



# SEC Family

Connecting Lives for Eternal Living

A Publication of the South England Conference Family Ministry Department

## In this issue:

**Divorce is Not the Answer**

**Growing Happy Children**

**Upcoming Events**

**Recommended Reading**

## Divorce is Not The Answer

Pr Les Ackie

Research indicates that the divorce rate among Christian couples is more or less on a par with the divorce rate in society in general, and that Christian couples are just as likely to divorce as non-Christian couples. Yet, Malachi 2:16 states, “For the LORD God of Israel says that He hates divorce . . .” God finds divorce a detestable thing because no-one knows more than Him, the emotional devastation it creates in the lives of His children.

Couples divorce when they lose all hope that their relationship can change for the better. The prospect of divorce often holds hope for a release from pain and the promise of a more fulfilling life alone or with a new partner. However, despite the fact that ‘Happy Divorce’ parties are becoming more fashionable, many couples confess that divorce rarely fulfils their hopes for future happiness. The fact that the divorce rate is generally higher in second marriages than for first marriages is evidence that divorce is most often not the answer.

Few adults anticipate accurately what lies ahead when they decide to divorce. Life is almost always more difficult and more complicated than they expect. While divorce proceedings provide for legal separation, it cannot heal the emotional wounds couples often inflict upon each other. Spouses often believe that divorce will put a stop to conflict, however this is frequently not the case, especially where children are involved. It is not uncommon that years of physical separation fail to free these couples from the intense emotional connection inherent in the marriage bond.

Divorce often becomes an attractive prospect when couples fail to take responsibility for their own emotional well-being. Many couples labour under the misconception that it is their spouse’s responsibility to make them happy. Paul counsels, “Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband” (Ephesians 5:33). Spouses are responsible to love each other. While a husband and wife may be intentional about doing the things which may lead to each other’s happiness, they are not responsible to make each other happy.

Blaming a spouse for marital unhappiness is easy to do. It becomes easier when friends and relatives feed into this mindset. Once an individual makes a spouse responsible for their unhappiness, the next logical



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conclusion is that separating from that spouse will get rid of the problem and lead to happiness. An abundance of evidence demonstrates that this rationale is often proved false. While marriage may not be a bed of roses, loneliness, along with all the other challenges divorce presents, can be just as debilitating. Many people find themselves craving for the very stability they left behind. Research shows that even ten years after their divorce, many people still had not completely recovered from the trauma. Divorce may remove an individual from the immediate source of conflict and pain, but it also creates new problems related to developing new relationships, decreased standard of living, access to children, along with the inevitable grief process which accompanies all significant loss. New relationships not only have to cope with the natural growing pains which all healthy relationships experience, but they must also deal with the emotional baggage carried over from the previous marriage. Not only do 60% of second marriages end in divorce, but the more marriages an individual has, the greater the likelihood of divorce.



The fallout from marital breakdown has its most devastating effect on the children of divorced parents. Marriage break down removes the very foundation of a child's sense of safety and protection. They must watch their family tear apart with no say in the matter. Parents move away, children may be uprooted from their familiar surroundings, relationships with grandparents and other relatives may be severed, and educational achievement often suffers. All the while they must cope with their own grief process. The trauma of divorce is compounded when couples continue an acrimonious relationship even after they have separated.

Judith Wallerstein's long-term study of divorced couples has revealed that divorce hurts children of all ages. In order to make peace with their decision to separate, parents will often overestimate their children's resilience in coping with divorce. Wallerstein's study demonstrates that while children learn to cope with divorce, the effects take their greatest toll in adulthood. Adult children of divorce often feel that their relationships are doomed, seek to avoid conflict, and fear commitment. Failure in their loving relationships often seems to them preordained, even when things are going smoothly.

The question is often asked, "Should couples stay together for the sake of their children?" The inherent problem with this question is the underlying assumption that a couple will remain unhappy together to avoid breaking up the family unit. Notwithstanding evidence, which indicates that children may do better in unhappy homes than in a divorced family, the most appropriate answer to the question is that couples should stay happy together for the sake of the children. Especially where there are children involved, couples considering divorce owe it to themselves, their children, and their extended family to make themselves aware of the potential long-term consequences of the choices they are making.

