



September 2014

# SEC Family

Connecting Lives for Eternal Living

A Publication of the South England Conference Family Ministry Department

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## Domestic Violence: End It Now!

Pr Les Ackie

Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan described domestic violence as “The most universal and unpunished crime.” Domestic violence takes place when one person in an intimate relationship with another uses violent or intimidating behaviour to control, (often systematically) causing physical, emotional or spiritual harm. It varies in its form whether it is physical battering, sexual assault, emotional abuse, violence against property, and spiritual abuse.

Domestic violence is no ‘respector of persons’. It occurs between people who are dating, married, separated, and divorced. Victims cross all socio-economic, religious, racial, ethnic, age groups. In the UK, women represent 85% of adult victims with men representing 15% of victims, a statistic which often elicits amusement, but is a source of agony for the victims. According to Women’s Aid, between 1 and 4 million women are abused every year with the lifetime risk for women at about 20% probability of becoming a victim.

Children become victims of domestic violence when they are physically present during violence or conflict whether they see or overhear it. This also applies to witnessing the outcome of violence (e.g. crying, bruises etc.). They are often used by the perpetrator to intimidate/blackmail the victim (e.g. use of threats towards children etc.). It is not uncommon, particularly in younger children, for them to conclude that they have somehow triggered the violence and blame themselves.

Children experience trauma when they become aware of physical and emotional effects on their parent. They are most obviously victims when they themselves are physically, emotionally or sexually abused or neglected.

The long-term adverse effects of domestic violence on children cannot be overstated in terms of physical, emotional, behavioural and social problems. These may include sadness; isolation; depression; anger; aggression; lack of assertiveness; low self-esteem; guilt; shame and social stigma. The experience of domestic violence on children often has adverse effects on their ability to form healthy relationships in adulthood. Paradoxically, it is often the case that those who come out of abusive homes form relationships in adulthood which repeat the cycle of abuse.

As with victims, perpetrators come in all shapes and sizes, but often exhibit characteristics which include a sense of entitlement, a lack of emotional control; a lack of empathy and compassion; contemptuous of others; self-justification. Perpetrators often operate under a veneer of charm and respectability in public, but drop the pretence in private. Their selfish manipulation, irrational jealousy and controlling behaviour are indicative of emotional insecurity and a fear of

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By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:35

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Christian abusers will often twist biblical passages regarding submission and headship in order to justify their abuse and to control their spouse. Such distorted understandings of these passages have also led to church leaders becoming complicit in domestic abuse. When leaders urge emotionally fragile individuals to remain in potentially life-threatening or soul destroying situations under the premise of being faithful to the marriage vow, they compound the abuse and cause added trauma to the victim.

In addressing domestic violence, it is vital that victims, perpetrators and church leaders appreciate that there are no excuses for abuse. Intimate violence is NOT caused by illness; genetics or gender; alcohol or other drugs; anger; stress; the victim's behaviour or relationship problems. It is always a choice.

There are certain factors which empower abusers to carry out their attacks. Isolating the victims is a key ploy for the perpetuation of the violence. Abusers do all in their power to prevent their victims from having access to people and resources that may provide escape from the violence. Denial on the part of a church community that refuses to accept the possibility of such behaviour also helps to keep the violence secret.

Probably the greatest factor is the fear of reprisals on the part of the victim. The question is frequently asked of victims, "Why don't they just leave?" The very question betrays a lack of understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence. When victims try to resist the abuse, the violence tends to continue and often becomes more frequent and severe. Statistics indicate that 73% of battered women seek emergency medical services after separation (Stark, 1981). Women are most likely to be killed when attempting to report abuse or leave the abuser (Sonkin, 1985). Approximately one-half of males who kill their wives, do so after separation (Hart, 1992).

One of the most successful tools that perpetrators use to maintain control is the systematic dismantling of the victim's sense of personhood and value through emotional abuse. Many survivors of domestic violence will readily admit that while the violence caused great physical harm, the emotional abuse caused more damage to their image of self.

