



SEC Family

Connecting Lives for Eternal Living

A Publication of the South England Conference Family Ministry Department

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Guardians of a Stolen Portrait

Isha Prince, co-presenter of Sex and the Sanctuary

The Mona Lisa is widely recognized as the most famous painting in the history of art. It has become so famous because there is something in that portrait that we cannot quite understand. There is a mystery that surrounds it, in the way that she smiles, the anonymity in her eyes, the manner in which she simply sits there. There is something about her that elicits curiosity and draws the admirer to seek to uncover that mystery. In 1911, however the Mona Lisa was stolen! The guard on duty turned the corner where the portrait had hung for 5 years and in place of the world class painting he found only four iron pegs. He conferred with the other guards on duty and together they concluded that the painting must be with photographers for marketing purposes. Consequently, they did nothing. The greatest picture in the world had been stolen and those entrusted with its care - did nothing!

If you have ever heard the phrase 'yada, yada, yada' before, you will know that it means 'blah, blah, blah' or 'boring, boring, boring'! Yet I have discovered that this word is not as boring as it sounds. In Genesis 4:1 the Bible says 'Adam knew Eve his wife and she conceived and bare Cain'. This was quite literally a match made in heaven. You can imagine Adam's face as this perfect woman, fresh from the creator's hand, opened her eyes for the first time to discover that she was made especially for him. This was the first love story in the history of the world and all the Bible says is Adam knew Eve! If we look up the Hebrew word for 'know' in this context, we find that word is Yada! It means 'to know, to recognize, to understand, to respect'. How completely different to the image of sex that we are constantly bombarded with today! We are relentlessly fed a message through the media that all sex is the same, that what we see in Hollywood, Hollyoaks and Eastenders is similar to the union that God intends us to have with our spouses. Yet His plan is so much bigger than this.

God's intention for 'yada' is so big that He has yet another use for this word in the Old Testament and it's Greek counterpart is used right through to Revelation. So we know that 'Yada' is used in the context of a husband and wife being in a sexual relationship, however the word is also used nearly 900 times in the Old Testament for someone being in deep fellowship with God. It is as though God looked down on the earth and said to Himself 'how can I let these people know just how intensely passionate I am about them?' then He chose the ultimate human



August 2012

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

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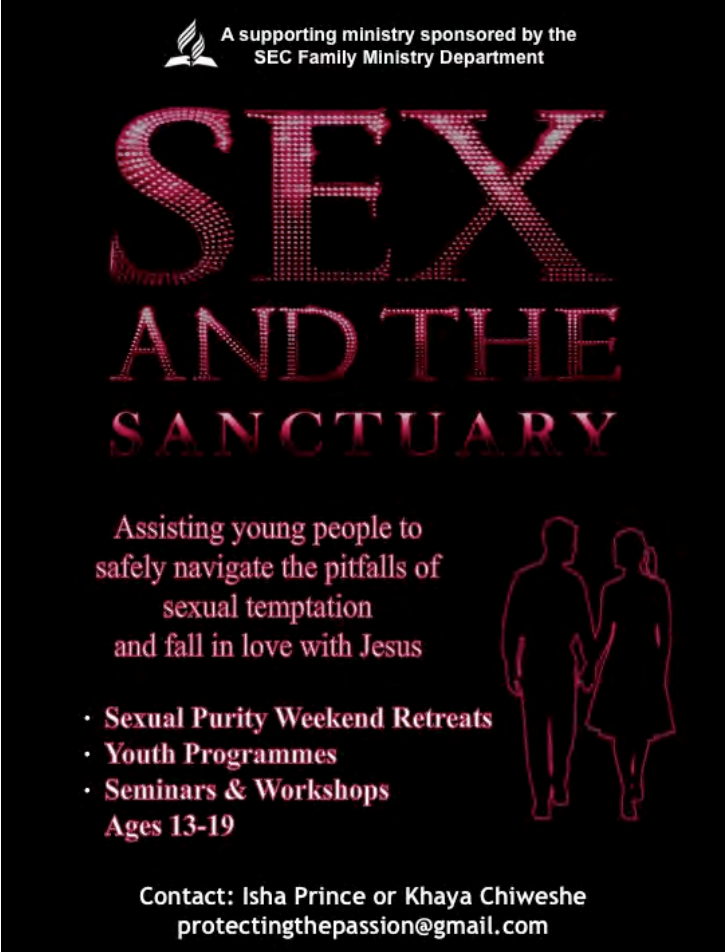
intimacy and said this shall be a portrait of how intimately close I want to fellowship with My bride, the church.

