



July 2015

SEC Family

Connecting Lives for Eternal Living

A Publication of the South England Conference Family Ministry Department

In this issue:

**Where is the Love? -
A Plea for
Compassion**

Complicated Grief

Upcoming Events

**Recommended
Reading**

Useful Links

Where is the Love? - A Plea for Compassion

Pr Les Ackie

Last month's massacre of European tourists on a Tunisian beach raised the question in my mind of how an individual who purportedly believed in a benevolent Creator could apparently dispassionately discharge the contents of a Kalashnikov assault rifle and explode grenades slaughtering 38 innocent victims. A similar question occupied my thinking as I recently watched a Panorama documentary, which sought to trace the whereabouts of the '300' schoolgirls kidnapped by the 'Islamic' militant group Boko Haram. Reports indicate that while some may have escaped, the vast majority remain in captivity, compelled to convert to 'Islam', forced to marry, perpetrate acts of violence, and be subjected to the most dehumanising abuses. Video footage of the militant group's leader Abubaker Shekau's grinning taunting of the West, displayed a personification of evil that was chilling in its malevolence. What is it that happens in a person's mind that can so completely negate the ability to feel compassion toward fellow human beings?

We are created for loving relationships with God and with one another. Especially because of our fallen nature, we are admonished, "clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another" (Colossians 3:12-13). Even in our fallen condition, modern studies in social neuroscience indicate that our brains are wired naturally to reach out to those who are suffering. Areas of our brains are populated by "mirror neurons" that allow us to "feel with" those who are experiencing pain or distress and prompt us to bring relief. However, the same body of research points to self-absorption as a primary hindrance to the practice of compassion. Preoccupation with self, intentionally or unintentionally, closes our hearts to the needs of others (1 John 3:17). The priest and the Levite in the story of the Good Samaritan were not evil as we might define the term, but they were overly concerned with their busyness, the need for self-preservation and religious correctness, preventing them from meeting an immediate human need (see Luke 10:25-37). We lose the capacity for compassion when being 'right' becomes more important than loving right. One of the reasons that Jesus fought so relentlessly against right-wing fundamentalism was its tendency to elevate the preservation of doctrinal 'truth' above the very relationships those truths were designed to promote and protect. Truth without love sacrifices compassion on the altar of religious propriety and behavioural conformity.

The reality is that those who operate in a religious context and yet balk at the experience and demonstration of agape love, will ultimately take refuge in biblical knowledge as opposed to biblical experience. Ellen White stated that, "a religion of externals is attractive to the unrenewed heart" (*The Great Controversy*, 88). As precious as our distinctive truths are, they are simply the context in which we are to reveal the love of God. Truths designed to bring sanctifying grace may become weapons that wound when wielded by a cold heart. We are told that, "The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of

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

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love” (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, 415). We often resist compassion because it comes with a price. Compassion does not exist in a vacuum. It calls for a response. The “Good Samaritan” not only cared for the one who fell among thieves; he bore the emotional cost of getting involved; the physical cost of getting the wounded to a place of safety; the financial cost of providing for his upkeep and the cost of continued commitment. The question we need to address is, “Am I willing to pay the price to live compassionately?”

While we may easily distance our own personal experience from that of sociopaths and religious fanatics, the Bible clearly warns us that as we approach the close of earth’s history, “the love of many will wax cold” (Matthew 24:12). What makes this warning all the more disturbing is that it indicates that significant numbers who have experienced the love of God will lose the capacity to exhibit His love to others. The Apostle warns that the very facility that God has instilled within us to sensitize us to doing the right thing can be nullified. Paul states that our conscience can become, “seared as with a hot iron” (1 Timothy 4:2). Repeated violations of our

consciences will ultimately compromise our ability to experience truth. Continual resistance of the natural urge to alleviate suffering will stifle the promptings to do so. Compassion dies when we practice to keep people at an emotional and psychological distance. We diminish people when we lose sight of the value that Jesus invested in them - when we fail to see them as God’s property, purchased by the ultimate price. It is when this occurs that a mother can forget her nursing child (Isaiah 45:9), spouses can divorce without cause (Matthew 5:31), and brothers and sisters can “bite and devour one another” (Galatians 5:15). Cruelty and neglect necessitate us psychologically and emotionally distancing ourselves from the pain we cause. We have to silence our own conscience.

Just as many flip their TV channels when emotional appeals are made for charitable giving, we can flip our minds when confronted with legitimate needs in our daily experience. Our expression of compassion requires our choice to remain engaged with those who require our help in spite of our discomfort. The reality is that we cannot love from a distance. Love requires us to be up close and personal - to be spiritually, emotionally, socially connected with the recipients of our love. This begins in our homes and works outwards. Our ability to experience compassion for others is in direct proportion to how much our hearts are softened by the compassion God has for us. The “Unjust Steward” was asked, “Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you” (Matthew 18:33). Compassion rises in our hearts when we sincerely pray the sentiment articulated by Bob Pierce, the founder of World Vision, “Let my heart break for the things that break the heart of God.” Jesus said that the greatest evidence that we are His disciples is the love we have for each other (John 13:35). Compassion grows when we choose to shift our focus away from self and onto others. Martin Luther King declared that, “A man has not begun to live until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns, to the broader concerns of all humanity.”



