



SEC Family

Connecting Lives for Eternal Living

A Publication of the South England Conference Family Ministry Department

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Faith Begins at Home

Pr Les Ackie

The prayer of affirmation known as *The Shema* is considered to be the most important prayer in Judaism. It states, ⁴Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength . . . ⁷These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up (Deuteronomy 6:4-7).

The Shema stresses the importance of parents passing on a spiritual heritage to their children. Ellen White reiterated this thought when she wrote, "Our work for Christ is to begin with the family, in the home. . . . There is no missionary field more important than this" (Adventist Home, 35).

When Christian researcher George Barna set out to discover what was the most effective form of evangelism in which churches can engage, he was so surprised by his results that he discarded them. He started again from scratch only to repeat the same findings, namely, that the most effective form of evangelism is evangelism to our children. He has also shown that the optimum ages at which children make decisions for Christ are between 5-13. The Barna Group research is a confirmation of what Mrs White said many years ago that, "It is in these early years that the affections are the most ardent, the heart most susceptible of improvement" (*Review and Herald*, December 17, 1889).

In light of this 'window of opportunity', what initiatives do we have in place to intentionally maximize this crucial period to hold and empower our young people for Christ? While we are blessed to have ministries like Sabbath School, Pathfinders etc., faith transmission remains the primary responsibility of parents. Parents continue to be the major influence on the children's spiritual choices being two to three times more effective in leading children to faith than any church programme. The role of these church agencies is one of support. As a church we need to place responsibility back into the hands of parents by empowering them and resourcing them to fulfill their high calling.

If we accept the validity of Barna's research, it carries major



January 2013

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implications for how we organize our church and how we allocate our resources and our funding. I was once told that if you want to know what a church's priorities are, the best place to look is the church budget. If that is the case, what do our church budgets say about how we value our children? It is not unusual for churches to invest thousands of pounds organizing elaborate evangelistic endeavours, while allocating a pittance, if anything, for ministry to our children.

Effective ministry to our children requires us to modify our concept of evangelism. The term almost automatically creates in our minds outreach to the unreached masses within our communities. However, our children are not born believers. They may be raised within Christian homes but a personal faith in Jesus Christ does not happen by accident.

Don McLafferty, Director of Kids in Discipleship recognized this anomaly when he founded the ministry in 2003. He saw the need to create a specifically Adventist ministry and resources to enable parents and mentors to intentionally disciple their children for Jesus. McLafferty has since recognized that empowering and equipping parents to pass on a spiritual heritage to their children has a profound effect on the parents' own spiritual growth. Kids in Discipleship has developed another arm called 'In Discipleship' to formally recognize and develop this aspect of the ministry. Parents who are confident in mentoring and discipling their own children also become more confident to engage in the wider outreach efforts of the local church.

Around the mid-noughties, church pastor and consultant Mark Holmen founded the "Faith At Home" movement which equips congregations to make the home the primary place where faith is nurtured. This was in response to findings that fewer than 10% of parents who regularly attend church with their children read the Bible together, pray together (other than at meal times) or participate in an act of service as a family unit. Add to this statistic the findings from the last ValueGenesis study conducted in the Trans European Division indicating that we are losing over 51% of our young people by the time they reach their 20s, and we have a major crisis on our hands.

Our young people are the lifeblood of the church and we are haemorrhaging at an alarming rate. In order to stem the flow we need to enlist, empower and equip parents and mentors to pass on our rich spiritual heritage. We are told that, "Men and women, children and youth, are measured in the scale of heaven in accordance with that which they reveal in their home life" (SDA Bible Commentary, 1085). This being the case let us support families to live out the reality of *The Shema*.

