



SEC Family

Connecting Lives for Eternal Living

A Publication of the South England Conference Family Ministry Department

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Single Seventh-day Adventists Online - For Real!

Anthony Nxumalo

The new website, www.singleseventhdayadventists.com is a brand new supporting ministry that is for . . . yes you guessed it: Single Seventh-day Adventists! Having just launched a few months ago it has already celebrated its first marriage and has had an overwhelming response from all around the world.

As you are no doubt aware, there are hundreds of thousands of Adventists worldwide who desire life partners but the ratio of men to women in many churches or the age disparity in many of our churches means they do not have the opportunity. As a result, too many members have unequally yoked with people outside the church which has often resulted in them leaving the church. This ministry seeks to prevent this sad reality.

Many people have chosen to look for other Adventist singles online which presents its own set of problems. If you type "Adventist Singles" into Google, many websites appear with Adventist in the name. Sadly most of these websites are neither owned, or administered by Seventh-day Adventists. They are using the church's name illegally to cash in on the fact that single Adventists (being more discerning about who they choose to find love with) will jump to one of their services when they see the Adventist name and unfortunately indeed they do in their thousands. Whether the individuals they meet on the websites are Seventh-day Adventists is also questionable and having spoken to the church conferences around the world, many of our church members have complained and commented that they didn't get the service they paid for when they joined these sites and could not get a refund.

Many singles websites actually don't want you to find love at all as monthly membership fees keep them in business, and even if you sign up for a short time and never use the account, they still use your image and profile to entice other singles into signing up to their sites thus generating more revenue. It's a bit like a fly light trap which looks beautiful from the outside but when you sign up and pay to talk to the people you see on the front page, many have stopped using the website or let their membership expire so you can't talk to them and they can't talk to you. Every individual pictured on singleseventhdayadventists.com/ are real people you can talk to TODAY.

We are a Seventh-day Adventists online singles ministry run by Seventh-day Adventists (unlike most of these other websites) and the best news is that we are FREE! Though free, the website is state of the art with functionality to compete with the world's biggest singles sites. We have set up the website



February 2013

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in faith trusting that donations will keep it running either from satisfied customers or people that support our cause. By making it free, we are also hoping it will cause those websites that are cashing in on the church name to shut up shop as it will no longer be profitable for them to run because Adventists now have a genuine and free option. People who have signed up cannot believe we are free. They think at some point the trial will run out and they will be expected to pay. Singleseventhdayadventists.com is also a Seventh-day Adventist supporting ministry and we are also members of Adventist-laymen's Services & Industries (ASI). It is a requirement that we be baptized members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in regular standing as well as recommended by a pastor.

We only accept applications from baptized Seventh-day Adventists. We don't accept applications from people that are not baptized even if they attend an Adventist church. We ask our members to confirm they are baptized Single Seventh-day Adventists or give us the means to confirm this. Most choose their pastor to contact us and the recommendation of a pastor is a great way of getting yourself on the verified list. Some choose to confirm their membership by baptism certificate but since these can be easily forged we still check for their authenticity. Verifying you are Seventh-day Adventist puts the pretenders off joining our website and those that have still been bold enough to try have soon been found out.

No system can claim to be infallible and the fact that a person is baptized and Adventist doesn't mean they will make a good life partner. Only the heavenly Father has the ability to read every heart. All we can do (which is much more than any other site) is try as much as humanly possible to screen candidates. Checking people will perhaps not make us as popular as other websites but at least we will know that the people who do eventually sign up are serious. So far, our confirmed members have commented on how fantastic they think the screening process is. We also have a photo verification process whereby if someone signs up, we send them a unique ID number and they have to send us a picture of them holding that unique ID number which proves that the photos they are using on the website are real. Website safety is something we take very seriously.

The Website has only been open a few months and we have been overwhelmed by the amount of signups already. Much more than we expected at this stage. We have also received in a matter of months two thousand followers on both Twitter and Facebook. When we launched, we were wondering how many people would join but God is wonderful. If you plough and prepare the fields, he will supply the rain and he has in abundance. We are particularly thrilled that a lot of the more senior generation have also chosen to use the website. As Heather Haworth family ministries director for the BUC said recently in a communication to us. "It's easy for the young to go out there and meet people but for the more senior who many consider to be the most lonely in the church it is more difficult." Many of the church membership who have been widowed have said to us they would not even have known where to start to meet someone, and we have had quite a few signups. We pray constantly that God will supply life partners for all our members according to his will.

With such stiff competition in the singles field, we are David taking on the Goliaths of the online singles world but God is good and everything is just falling into place with this project. It's been a blessing how helpful people have been especially the leadership at the British Union Conference particularly Pastor Hulbert, Pastor Lockham, Pastor Stickland and Heather Haworth, Clair Sanches-Schutte at the TED and also our local SEC family ministries director Pastor Ackie. We would like to express our thanks to all of them.

