



August 2014

SEC Family

Connecting Lives for Eternal Living

A Publication of the South England Conference Family Ministry Department

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What About Us? A Plea for Single Adult Ministry

Pr Les Ackie

We have no official statistics to prove the fact, but it's quite likely that unmarried individuals make up the majority of the membership in the British Union. However, when programming for marriage and families is provided, the heartfelt plea often follows from many single adults, "What about us?" If we are honest with ourselves, for far too long, we have neglected to address the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of our single members. Single adults are often conspicuous by their absence in the planning of family ministry days that fail to be inclusive of a significant proportion of the family of God. While such neglect is rarely intentional, its impact is felt nonetheless.

Since its inception the Adventist church has always had an uneasy relationship with single adult ministry. We still even struggle to find the most appropriate terminology to describe unmarried people that does not carry negative connotations. Should it be 'single', 'single adults', 'unattached' etc? The issue of living single is rarely addressed from our pulpits, either through oversight, lack of interest or for fear of causing offence. Our uneasiness is probably compounded by the fact that we live in a media driven culture that promotes couple attachments and views single status as a sign of social inadequacy. In spite of our Christian ethos, this erroneous attitude often permeates our own thinking. It is not unusual for single adults in church to avoid specific singles ministry events and programming simply because they do not wish to be 'highlighted' as single.

We struggle to come to an understanding of what actually constitutes single adult ministry. If we as a church had vibrant, relevant singles ministries functioning in our local churches, what would they look like? What does a singles ministry provide that existing ministries cannot? Where singles ministry does exist, it is often a 'tag on' to the more 'legitimate' ministries to families. Yet, the benefit of a vibrant ministry to single adults is the creation of a culture that values single people and reiterates the point that singleness is not a second-class status. This goal is aided when leaders preach and teach positively about singleness. Churches should also be proactive about placing single people in positions of responsibility based on their legitimate gifts and abilities. Singles ministry should avoid segregating single people but rather seek to integrate them into the life of the church.

Ministry to single adults has always been dogged with erroneous ideas about the purpose it should fulfil. Some time ago I was asked the following question in a Q & A session at one of our local churches. "What is the South England Conference doing to help single people find partners?" The question caused some amusement in the congregation and my immediate response was to make it clear that the South England Conference is not a dating agency. My reply was not intended to flippantly ignore the desire of some single adults to find romantic partners, or to dismiss the

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

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is a whole number

legitimate role that dating agencies have (see singleseventhdayadventists.com). On reflection, it was a knee-jerk response to a question for which I didn't really have a more substantive response. I still do not believe it is the role of the church leadership to assume the role of matchmaker. However, I do believe that we should encourage programming that assists single adults to cultivate spiritual, emotional, physical and intellectual health. One of the potential by-products of such personal development may be the formation of romantic partnership where this is desired and appropriate. In order to encourage healthy opposite sex interactions, churches should be proactive about creating contexts in which single people can socialise.

We should not underestimate the importance of Christian fellowship for growth and retention of members. We all crave community and research indicates that those who remain committed to church attendance and participation must have at least 5-7 individuals in attendance with whom they connect on more than a superficial level.

In our planning, we must be cognisant of the fact that ministry to single adults does not address a homogenous group of people who all have the same needs and aspirations. Single people are not a generic mass. As in every aspect of church ministry single adults come in all shapes and sizes. While there may be many commonalities, the needs of a single mother may differ widely from a person who has experienced separation; divorce; bereavement; those who desire a relationship, yet don't have the opportunity; and those who are intentional about remaining single. Whatever the 'category' single adults fall into, they often have a natural desire for recognition, affirmation and validation.