Jesus in the Family



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Designed for Families Focussed on Children

Equipping parents, mentors and churches to empower their children to become disciples who joyfully trust, follow and share Jesus



"And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions."
Joel 2:28



For more information in the UK and Eire contact:

K.I.D. Children's Ministry Department
British Union Conference, Stanborough Park, Watford, WD25 9JZ
Tel: 01923 672251
www.adventistinfo.org.uk/department/childrensministries.php



KID LEADERSHIP TRAINING

9th - 12th April

Yarnfield Park Training & Conference Centre
Yarnfield, Staffordshire ST150NL

Contact: K.I.D Children's Ministry Dept
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<http://www.adventistinfo.org.uk/departments/>

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The Bible, Psychology and Christian Counselling

Pr Les Ackie

When I decided to study to qualify as a clinical counsellor I received a mixed reaction from various quarters, some of which gave me pause for thought as to whether I should pursue such a course. Concerns were raised as to whether it was appropriate for Christians to expose their minds to the subtle deceptions of the psychological world.

Convinced that I needed to clarify the matter for myself, my concerns were actually heightened when confronted with disturbing statements penned by Ellen White. For example, she wrote that through psychology the Enemy, “comes more directly to the people of this generation and works with that power which is to characterize his efforts near the close of probation. The minds of thousands have thus been poisoned and led into infidelity (*Mind Character & Personality, vol.1 19*).

As a result of this and similar statements, many have felt safe to draw the conclusion that all psychology is therefore evil and should be avoided. However, Mrs White also stated that, “The true principles of psychology are found in the Holy Scriptures.” In an 1884 *Signs* article, she also wrote: “The sciences which treat of the human mind are very much exalted. They are good in their place; but they are seized upon by Satan as his powerful agents to deceive and destroy souls.” Our task then, is not to ‘throw the baby out with the bath water’ by rejecting psychology out of hand, but to discern between the true and the false. Paul counsels us in 1 Thessalonians 5:21, “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

The term “psychology” actually derives from two Greek root words, *psyche* (spirit) which refers to the conscious part of man - the mind, and *logos* (word) pertaining to study. Therefore, psychology refers to the study of the mind. The aim of psychology is to describe, understand, predict, and determine the factors that influence mental processes and behaviour. We are told that, “To deal with minds is the greatest work ever committed to men” and that, “In order to lead souls to Jesus there must be a knowledge of human nature and a study of the human mind” (*Mind Character and Personality, p.4, 67*).

The Apostle Paul counselled, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:2). Conversion not only gives us a new capacity to know God, it also changes the way we think. The proper application of biblical psychology enables individuals to identify and change the faulty core beliefs about themselves, others and even God, which frequently lay at the root of destructive behaviour and dysfunctional relationships.

The choice of a counsellor requires very careful consideration. We should exercise the utmost caution and discernment for we are warned in Colossians 2:8, “See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.” It is right that we take inspired counsel seriously in order to avoid counselling processes, which compound rather than provide solutions to people’s problems. But we should not tar all counselling with the same brush. The study of psychology is wholly appropriate for Christians as long as our presuppositions are biblical and not humanistic.

The Bible is replete with good psychology. The fact that the core beliefs we hold about ourselves and our environment profoundly affects our behaviour is a reflection of Solomon’s words, “For as he

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thinks in his heart, so *is* he.” The fact that our mood is a significant factor in our physical health confirms the truth that, “A merry heart does good, *like* medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones.” Jesus himself used good psychological principles to win the confidence of the woman at the well (John 4:7-30) and avert the execution of the woman caught in adultery (John 8:2-11) and gently rebuke Simon the Leper (Luke 7:39-48).

Our fundamental belief teaches that, “the Bible is our only rule for faith and practice”, but what does this actually mean? For example, the Bible contains excellent counsel on healthy eating, but we would hardly seek to use the Bible only, as a recipe book to cook a three course meal. The Bible promotes excellent principles for physical health but it would be ridiculous to try to use it as a text book for performing open-heart surgery. Why then do some try to apply this logic when it comes to counselling? Our fundamental belief simply means that whatever we choose to believe and do, must be founded on biblical principle.

As in all things, we must exercise good spiritual judgement and a humble heart in order to receive the help we need. Solomon states, “A wise *man* will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel” (Proverbs 1:5.)