In Ephesians 5: 31 and 32 the apostle Paul begins to unveil this mysterious portrait that has been entrusted to the church's care. He says 'For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery but I speak concerning Christ and the Church'. The Baptist Pastor, John Piper, on evaluating this mystery, concluded that the ultimate reason, not the only one, why we are sexual beings is 'to make God more deeply knowable'. Somehow, through this mysterious portrait of sexual intimacy between a faithful husband and wife, God has provided us with the opportunity to begin to discover His heart of passionate and intimate love towards us.

Is it any wonder then, that the enemy is working tirelessly to eradicate God's image of Yada in our lives and to offer us a cheap, de-valued, casualised counterfeit image of sex? Dannah Gresh, author of 'what are you waiting for, the one thing no one ever told you about sex' says 'We must plant in our children the desire to carry forward the gospel in the picture of a holy marriage bed and relationship. The world is crucifying that image in them...The intention of the enemy is a direct assault on a picture of Christ and the church and it is being stolen right from under our noses' and we as a church, much like those guarding the Mona Lisa, are doing nothing about it.

The Psalmist writes in Psalm 45:1 NIV 'My heart is stirred by a noble theme...' oh that God would stir our hearts on the subject of purity! '...my tongue is the pen of a skilful writer.' May God, through us, skilfully write on the hearts of young men and young women the gospel of forgiveness, the gospel of healing and the gospel of God's great redemptive love towards us. May we, as guardians of the gospel, guard faithfully and diligently this portrait of His great Love.¹

This article was adapted from ' why your family is so important' by Dannah Gresh: <http://www.reviveourhearts.com/radio/revive-our-hearts/why-your-family-so-important/>



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



Adventist
Family Ministries



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Same-Sex Marriage & Religious Liberty

Pr Les Ackie

As Seventh-day Adventists our prophetic understanding of last day events has required us to be staunch defenders of religious freedom. The Coalition Government's plans to redefine marriage by legalizing same-sex marriage raise significant religious liberty concerns. In their consultation document and in public, David Cameron and Home Secretary Teresa May gave firm assurances to exempt religious organizations from performing same-sex marriages. Yet Mr Cameron's own justice minister Crispin Blunt has admitted that 'it would be hard to guarantee that clergy would not face court challenges if they refused to preside over same-sex unions.' The Church of England has already claimed that the Government's assurances will not hold under the scrutiny of the European court and have dismissed them as 'worthless'.

Colin Hart, campaign director for the Coalition for Marriage, commented that, "Marriage appears more than 3,000 times in law, affecting every aspect of our lives. It is simply impossible to redefine it without many serious unintended consequences." Once same-sex marriage is written in law it will open a Pandora's Box of legal, moral and ethical complexities which carry with them widespread implications in the area of religious liberty.

Both at home and abroad we have already seen examples of opponents of same-sex 'rights' facing discrimination in the the areas of adoption, housing, employment, tax-exempt status and in the medical field. Coalition Government documents recently obtained by the Coalition for Marriage (C4M) under freedom of information legislation indicate that schools could be forced to teach children about gay marriage against parents' wishes.



While supporters of same-sex marriage call for equal rights and civil liberty, the reality is that changing the legal definition of marriage will inevitably affect our rights to live according to our values. For Bible-believing Christians to give assent to same-sex marriage on the basis of fair play for all, has been likened to turkeys voting for Christmas. The bottom line is that in any diverse culture which represents a multitude of differing world views, perceived rights will come into conflict. Christians advocate a biblical worldview, which accepts the Word of God as an authoritative guide for faith and practice. However, we live in a post-modern, pluralistic society, which to a large extent has embraced a humanistic world view in which there are few moral absolutes and which rejects divine ideals in favour of society's standards.


Bible-believing Christians have as much right to defend their biblical values, as pro-homosexual activists have to promote theirs. We have a mandate from the Word of God not only to protect biblical ideals but also to share those ideals with others and to lovingly and respectfully challenge society to embrace them.

If excluding same-sex couples from marriage is viewed as discrimination, the discrimination involved in the exclusion is unavoidable in order to maintain the biblical purpose of marriage. Our legislators have a responsibility to avoid passing laws which will be detrimental to society. Our biblical worldview informs us that same-sex marriage constitutes one such law. If the right to marry is based purely on the freedom of choice of consenting adults who love each other, what reason would we have for excluding polygamous and incestuous marriages? What values inform society's exclusion of such marriages from legal recognition? Freedom and equality are laudable goals, but our first responsibility is to do what is right not what is 'fair' or popular. As much as the legalization of same-sex marriage appears to be a 'fait accompli', let us do what we can to promote the biblical ideal for marriage at every opportunity in your churches and in our communities.