Singles ministry should not simply constitute ministry to single adults but also ministry by single adults. Ephesians 4:11-13 emphasises the fact that the role of church leaders is to 'equip members for the work of ministry.' We must therefore create opportunities to serve together. Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 7 makes it clear that the church actually needs unmarried adults who are committed to the work of the Lord. It is however, vitally important that the church does not presume upon the availability of their single members. While single people must take personal responsibility to set healthy boundaries for themselves, the church must also safeguard them from the dangers of overcommitment and burnout. So, what does an effective single adult ministry look like? This is a question that each local church has to answer for themselves. There can never be any 'one size fits all' ministry, but every ministry needs to be tailored to the needs of each congregation.



Any effective ministry begins with the recognition of a need and a willingness to address that need. The general purpose of ministry to single adults is reflected in the vision statement formulated by Dennis Franck, author of *Reaching Single Adults: An Essential Guide for Ministry*. It reads, "Single Life Ministries exists to build single adults who are whole spiritually, socially, intellectually and relationally to achieve their God-given potential." Similarly, the North American Division Adventist Single Adults Ministry (ASAM) has as its mission statement, "Reaching and empowering single adults to create Christ-centred safe places for fellowship, nurture and service" (adventistsingleadultministries.org).

The more emphasis we as church leaders can focus on these holistic goals, the more we can dispel false perceptions about single adult ministries and remove the false stigma that being a single adult is akin to having an affliction that elicits a "poor you" response from those 'blessed' with partners. The overarching purpose in ministry to single adults is to create opportunities to encourage, inspire, equip and empower valued individuals to experience the "abundant life" that Jesus Christ has made available to each one of us (John 10:10).

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

SOLOFEST 2014



Free to be!

Workshop Hosts: Layne & Petrian

Workshop Hosts: Hilton Samuels & Pastor Leslie Ackie

Guest Speaker: Clarence Jackson

Featuring Mayday Ministries

Sabbath 16th August 2014 @ 9:30am

Venue: Balham SDA Church, 83 Elmfield Road, Balham, London SW17 8ED

Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed. John 8:36

The 4th Annual Day of Fellowship for the Unattached

Fellowship Lunch Provided

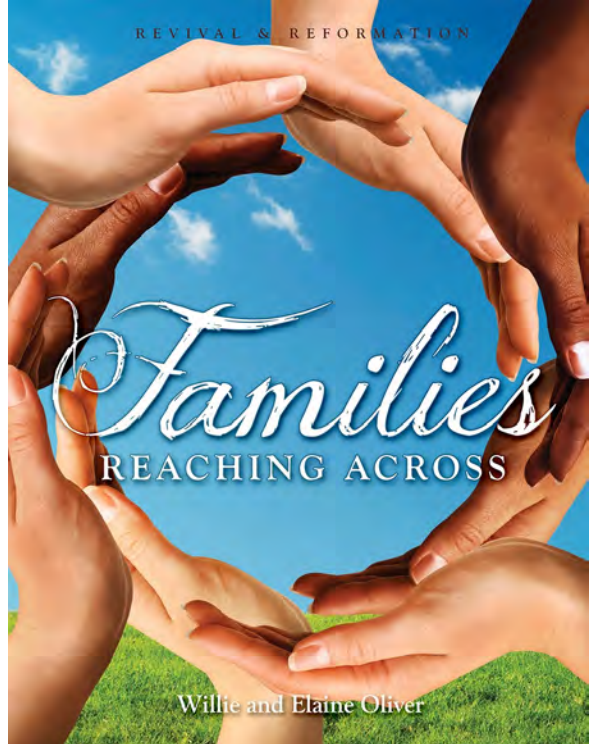


Followed by THE LITE LOUNGE at 8:30pm

Sponsored by the South England conference of Seventh Day Adventists

For further info call 07921 992 296

REVIVAL & REFORMATION



Families

REACHING ACROSS

Willie and Elaine Oliver

Family Togetherness Week 7-13 September

Download the Family Ministry Planbook from <http://family.adventist.org/revival-and-reformation-families-reaching-up.html>

Mum's In Action presents...

"UNITY IN THE COMMUNITY" FAMILY FUN DAY

ADMISSION FREE!