The next plan for the website is to hold live events where single Adventists can meet and the church's family life leaders will be invited to come and share how single Adventists can make wise choices in finding a life partner, how to be a good future life partner as well as how they can witness for Christ and enhance the quality of life for others. We invite all baptised Seventh-day Adventist singles to sign up! We also ask that anyone who owns or administrates a website or blog creates a link to the site. For the full article go to <https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B7i6s5L9ANzJX3FvSnhNMFFEY0k/edit?usp=sharing>



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Is Self-esteem a Legitimate Concept?

Pr Les Ackie



Throughout the history of the Christian church there has been an ongoing debate and confusion over how we should view ourselves in light of the Fall and the restorative grace of God. The issue has been further complicated since the birth of psychology as a pseudo-scientific movement at the turn of the 20th century, with its emphasis on the need for positive self-regard. Careless attempts to fuse psychological theories with biblical principles have often resulted in great suspicion of any teaching which smacks of psychology. We are left to wrestle with the uneasy tension between the apparently opposing concepts of self-denial and

self-acceptance; self-love and self-renunciation; self-affirmation and self-crucifixion; self-worth and self-abasement.

A biblical survey of the term 'self' reveals that the vast majority of references are cloaked in negativity. Terms like 'self-confidence', 'self-will', 'self-seeking', 'self-indulgence', are cases in point. A study of Ellen White's writings creates a similar picture. It is therefore legitimate to ask whether the concept self-esteem should be rejected as a psychological construct or embraced as biblical truth.

A dictionary search for the word 'esteem' reveals the terms, respect, regard, appreciate, approval, honour and value. The suggestion that we are to love ourselves implies that we should not only accept ourselves but also value who we are. This seems to fly in the face of traditional Christian theology, which has placed the emphasis on self-denial rather than self-love. Self-affirmation and self-love are often viewed as antagonistic to the true message of the gospel. Passages like 2 Timothy 3:2-4, place those who love themselves in the same category as the "boasters," the "proud," and the "haughty." Paul's view appears to be compounded with references like the following from the pen of Ellen White: "Self-esteem and self-sufficiency are killing spiritual life . . . when this proud, boasting self-sufficiency and this complacent self-righteousness permeate the soul, there is no room for Jesus" (Testimonies for the Church vol.5, 538-9).

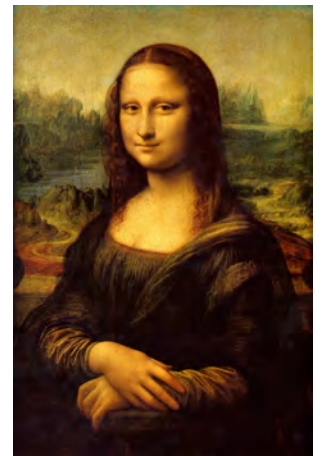
However, discussions related to self-esteem are often muddled by a failure to clearly define words and meanings. For example, it is evident from the above reference that Ellen White equates the term self-esteem with sinful pride and arrogance. However, words and meanings are dynamic and change depending a host of factors including time and place.

The idea of a healthy self-concept is not foreign to the writings of Ellen White. Self-esteem, defined in terms of a healthy sense of personal worth, finds its equivalent in her concept of "self-respect." This self-respect is destroyed by indulgence in sin, culminating in a "loss of self-appreciation (Mind, Character and Personality, vol. 1, 257)." She also stated that,

While we should not think of ourselves more highly than we ought, the Word of God does not condemn a proper self-respect. As sons and daughters of God, we should have a conscious dignity of character, in which pride and self-importance have no part" (ibid, 260).

The modern-day concept self-esteem refers to the way we evaluate personal acceptability and worthiness to be loved, which carries with it pleasant or unpleasant feelings. It is strongly related to the way we perceive other people's view of us. Unfortunately, due to our fallen condition and the 'legacy of shame', which originated in the Garden of Eden, we place too much importance on other people's evaluation of us rather than God's evaluation.

So, how should we evaluate ourselves? The value of an object is indicated by the price people are willing to pay. For example, while opinions vary over the aesthetic beauty of the Mona Lisa, estimates place the value of the painting at around \$800 million - for paint on canvass.



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We are of immense value to God. Jesus declared that He came to “give His life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). Paul states that we are “bought with a price” (1 Corinthians 6:20, 7:23). Peter adds that we “were not redeemed with corruptible things . . . but with the precious blood of Christ” (1 Peter 1:18-19). Our self-worth is not based on any intrinsic value in ourselves, it is based on the value that God places in us. To say that we are unworthy is legitimate, but to say that we are worthless is an insult to God, for the Cross is the definitive statement of the value God places in man and is thus the basis of Christian self-esteem.