As much as He hates divorce, even God himself, reluctantly allows for the dissolution of a marriage in certain restricted circumstances. However, when Jesus was debating with the Pharisees, he stated that divorce was permitted because of the hardness of men's hearts (Matthew 19:8). Marriage is designed to be a covenant relationship between a husband, a wife and God. Marriages cannot hope to fulfil God's purpose unless spouses are willing to allow His grace to flow through them to each other. Elizabeth Achtemeier makes the sobering comment that, "By the way we conduct our marriages, we proclaim that Jesus Christ has won the victory over sin in the marital sphere too, or we confess that He is powerless to reconcile husband and wife, parents and children, old folks and youth" (*The Committed Marriage*, 107-108).

As a community of believers we must create a safe environment for couples to reach out for help before it is too late. Couples facing the trauma of divorce need support not condemnation. They need healing not judgement. God's answer to a troubled marriage is a graceful heart, a forgiving spirit and a willingness to live out the true meaning of commitment to the marital covenant. Divorce is not the answer.

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## Growing Happy Children

Karen Holford



### Helping children manage their difficult emotions

If you ask parents what they most want for their children they'll usually say that they want them to be healthy and happy. Just as there are some simple basic principles for nurturing healthy children, there are also some simple, basic principles for nurturing their happiness. Happy children are also more likely to do well in school and to be healthy, well-behaved, loving, and kind.

Research is helping us to understand the importance of happiness in learning - happier students are more likely to believe they can learn new things, be creative and do better in their studies. Happier people are more likely to get married, stay married and have happy families. Happy people are more likely to do well at their jobs and help others. And happiness is an important part of a healthy Christian life. Paul was a wise psychologist when he told the Philippians to rejoice in all things and to focus on positive thoughts (Phil. 4:4-8).

### Soothing and managing difficult emotions

In order to help children experience happy and healthy emotions, we first need to soothe their sad and hurting emotions. Sad and hurting emotions are things like anger, contempt, disgust, embarrassment, fear, frustration, guilt, sadness, shame and stress.

- Be a good role model and show your child how you manage your own painful emotions. Talk about what you're feeling, why you're feeling that way, and what you are doing to manage the feeling. "I'm really sad because someone was unkind to me at work, and that hurts. But I am also remembering how kind most of the people are and I'm going to bake a cake for everyone to share tomorrow."
- It's very hard for children to deal with emotions they can't name. Help them by using feeling words to describe what they might be experiencing. "You must be so sad and disappointed that David wasn't able to come and play today because he was sick." When they can use words to tell you how they feel, they are less likely to show their distress by having a tantrum or sulking.
- Encourage your children to talk about their feelings. If they look worried or distressed, invite them to talk. Be ready to spend time with them, listening to them, accepting their feelings and letting them know you understand. Once they feel understood by you they will find it easier to sort out their feelings and find better ways to manage them.
- Acknowledge when your children manage their emotions well, and let them know you've noticed how brave they've been in a scary situation. This encourages them and lets them know when they're getting it right.
- However understandable a child's difficult emotions might be, let them know when their behaviour is inappropriate, and help them to find different ways to respond. "I know you're angry that Tom broke your toy, but it's not ok to hit him. Let's go for a run to let off some steam instead!"
- Teach children to distract themselves when something is bothering them. Help them to make a 'busy box' full of interesting things to explore, or to choose a song they can sing. In 'The Sound of Music' Maria does this - she makes up the song 'My Favorite Things' to distract herself when she feels scared. Turn comforting Bible verses into songs for them to sing to themselves, even silently, when they feel sad and afraid, etc.
- Whatever you do, don't dismiss their painful feelings or tease them for being scared, etc. Painful feelings are a normal response to a sinful world, but the feelings are not sinful. God also feels sadness, anger, frustration and disgust.
- Children need their parents to be sad with them when they're sad (Romans 12:15) and to comfort their painful feelings just as God comforts us in our distress (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

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# SEC FAMILY

National Annual **Asna**  
Adventist Special Needs Association

## Respite Family Weekend

*Connecting people, Changing Lives*

*Aim of event: To bring people living with disabilities together for peer support, spiritual support and respite from caring.*

Speaker: **Pastor Leslie Ackie**

**26<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> April 2013 at WYBOSTON LAKES**

Great North Road, Wyboston, Bedfordshire MK44 3AL

Standard price **£85** | ASNA members **£80**

Up to 15yrs **£30** | Children with disabilities 0-15yrs **FREE**

price includes accommodation, resources and all meals  
activities for children include zip wire, spider mountain, segways and more