In spite of all the obstacles in their way, survivors of domestic violence can and do successfully escape the abuse. However, leaving is a process that must navigate safety issues, the false shame of admitting the problem, exercising the courage to leave and the implementation of a survival strategy.

As a church, our support for victims begins when we acknowledge and identify the problem. We must provide a safe environment in which survivors can receive the spiritual, emotional and material support to rebuild their sense of personhood. It is our responsibility to, "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; for the rights of all who are destitute" (Proverbs 31:8 NIV).



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## Family Violence: A Christian Response

Ron & Karen Flowers, former GC Family Ministry Directors



Abuse and family violence represent a significant threat to the well-being of individuals and societies worldwide. Abuse is blind to age, social status, colour, culture, and creed. There is no typical victim of abuse and no typical perpetrator, except insofar as the victim is, overwhelmingly, female (95 percent) and the perpetrator male.

Certainly these wounded individuals and families deserve a compassionate response from the church. To respond with acceptance, understanding, comfort, and practical help is the moral responsibility of Christians and tangible evidence of the presence of Christ in our midst.

There is often, however, a gulf between belief and practice, between conscience and duty. So what constitutes a practical and appropriate church response to abuse and family violence? How can pastors prepare themselves and their congregations in facing abuse and family violence in their midst?

We believe the gospel calls the church to:

- **Affirm the dignity and worth of each human being and decry all forms of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and family violence.** In too many circles a woman's value is still based upon her marriageability and fertility. Christians affirm that the Creator and the Redeemer has placed inestimable worth on every individual not on the basis of who we are or anything we have or have not done, but on the basis of who Jesus is and what He has done. Seventh-day Adventists, fulfilling their call to herald the message of the three angels of Revelation, cannot call the world to worship Jesus as Creator and Redeemer without striking this higher note for women and children, who count for little in the societies around them, but are precious in His sight.
- **Identify abuse and violent behaviours for what they are.** There are four basic types of abuse and family violence: physical, sexual, and psychological, assault and attacks against pets and property. Pastors will need to educate many members regarding the kinds of specific behaviours and attitudes that constitute abuse, particularly when these behaviours and attitudes are commonly accepted or culturally prevalent.
- **Recognise the global extent of this problem and the serious, long-term effects upon the lives of all involved.** The pain experienced by persons who are deceived, exploited, and betrayed by someone they should have been able to trust for love and nurturance defies expression.

Without doubt, surviving family abuse is a costly phenomena. It consumes a significant amount of energy on the part of individuals in Adventist pews and in the communities around as they attempt to deal with the issue. This energy is needed to enjoy fully relationships among family members and friends. It is energy no longer available for service in the name of Christ.

- **Break the silence and create an atmosphere in which secrets can be told and help can be found.** The first step in both prevention and intervention is for your local church to acknowledge the hard facts. Churches in which abuse and family violence are addressed openly— in sermons, seminars, in the newsletter, on the bulletin board, through cooperative community efforts to protect survivors and strengthen families in a preventive mode, etc.—are churches in which abusive families can find the courage to tell someone about their situations and find help.
- **Identify the full range of resources available and assist victims, abusers, and their families in accessing these resources.** To deal effectively with abuse and domestic violence requires the utilisation of the full range of services available through preventive education, the professional

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services provided by mental health specialists and social agencies, and support networks. While the pastor and the church play an important support role in assisting abuse victims and their families, unless pastors are licensed as mental health professionals he or she is ill-equipped to deal with the treatment needs. Referral is the only responsible course of action.

Pastors should acquaint themselves with the network of services available within the congregation and the surrounding community. Professionals in your congregation may be able to help locate such resources. Talk to pastors of other churches in your community to find out to whom they refer and the services they have found helpful to their members.

Making your parishioners aware of these services helps abusive families with information as to where to seek help. Many will also need your help to access these services. Some need courage to face what for them is an intimidating situation. Others will need your help to verbalise their situation to a stranger. Still others will need very practical help, such as child care, transportation, etc.

