



# SEC Family

Connecting Lives for Eternal Living

A Publication of the South England Conference Family Ministry Department

## In this issue:

Seventh-Gay Adventists?

Upcoming Events

Recommended Reading

## Seventh-Gay Adventists?

Pr Les Ackie

Last year saw the production of a feature-length documentary entitled “Seventh-Gay Adventists,” which explores the spiritual journey of three same-sex couples who wrestle with trying to reconcile their religious and sexual identities. The film seeks to elicit a sympathetic response toward these very ordinary everyday Adventists who just happen to be gay. Having seen the trailer online, it did remind me that in our attempts to defend our moral standards it is possible to lose sight of the fact that we are not just dealing with an issue, but we are dealing with people. People who are often hurting and confused; people who need counsel not condemnation; people who hide behind masks of pretense for fear of vilification and rejection; people who need a safe place to work through their inner turmoil.

Ask yourself this question: 'If a member of my church openly admitted that he or she was struggling with same-sex attraction, how would that individual be received?' I recall sitting in a meeting in which the question was raised regarding how we should relate to those within our church who have a homosexual orientation. I overheard one church elder whisper to another, "Burn them!" Now I am quite sure this does not represent the majority view of church leaders, but it is representative of a disturbing lack of compassion for those who wrestle with this issue.

The well-worn line that ‘God made Adam and Eve not Adam and Steve’ may draw chuckles from an unthinking congregation, but it makes me cringe every time I hear it. I wonder how the young person who is struggling with his or her sexual identity feels when the authority figures in the church use the core of their struggle as an opportunity for cheap jibes. Can we seriously expect them to confide in leaders who make light of their pain? Where then do they go? We have a great emphasis at present regarding our Mission to the Cities, but if we are as successful as we wish to be, there will be people coming through our doors from varying backgrounds. Are we ready to receive them?

Our biblical position on homosexuality is what it is. It’s not going to change. However, what needs to change is how we relate to all people we consider to be living contrary to God’s will. I believe that one of the barriers to a compassionate response is our traditional position that homosexuality is simply a rebellious lifestyle choice. I’m not so sure.



April 2013

# SEC FAMILY

I believe it is too simplistic to just dismiss homosexuality as a choice. Can anybody just choose his or her sexual orientation? When did we choose to be heterosexual? Why would an Adventist Christian consciously choose such an orientation when it is guaranteed to excite opposition? The fact is that we live in a “cursed Earth.” As a result, people can be born with all manner of physical, psychological and physiological anomalies. Mankind is affected by sin on every level including our genetic make-up. Ellen White alludes to this when she refers to “hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil” (*Desire of Ages*, 311). We have to allow for the fact that some people may be born with a predisposition toward homosexuality. Whether homosexuality is genetically influenced, a conscious choice or developmental in origin - or even all three - it is still the product of a fallen human condition.

Homosexual orientation may not be a choice but homosexual behaviour is a choice. A thorough study of the biblical passages that refer to homosexuality shows a condemnation of practice, not orientation. A person’s orientation indicates sexual preference and how an individual may be tempted. However, God does not judge us for how we are tempted. He holds us accountable for the decisions we make, and the behaviours which follow those decisions. The fact that a person may have a predisposition toward homosexuality is not the point. Genetics do not determine morality. The Bible makes it clear that we are all ‘born in sin and shaped in iniquity’ (Psalm 51:5). The fact that we are ‘naturally’ sinful does not legitimise sin, but rather emphasises our need of a Saviour. The argument is often raised that if an individual surrenders completely to God, He will change their orientation. Can God do that? Of course! The God who spoke the world into existence is able to change a person’s sexual orientation, but that does not necessarily mean that He will. Did the Lord have the ability to remove Paul’s ‘thorn in the flesh’? Of course! Did He? No! He simply said, “My grace is sufficient for you” (2 Corinthians 12:9).