*Weekend provides opportunity for further training for Disability Ministry Coordinators in the BUC*



www.asna.org.uk



## Jesus in the Family

*Designed for Families Focused on Children*

Next Training, 9-12 May, 2013  
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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 or Email: [hhaworth@adventist.org.uk](mailto:hhaworth@adventist.org.uk)

[www.adventistinfo.org.uk/department/childrenministries.php](http://www.adventistinfo.org.uk/department/childrenministries.php)

## Abundant Relationship COUPLES SUMMIT 17 May-19 May 2013

THEME

### Rekindle the Spark

PRESENTED BY

Barrington Brennen

TOPICS

*Principles of Relationships.*

*Kissing wont help Honey-When Love Hurts*

*When Division makes no Provision*

*Talk so your partner will listen and listen so your partner will talk.*

*Outercourse Before Intercourse.*

*Forgive me baby- Healing Moments.*

*Take you, Honey, One More Time  
Renewal of Vows*



VENUE

Devere Venue, Theobolds Park, Lieutenant Ellis Way, Cheshunt, Hertfordshire, EN7 5HW



**£135**  
PER PERSON

CONTACTS

Mrs L. Mukwada - 07920850311

Mr S. Chenge - 07720562212

Mr S. Mugari - 07912870005

## Passion & Compassion



Marriage Enrichment Seminar  
May 24-26, 2013



Barrington Brennen  
With Annick Brennen

THE MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT FELLOWSHIP INVITES YOU TO THEIR ANNUAL SEMINAR FOR COUPLES.

GUEST PRESENTERS:  
BARRINGTON BRENNEN WITH  
ANNICK BRENNEN

HOT TOPICS :

- ⇒ "BONE OF MY BONE" (GOD'S PERSON IN MARRIAGE)
- ⇒ "COMPASSIONATE LISTENING" (CONFLICT RESOLUTION, ETC)
- ⇒ "PASSIONATE ROMANCE" (AFFECTION, INTIMACY, ETC)
- ⇒ "BITTER PASSION" (INTIMATE PARTNER ABUSE-DOMESTIC VIOLENCE)



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# SEC FAMILY

**MAKING GOD KNOWN**  
SEC CAMP MEETING 2013



**LAWRENCE DORSEY SNR**  
Commitment Speaker

**ERROL NEMBHARD**  
Power Hour Speaker

**DR CHARLES WESLEY KNIGHT**  
Power Hour (YLC) Youth Speaker

**GARY KRAUSE**  
Adventist Mission GC Speaker

**DR CHIDI NGWABA**  
Lifestyle Doctor Health Speaker  
@drchidi247



**AEOlians**  
Oakwood University

... OTHER SPEAKERS INCLUDE ...  
NATHAN STICKLAND - BUC Youth Director | KIRK THOMAS & PAUL KING BROWN - Teens | PETRAS BAHADUR - Adventist Muslim Relations  
ANTHONY FULLER & ANDREW DAVIS - Juniors | MICHAEL HAMILTON & JANOS KOVACS-BIRO - Personal Ministries

**24-30 JUNE 2013**  
PONTINS PRESTATYN SANDS HOLIDAY PARK, PRESTATYN, DENBIGHSHIRE, NORTH WALES, LL19 7LA

Daily Commitment Messages, Health Plenary Sessions, Power Hour Sessions and Workshops  
For more information please call 01923 232 728 or email: [campmeeting@secadventist.org.uk](mailto:campmeeting@secadventist.org.uk)

 SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

[www.campmeeting.com](http://www.campmeeting.com)

 A supporting ministry sponsored by the  
SEC Family Ministry Department

# SEX AND THE SANCTUARY

Assisting young people to safely navigate the pitfalls of sexual temptation and fall in love with Jesus