- **Hold abusers accountable for their actions.** A pastor's first responsibility is to protect the victim and her children from further abuse and violence. Making a report to law enforcement is, in many places, the legal responsibility of the pastor. Professionals who treat abuse and family violence, even abusers who have been successfully rehabilitated, strongly advise that pastors and church communities resist the temptation to move too quickly in urging forgiveness and reconciliation in abusive families. Abusers must be led to take full responsibility for what they have done, to make restitution in every way possible for the damage they have created, and to seek treatment that can result in changed attitudes and behaviour. Only after this step has been taken, is it safe to open the possibilities for forgiveness and new beginnings.

- **Address the spiritual questions confronting abused persons.** It is common for victims of abuse and family violence to feel that God has abandoned them, to blame themselves for creating the situation in which they find themselves, and to wonder if God can ever forgive them for the disruption in their families. Pastors can do much to change the perception that victims are to blame for their circumstances. Caring church members can provide reassurance, encouragement, and practical help at this time of deep distress.

- **Strengthen families.** Pastors can do much to slow the forces of abuse and family violence by becoming intentional about strengthening families through marriage enrichment, parent education, and the development of a broad spectrum of relational skills.



see the full article at [www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1995/11/family-violence-a-christian-response](http://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1995/11/family-violence-a-christian-response)



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ASNA PRESENTS

## FOR HIS GLORY

FREE MUSICAL ANNUAL FUNDRAISING & AWARENESS CONCERT

DOORS OPEN at 7.00pm for 7.30pm start **13 SEPT 2014**

**ARTISTES INCLUDE**  
 Reading Community Gospel Choir, Promise Children's Choir, South West London Ghana SDA Choir, Resurrection, Adam Thompson & many more...

**VENUE**  
 Wesley Methodist Church  
 Queens Rd. Reading, RG1 4BW.

Free-will collection will be taken during intermission. Food and Disability Awareness Resources on sale. Parking in NCP car park very close by. Parking for those using Wheelchairs on-site. BSL interpretation available.

Contact: Helen Batten  
 07768 298 297 or info@asna.info

**Donations to ASNA Bank Account**  
 Bank: Lloyds Bank Sort Code: 309153 Account Number: 03151450  
 or Cheques to ASNA Office, Howbery Park, Benson Lane, Oxon. OX10 8BA.

The SEC Family Ministry  
 Marriage Retreat

## Intimate Allies

Guarding the Foundations of Marital Love

An exploration of practical biblical principles to enhance spiritual, emotional and physical intimacy

**19th - 21st September 2014**  
 Venue: Latimer Place, Latimer, Chesham, Buckinghamshire, HP5 1UG

Cost: £240 per couple (subsidies and split payments available for early booking)

Presenters: Les & Irma Ackie

Register at [secadventist.com/events](http://secadventist.com/events) or call Anna McLarty on 01923 232 728

**why...** *God needs praying Mothers...*

do we find it difficult to pray?  
 do we worry and fret?  
 are we anxious?  
 do we take so long to understand our place of prayer?  
*Rachel Weaver*

**SATURDAY 1<sup>ST</sup> NOV 2014**  
**STARTS 9.45am prompt!**

Parliament Hill School  
 140 Highgate Road  
 London NW5 1RL

*God is waiting on you to build a Hedge around your children. Will you take up the challenge?*

Hallelujah KidzPraise is inviting all Mothers and Mothers-in-Waiting! Learn to pray now! Come! Join the hundreds of mothers praying for their seeds. There will be **great music, prayer sessions, prayer school** and lots more!..

For more information please contact: **Barbara Lawrence** on 07940 007331 or **Toyin Aworinde** on 07533793253

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new weekly children's  
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with singing, talks,  
challenges, cartoons  
and much more

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KidsPoint is a production by BrixKidz (Brixton Seventh-day Adventist Church Children's Ministries Department)

hallelujah  
**KidzPraise**  
DAY OF  
**FELLOWSHIP**  
SAT 23 MAY 2015

**WATFORD COLOSSEUM**  
Rickmansworth Road  
Watford WD17 3JN  
Starts 10am

ADMISSION: FREE!  
**WWW.KIDZPRAISE.CO.UK**



**For Single and Shared-Parenting  
Mums and Dads**



The Loop  
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theloopyfc@gmail.com

Email to gain access the  
WhatsApp Group

Like us on Facebook, Follow us on Twitter!