WHEN? SUN 24TH AUG 2014 12noon - 6pm

OPEN AIR CONCERT! Stanborough Park School Grounds Garston, Watford, WD25 9JT (entrance Cedar Wood Drive)

Come and join in the FUN with these ACTIVITIES


- * Tug-o-war
- * Strong man/woman competition
- * Sandbag race
- * Face painting
- * Children's activity corner
- * Football shoot out and games
- * Bouncy castles/slides
- * Acrobat/jugglers
- * Children's fair ground rides
- * FREE blood pressure and cholesterol testing
- * Beauty treatments
- * Bric-a-brac
- * Diverse cultural cuisine
- * Crime prevention
- * Open air concert
- * Modern dancers
- * Home and handmade cakes
- * Variety of all sorts stalls
- * Ice cream/Candy floss/Popcorn
- * Hair braiding
- and much more!!

If you would like a stall on the day, or for more information, please call Barbara on 07940 007 331 or Andre on 07956 264 980

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 or call Anna McLarty on 01923 232 728



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

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.

KIDSPoINT



KidsPoint - your new Friday night treat
 You do not want to miss it!

tune in at: www.brixkidz.org/kidspoint



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

follow us /BrixKidz



KidsPoint is a production by BrixKidz (Bristol 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



THE SEVEN CAMPAIGN

www.thesevencampaign.com

STOP CHILD ABUSE NOW

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



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

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!..

STARTS
9.45am
prompt!

**SATURDAY
1ST NOV
2014**

**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?*

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

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

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



Useful Links

AdventSource - www.adventsource.org/

Adventist Parenting - www.adventistparenting.com

Adventist Special Needs Association - www.asna.info/

BUC Family Ministry- adventist.org.uk/who-we-are/departments/family-ministries

The Ellen G. White Estate - www.whiteestate.org/

GC Family Ministry - family.adventist.org

Hope Channel - www.hopetv.org

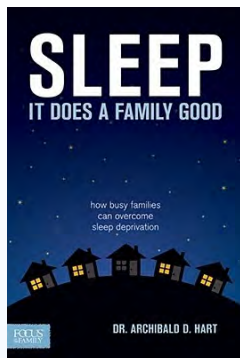
Kids in Discipleship - www.kidsindiscipleship.org/

North American Division Family Ministry - family.nadadventist.org

SEC Family Ministries secadventist.org.uk/who-we-are/departments/family-ministries

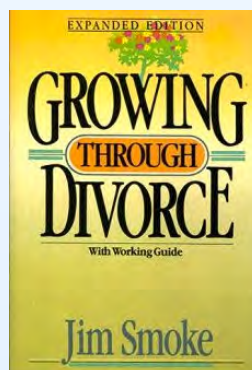
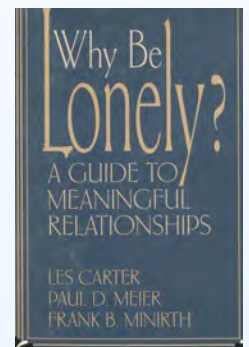
South Pacific Division Family Ministry - www.adventist.org.au/family-ministries

Recommended Reading



People today are sleep-deprived, and nowhere are the negative effects felt more acutely than in families. Most parents realise that their families aren't getting enough sleep, though they likely don't understand how serious the problem is and need help finding a solution. In *Sleep* Dr Archibald Hart explores why sleep is so important, what happens when family members are chronically sleep deprived, and how families can start developing healthy sleep habits.

In *Why Be Lonely*, Drs Carter, Meier, and Minirth address a topic with which many struggle, yet is not often discussed. This book defines what constitutes loneliness and examines the causes and consequences. The authors then address biblical principles for overcoming loneliness and cultivating meaningful relationships.



Growing Through Divorce. Forced to accept drastic changes, make lifestyle-altering decisions, and develop new coping skills, many people going through divorce are left with little hope for the future and even less energy for daily living. Jim Smoke gives wise counsel and step-by-step guidance for anyone experiencing divorce, offering the rediscovery of hope and joy.

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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