To live without the opportunity for legitimate sexual expression is a common experience for both those who experience same-sex attraction while choosing to remain celibate and single heterosexuals who for whatever reason remain single. Living without romance and a legitimate outlet for sexual expression may be considered as a loss for those who desire such relationships. However, such relationships are not the be all and end all of human intimacy. In his excellent book *Beyond Boundaries*, John Townsend makes the point that as a society we have bought into the fallacy generated to a large extent by Hollywood that a sexual relationship trumps every other kind of intimate relationship we can experience. However, this is not necessarily the case. In the end analysis, our primary concern has to be faithfulness to God's will for our lives and if that requires celibacy, then so be it.

In order to respond compassionately, we need to come to terms with our own prejudices. We need to examine our own hearts and ask ourselves whether we truly have the capacity to hate the sin and love the sinner. In His dealings with both the woman at the well (John 4) and the woman caught in adultery (John 8), Jesus demonstrated both love and acceptance while at the same time holding these women accountable for their choices. It is the absence of a compassionate heart that leads to a 'round 'em up and burn 'em up' mentality. It is much easier to take a judgemental view when homosexuality has no face. However, if the church is truly a family, then we need to appreciate that those who are fighting their silent battles are our sons and daughters, our brothers and sisters to whom we owe a duty of care.



It is those who are considered to be the worst of sinners who need the best of grace. In Luke 15:2 the leaders of the church leveled what was intended to be a criticism of Jesus, but it was in fact one of the greatest compliments they could have paid Him. “And the Pharisees and Scribes complained, saying, ‘This Man receives sinners and eats with them.’” Our challenge as a church community is to create a safe place which provides spiritual and emotional support. While we are expected to uphold biblical standards, we are equally required to ‘receive sinners and eat with them’ by demonstrating compassion and grace.

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



# SEC FAMILY

The African Caribbean Society (Wokingham)  
Presents...

Written & directed by Derek Lindo

# Beyond the Boundaries

"When family rules are not enough how far will you go?"  
"A must see for the whole family"

**DATE**  
SATURDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2013  
**TIME:** 7:30PM

**VENUE**  
PARK UNITED REFORMED CHURCH,  
PALMER PARK AVENUE, READING, RG6 1DN

ADMISSION £1  
DONATIONS FREE

For more information and tickets contact:  
Pol-07954 146245 / Derek-07958 430553 / Off-07950 907354

AGS Wokingham  
LOTTERY FUNDED

**KID**  
KIDS IN DISCIPLESHIP

## Jesus in the Family

Designed for Families Focused on Children

Next Training, 9-12 May, 2013  
(Thursday evening through to Sunday afternoon)  
Hayes Conference Centre  
Swanick  
Derbyshire  
DE55 1AU

**EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT  
WHEN BOOKING  
BEFORE 8 MARCH!**

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 872251 or Email: hhaworth@adventist.org.uk  
www.adventistinfo.org.uk/department/childrensministries.php

SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

## 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

**CONTACTS**  
Mrs L. Mukwada - 07920850311  
Mr S. Chenge - 07720562212  
Mr S. Mugari - 07912870005

**£135 PER PERSON**

## Passion & Compassion

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

**GUEST PRESENTERS:**  
BARRINGTON BRENNEN WITH ANNICK BRENNEN

Marriage Enrichment Seminar  
May 24-26 2013

**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)

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:  
PETERSON SENTENGA,  
TEL: + 00.44(0)118 376 7575  
MOBILE: + 00.44(0)791 632 8316