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## Useful Links

AdventSource  
[www.adventsource.org/](http://www.adventsource.org/)

NAD Adventist Singles Ministry  
[www.adventistsingleadultministries.org/](http://www.adventistsingleadultministries.org/)

Official SDA Church Statements  
<http://www.adventist.org/information/official-statements/>

End It Now - Adventists Say No to Violence Against Women  
<http://www.enditnow.org/>

F.O.C.U.S. Singles Ministries  
<http://www.focusnyc.org/default.aspx?ad=0>

Mankind Initiative - Support for Male Victims of Domestic Abuse  
[www.mankind.org.uk/](http://www.mankind.org.uk/)

Raising Voices - Preventing Violence Against Women & Children  
<http://raisingvoices.org/>

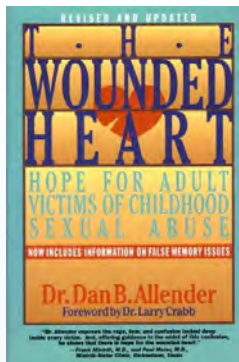
Refuge - For women & children Against Domestic Violence  
<http://refuge.org.uk/>

Respect - For Perpetrators of Domestic Violence  
<http://respect.uk.net/>

Real Family Talk  
[realfamilytalk.hopetv.org/](http://realfamilytalk.hopetv.org/)

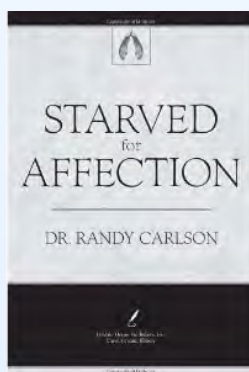
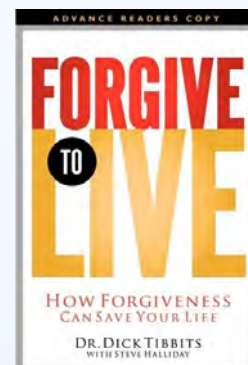
Sounds of Encouragement  
[www.soencouragement.org/](http://www.soencouragement.org/)

## Recommended Reading



**The Wounded Heart.** Sexual abuse not only destroys trust, relationships, and dreams, it also causes grief, stress, and feelings of guilt and shame. Dan Allender examines the issues surrounding sexual abuse while looking to God for restoration and peace. This book still contains the powerful message of the gospel applied to the mess and pain of broken relationships, and as such, has the power to change lives.

**Forgive to Live.** According to Dr Dick Tibbits, everyone has a 'grievance story'. We've all been hurt or rejected by someone who mattered to us. It's a scientific fact that anger kills-spiritually, emotionally, relationally and physically. Unfortunately, while most of us have been told to forgive, we've never been told how or why to forgive. Dr Tibbits teaches that understanding and practicing forgiveness can literally save our life!



Love is the main component that binds a marriage together, but it doesn't end there. Sharing affection allows a couple to perceive that love. In **Starved for Affection**, Dr Randy Carlson teaches why affection is so important and how to develop that essential, active ingredient in marriage: the affection that demonstrates love for each other and makes a marriage the rich experience every couple craves.

**Cornerstone**  
Counselling Service

**0207 723 8050**  
or [ccs@secadventist.org.uk](mailto: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

## Contact Us

SEC Family Ministries  
25 St John's Road  
Watford WD17 1PZ  
[fm@secadventist.org.uk](mailto:fm@secadventist.org.uk)

Pr Les Ackie, Director:  
01923 656 510  
[lackie@secadventist.org.uk](mailto:lackie@secadventist.org.uk)  
Anna McLarty, Secretary:  
01923 656 530  
[amclarty@secadventist.org.uk](mailto:amclarty@secadventist.org.uk)