Tips for Choosing a Professional Christian Counsellor

- Pray for God’s wisdom to guide your choice
- If possible, get a recommendation from someone you trust
- Make sure you are comfortable with the counsellor - if not, change
- How does the counselor’s Christian belief influence their counselling practice?
- Is the counsellor a member of a recognised counselling organisation?
- What method/s of counselling does the counsellor use? Ensure that the method is in line with your personal values
- How much experience does the counsellor have in dealing with your particular situation?
- How does the counsellor define successful therapy?
- Do you require a counsellor of a particular gender?
- How much does the counsellor charge?
- How often & how long might you be expected to meet?
- Do not become overly reliant on the counsellor. Effective counselling should empower personal responsibility



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at a
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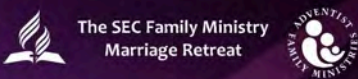
Individuals: £20 per session

Couples: £25 per session


Families: £30 per session

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Strength to Love

Spiritual Foundations for Marital Unity




An exploration of practical solutions for the inevitable challenges that threaten spiritual and emotional harmony

Presenters:
Les & Irma Ackie

Date: 22nd - 24th March 2013
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Cost: £230 per couple (subsidies available for early booking)
Register at www.secnews.org.uk or call Anna McLarty on 01923 232 728

REVIVAL & REFORMATION



Families

REACHING OUT

Willie and Elaine Oliver

Click on the link to download the GC Family Ministry Planbook at <http://www.adventistinfo.org.uk/departments/familyministries.php>

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www.familyministries.com



FAMILY MINISTRY
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- Communication
- Anger & Conflict Resolution
- The Family as a Centre for Evangelism
- Leading out in Family Ministries

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 Genesis 2:18

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Useful Links

AdventSource -
www.adventsource.org/

Adventist Parenting -
www.adventistparenting.org/

Adventist Special Needs
Association - [http://
www.asna.info/](http://www.asna.info/)

BUC Family Ministry-
www.adventistinfo.org.uk/

The Ellen G. White Estate -
<http://www.whiteestate.org/>

GC Family Ministry - [http://
family.adventist.org/](http://family.adventist.org/)

Hope Channel - [http://
www.hopetv.org/](http://www.hopetv.org/)

Kids in Discipleship -
www.kidsindiscipleship.org/

North American Division Family
Ministry - family.nadadventist.org

SEC News -
www.secadventist.com/secnews/

Share Him - [http://
sharehim.org/php/index.php](http://sharehim.org/php/index.php)

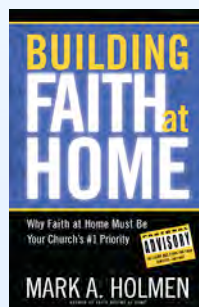
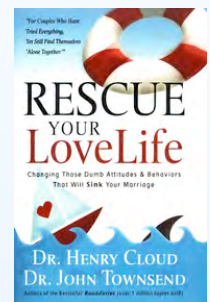
South Pacific Division Family
Ministry - [http://
adventist.org.au/family-](http://adventist.org.au/family-)

Recommended Reading



Ellen White's classic work *The Adventist Home*, offers counsel on many facets of home life including, choosing a mate; child discipline; grandparents; holidays; hospitality; moral standards; divorce; and living with an unbelieving spouse. Mrs White points out pitfalls to be avoided and shows how to have a happy marriage by injecting the grace of God and the principles of Christian courtesy into every aspect of family life.

In *Rescue Your Love Life* Drs Cloud & Townsend identify the various ways marriages can disconnect. The authors come to the aid of readers who are drowning in a sea of good intentions and misplaced priorities. Tackling self-examination, realistic explanations, healthy communication, and dealing with conflict and temptation, *Rescue Your Love Life* will show you how to build trust and intimacy in your marriage.



Studies show that faith lived out in the home is more influential than the Church. Unfortunately studies also show that prayer, Bible reading and faith talk are almost non-existent in most Christian families. In *Building Faith at Home* Mark Holman offers a vision and a practical model for how to weave family ministry into the DNA of churches. This work offers an integrated approach that can revolutionize churches' approach to this vital ministry.

Cornerstone
Counselling Service

0207 723 8050
or ccs@secadventist.org.uk

Contact us to speak with a counsellor about issues that trouble you, or to make an appointment.



REAL
Family Talk
with Willie & Elaine Oliver



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