his wife, he would have been alive today. But accountability goes far beyond husband and wife. It can and should be a basic principle that all Christians should be practising. The need of accountability amongst co-workers is an absolutely necessity. Accountability need not be a legalistic position, as true accountability only comes with love and respect for each other.

As the trustees of Avail, we seek to be guided by mutual love and respect. We have been recently greatly helped by recognising that there are different ministries and gifts that colour our thinking and that they can be moulded together for beneficial effect on the direction, purpose and structure of the mission.