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Strength to Love


Spiritual Foundations for Marital Unity



An exploration of practical solutions for the inevitable challenges which threaten spiritual and emotional harmony

Presenters:
Les & Irma Ackie


Date: 12th–14th October 2012
Venue: Latimer Place, Latimer, Chesham, Buckinghamshire, HP5 1UG
Cost: £220 per couple (subsidies available for early booking)
Register @ www.secnews.org.uk or call Anna McLarty on 01923 232 728


Residential Family Weekend
26th – 28th October 2012

SNAP


SUPPORT NETWORK FOR ADVENTIST PARENTS

Venue: Hill House Christian Retreat Centre,
 Otterhampton, nr Bridgewater, TA52PT




- Short presentations on topics relevant to Christian family life
- Group discussion time
- Family activity time
- Relaxing rural surroundings
- Self-catering arrangement, with 2 simple, warm meals provided


The Presenters:



Pr Wayne Erasmus



Pr Jacques Venter




Mike & Vicky Beamish

Cost: Adults and children age 12+ - £25 each
 Children age 6-11 - £18 each
 Children age 4-5 - £12 each
 Children age 0-3 - FREE

E-mail: snap.sda@tesco.net or Tel 01242 890566


Jesus in the Family



KIDS IN DISCIPLESHIP


Designed for Families Focussed on Children

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 672251
www.adventistinfo.org.uk/department/childrensministries.php





SEC FAMILY MINISTRIES LEADERSHIP TRAINING WEEKEND



Families 1st

CONNECTING LIVES FOR ETERNAL LIVING
 Wyboston Lakes, Bedfordshire
 21-23 November 2012

CERTIFICATE IN FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

Come and enjoy a weekend of faith, training and fellowship in the beautiful surroundings of Wyboston Lakes

- Biblical Foundations for Family Ministry
- Communication
- Anger & Conflict Resolution
- The Family as a Centre for Evangelism
- Leading out in Family Ministries

Cost per couple

£180

Single room

£127 per person

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Useful Links

AdventSource -
www.adventsource.org/

Adventist Parenting -
www.adventistparenting.org/

Adventist Special Needs
Association - <http://www.asna.info/>

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

GC Family Ministry - <http://family.adventist.org/>

Kids in Discipleship -
www.kidsindiscipleship.org/



Brixton SDA
Family Life Department
in association with
CLICKS Ministries
presents



Intentional 2012

Singles' Retreat
September 28-30, 2012

Venue:
DeVere- Denham Grove,
Uxbridge, Buckinghamshire, UB9 5DU

Presentations & sessions that are practical, engaging
and empowering

Cost: £125 per person (same sex sharing)

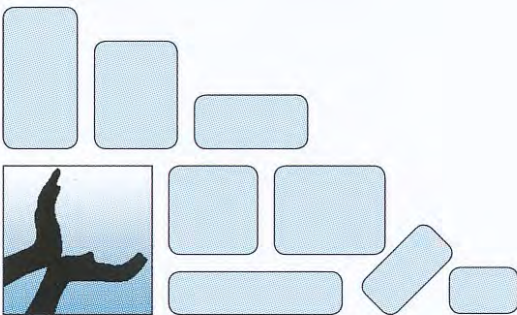
For more information call : Layne Robinson on 07852477665 (m)
Elder Mike Black on 07810 641 350 (m)
email:family.life@brixtonsdachurch.co.uk
To register online visit : www.clicksministries.com

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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.

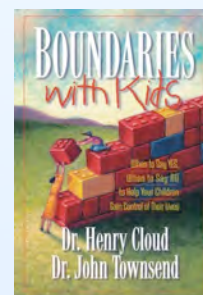


Recommended Reading



In Could It Be This Simple? A Biblical Model for Healing the Mind you'll learn about God's original ideal for the mind and His beautiful plan to restore His children back into His image. Dr Timothy R. Jennings also exposes many of Satan's subtle tactics that interfere with God's plan to heal the mind. This book is an excellent tool to help achieve emotional and mental well-being and gain real spiritual victory.

Sacred Marriage. Starting with the discovery that the goal of marriage goes beyond personal happiness, writer and speaker Gary Thomas invites readers to see how God can use marriage as a discipline and a motivation to love him more and reflect more of the character of his Son. God's purpose is not just to make us happy but to make us holy.



According to the authors, Cloud & Townsend, *Boundaries with Kids* will help you to; recognize the boundary issues underlying child behaviour problems; set boundaries and establish consequences with your kids; get out of the "nagging" trap; stop controlling your kids—and instead help them develop self-control by applying the ten laws of boundaries to parenting.

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