**VENUE:**  
DE VERE HOTEL, STAVERTON PARK,  
DAVENTRY, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

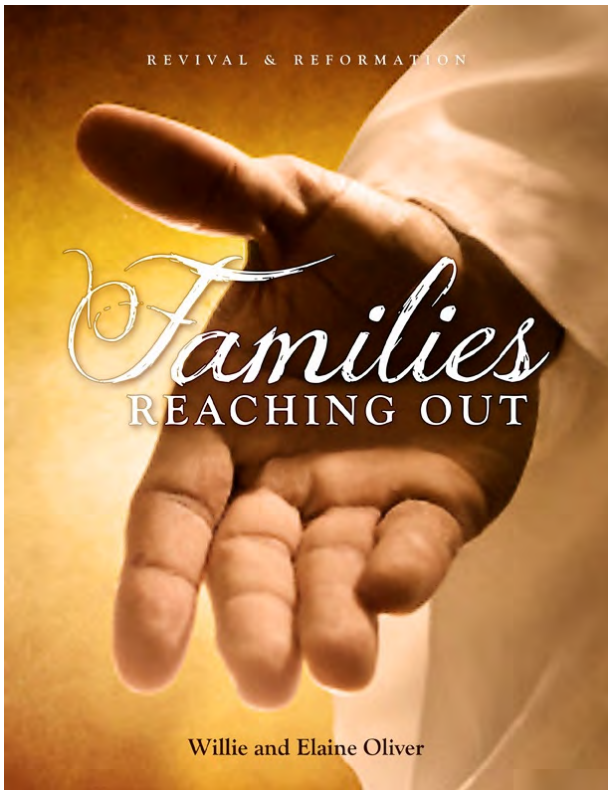
**DE VERE venues**  
Staverton Park

**COST £250.00**  
LIMITED SPACE AVAILABLE

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



# SEC FAMILY



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  
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  
Twitter.com/singlesdas



## FAMILY WORSHIP APP

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

**NO RECOURSE TO PUBLIC FUNDS**  
**NRPF**  
SEMINAR

**Be.Still.Ministries presents No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) Families and Current Changes in Immigration Law**

This seminar is for anyone who is or knows someone subject to immigration control. This seminar will provide clear and accurate information as well as raising awareness of NRPF. The seminar seeks to enable and empower individuals, community and churches to play their part.

**The Seminars will focus on:**

- \* Immigration Law and current changes
- \* Home Office Applications and prices
- \* UKBA protocols re deportation
- \* Benefits/ Housing
- \* Social Services
- \* The Church
- \* Health Services
- \* Immigration solicitors (what you should know)
- \* Employment/Volunteering and Education
- \* The Needs of NRPF Families

If you would like this FREE seminar to be held at your Church, Community Centre or Children's Centre, please do not hesitate to contact:  
**SARAH BASHORUN (DipSW/HE, BSc)**  
on 07507994541 or email [be.still.ministries@gmail.com](mailto:be.still.ministries@gmail.com)

Please be advised that seminars will last approximately 2 hours. For other available workshops and seminars please enquire via email.

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)

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

## 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/)

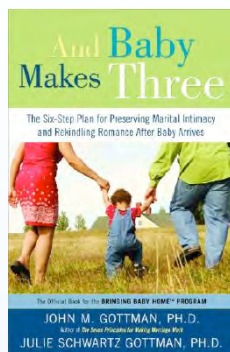
North American Division Family  
Ministry - [family.nadadventist.org](http://family.nadadventist.org)

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)

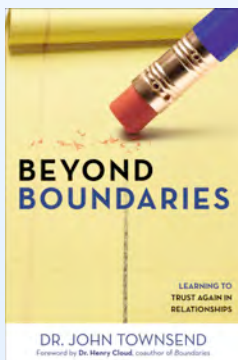
South Pacific Division Family  
Ministry - [http://  
adventist.org.au/family-](http://adventist.org.au/family-)

## Recommended Reading



In *And Baby Makes Three*, John Gottman and Julie Schwartz Gottman teach couples the skills needed to maintain healthy marriages, so partners can avoid the pitfalls of parenthood by, focusing on intimacy and romance; replacing an atmosphere of criticism and irritability with one of appreciation; preventing postpartum depression; creating a home environment that nurtures physical, emotional, and mental health, as well as the cognitive and behavioral development for your baby.

In *Love is A Decision*, family counselor and best-selling author Gary Smalley, with John Trent, share how to guide your marriage for a lifetime by learning how to make your spouse feel truly honored, keep courtship alive, rebuild trust, and become best friends with your family. According to Smalley, good marriages are no accident. And deciding to love-in the practical ways outlined here-can result in relationships that are tougher than tough times.



*Beyond Boundaries* is an excellent follow up to the classic *Boundaries* which established the need for healthy protective boundaries. This volume teaches how to open the heart and learn to trust again. Taking the reader beyond the pain of the past, Dr. John Townsend offers practical tools to help re-establish closeness with those who have caused pain, recognize true change, move past relational pain, and create a safe environment in which trust can thrive once more.

**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  
**Hope CHANNEL**

## 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)