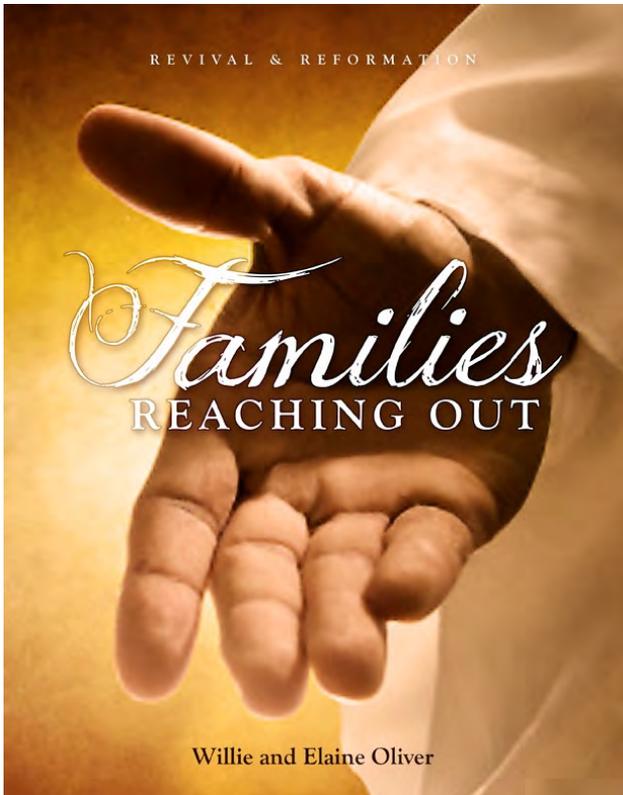


- Sexual Purity Weekend Retreats
- Youth Programmes
- Seminars & Workshops

Ages 13-19

Contact: Isha Prince or Khaya Chiweshe  
[protectingthepassion@gmail.com](mailto:protectingthepassion@gmail.com)

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>

[SINGLESEVENTHDAYADVENTISTS.COM](http://SINGLESEVENTHDAYADVENTISTS.COM)  
[Info@singleseventhdayadventists.com](mailto:Info@singleseventhdayadventists.com)



The brand new FREE A.S.I member official supporting ministry exclusively for baptised single Seventh-day Adventists. Join single Adventists from around the globe in fellowship and perhaps find the person made just for you.

Genesis 2:18

 [Facebook.com/adventistsingles](https://www.facebook.com/adventistsingles)

[Twitter.com/singlesdas](https://twitter.com/singlesdas) 




Download free from  
The Mac App Store

## ADVENTIST FAMILY MINISTRIES Family Worship App

This app provides family worship ideas that are fun, easy, and inspirational for the entire family

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## Useful Links

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

Adventist Parenting -  
[www.adventistparenting.org/](http://www.adventistparenting.org/)

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

BUC Family Ministry-  
[www.adventistinfo.org.uk/](http://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/](http://www.kidsindiscipleship.org/)

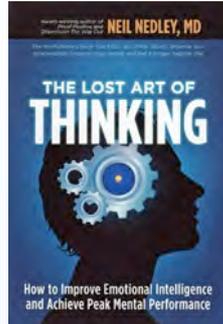
North American Division Family  
Ministry - [family.nadadventist.org](http://family.nadadventist.org)

SEC News -  
[www.secadventist.com/secnews/](http://www.secadventist.com/secnews/)

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

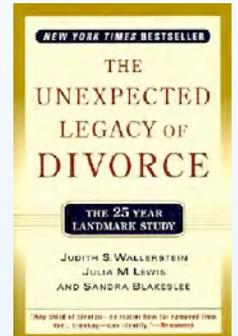
South Pacific Division Family  
Ministry - [http://  
adventist.org.au/family-](http://adventist.org.au/family-)

## Recommended Reading



*The Lost Art of Thinking* is a unique tool that you can use to improve mental performance, emotional intelligence, and life satisfaction. Adventist physician Dr Neil Nedley provides a wealth of information on how to find high levels of motivation, with more energy and better productivity. Develop a high ability to think through complex situations, analyze information accurately, and make correct decisions habitually. Improve your relationships and enjoy a healthy zest for life.

In *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce*, authors Judith Wallerstein, Julia Lewis, and Sandra Blakeslee demonstrate the long-term effects of divorce on children. Both encouraging and thought-provoking, this study shows how we maintain the freedom made possible by divorce while, at the same time, minimizing the damage. Various case studies show that many children of divorce experience a myriad of challenges in their adult relationships.



Many books have been written about how to parent a child effectively, how to become a better parent, and how effective parenting produces better kids. But in *Sacred Parenting*, Gary Thomas, delves into an entirely different reality: how parenting affects the parent. It explores the spiritual dynamics of parenting, and why caring for a child is such an effective discipline in shaping our souls and forming the character of Christ within us.

**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

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