The Bible evidently recognizes that the way we view ourselves has a profound effect on how we relate to others and even to God. Numbers 13 relates an incident in which the children of Israel lost faith in God’s promise to lead them into the Promised Land. Ten scouts having ‘spied’ out the land of Canaan and seen the occupying giants, declared, “. . . we were as grasshoppers in our own sight and so we were in their sight (v33).” Their grasshopper self-image paralyzed them with a sense of their own inferiority. Solomon recognized the reality of self-concept when he said, “For as he thinks in his heart, so is he (Proverbs 23:7).”



The view that we should value ourselves in no way contradicts the biblical command to self-denial. In Matthew 16:24-25 Jesus clearly states, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whosoever desires to save his life will lose it, whosoever loses his life for My sake will save it.” The ‘self’, which needs to be constantly denied, is our sinful nature, which must be kept under subjection to the Holy Spirit. However, David Carlson states the case well when he comments, “. . . although the old self has died with Christ, we still need to affirm that we still have a self, an identity, a personhood that has been reclaimed, renewed and resurrected by Christ (Counselling and Self-Esteem, 28).

A lack of self-esteem, self-worth and self-acceptance can effectively disable people from achieving their full potential and this is applicable just as much to those inside the church as outside. Lack of self-esteem is said to lead to feelings of inferiority, depression, anxiety, resentment and fear, whereas positive self-esteem is linked with good mental health and well-adapted personality. We are told that,

Many who are qualified to do excellent work accomplish little because they attempt little . . . One reason of this is the low estimate they place upon themselves. Christ paid an infinite price for us, and according to the price paid, He desires us to value ourselves (Messages to Young People, 192).

It is a false humility, which constantly demeans and devalues self. The Bible states that there is “no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). That includes no condemnation of ourselves. We are told, “It is not pleasing to God that you should demerit yourself. You should cultivate self-respect by living so that you will be approved by your own conscience and before men and angels (Mind, Character and Personality, 260).

An anonymous quote from ancient wisdom says, “A man should carry two stones in his pocket. On one should be inscribed, ‘I am but dust and ashes.’ On the other, ‘For my sake was the world created.’ And he should use each stone as he needs it.”

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Joel 2:28

For more information in the UK and Eire contact:

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British Union Conference, Stanborough Park, Watford, WD25 9JZ
Tel: 01923 672251 or Email: hhaworth@adventist.org.uk
www.adventistinfo.org.uk/departments/childrensministries.php



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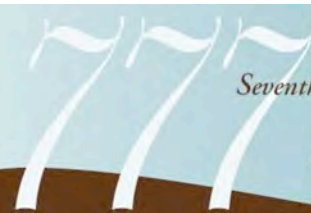
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Willie and Elaine Oliver

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Barrington Brennen

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

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

The Ellen G. White Estate -
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GC Family Ministry - [http://
family.adventist.org/](http://family.adventist.org/)

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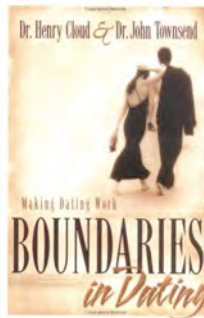
North American Division Family
Ministry - family.nadadventist.org

SEC News -
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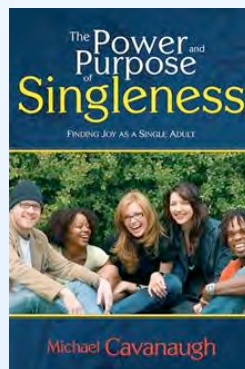
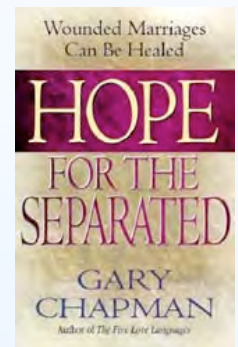
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Recommended Reading



In *Boundaries in Dating* Drs Cloud & Townsend provide a guide toward dating intentionally. This book is intended for those who wish to have some spiritual guidance in their dating relationships. It helps to answer questions which should be a part of any dating relationship: 'Where is God in all of this?', 'What role does God play in our dating relationship?', 'How do I reflect God's values in my approach toward dating?'

The unfortunate reality is that research indicates that Christians are separating and divorcing at the same rate as the unbelieving world. However, separation does not have to mean the end. Dr Gary Chapman argues that even when doors slam and angry words fly, when things just aren't working out, and even when a spouse has abandoned trust, there is hope. *Hope for the Separated* asserts that through God's Word marriages can be restored.



In *The Power and Purpose of Singleness*, Michael Cavanaugh teaches that every person, whether single, married, or divorced, is a complete person, with ability, talent, skill, and promise. When you use your abilities to His glory, He will purify you and bless you beyond comparison. God has a place and a purpose for you! He explains that God wants to use your singleness to bring you closer to Him. True joy comes only through living your life to serve God and others.

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REAL
Family Talk
with Willie & Elaine Oliver



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