Our concern for others and our personal transformation are intimately connected. The Dalai Lama said, “If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion.” God’s plea for compassion is ultimately for our eternal benefit. He inspired Paul to exhort, “Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing” (1 Peter 3:8).

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



Complicated Grief

Pr Barrington H Brennan

We all grieve when a loved one, friend, or acquaintance dies. It is always painful to face the death of someone you know. Unfortunately, many do not understand the dynamics of grief, thus when trying help someone to heal they cause more pain and suffering. They expect the one who is grieving to "snap out of it" or to "get over it." The truth is you never get over it. On the other hand you can learn how to cope and how to resume normal life even when facing loss.

It is important to note that people mourn when there is a loss of anything, not just of a relative or friend, but also the loss of the ability to function the way they always do. For example: children lose baby teeth, a pet dies, a child graduates from high school, a lover abandons you, a friend leaves you, a relative moves away, a spouse succumbs to cancer, retirement occurs, you are fired from the job, a leg is amputated.

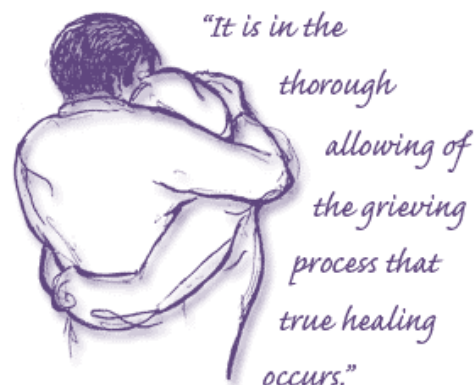
The grieving process can last from two weeks to two years. There is no required length for grieving. We all grieve in different ways and for different lengths. Ivan Chan, a specialist in dealing with grief and loss states "It is also quite normal to be able to experience joy, contentment, and humour even amidst the worst loss. Factors contributing to soothing grief include strong social support, optimism, and physical exercise. Most people recover from grief and can continue with their usual activities, while still feeling moments of sadness, within six months. Some people feel better after about a year to a year and a half. For others, their grief may be longer lasting, continuing for years without seeming to improve or with any break, and this may be due to factors before the loss such as pre-existing depression or high dependency on the departed."

COMPLICATED GRIEF

When someone dies, who was ill we do mourn, but the intensity of the loss might not as greatly as when there is unexpected death. This brings me to the topic of complicated grief. Complicated grief occurs when there is an unexpected or violent death, suicide of a loved one, lack of a support system or friendships, traumatic childhood experiences, such as abuse or neglect, childhood separation anxiety, close or dependent relationship to the deceased person, being unprepared for the death; in the case of a child's death, the number of remaining children and, lack of resilience or adaptability to life changes.

Here is what one psychologist gives as the signs and symptoms of complicated grief:
Extreme focus on the loss and reminders of the loved one

- Intense longing or pining for the deceased
- Problems accepting the death
- Numbness or detachment
- Preoccupation with your sorrow
- Bitterness about your loss
- Inability to enjoy life
- Depression or deep sadness
- Difficulty moving on with life
- Trouble carrying out normal routines
- Withdrawing from social activities



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- Feeling that life holds no meaning or purpose
- Irritability or agitation
- Lack of trust in others

When these signs and symptoms are present it is best to talk to someone. However, when the following symptoms are evident, it is wise to seek professional help from someone who is trained and knowledgeable about grief and loss:

- Intense pining or longing for the deceased that occurs daily or is distressing or disruptive
- Trouble accepting the death
- Inability to trust others after the death
- Difficulty moving forward with life
- Excessive bitterness or anger related to the death
- Feeling emotionally numb or detached from others
- A feeling that life is now meaningless
- A belief that the future won't be fulfilling
- Increased agitation or jumpiness

**And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away
Revelation 21:4**

These symptoms can cause numerous complications. They include: depression, suicidal thoughts or behaviours, increased risk of heart disease, cancer and high blood pressure, anxiety, long-term impairment in daily living, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, smoking or nicotine use. Some of these complications may not only require psychological help by medication assistance.

We must be more sensitive and understanding with someone who is grieving. Avoid saying things that can cause further pain. Avoid saying "God knows best," "just pray about it," or "snap out of it" or "don't cry" or "don't talk about it anymore." These are myths and unrealistic expectations when grieving. Just be there for the person. Allow them to grieve. Encourage them to talk about their loss. Encourage them to cry and feel their pain. This is best for recovery.



*Barrington Brennen
Pastor, Counselling
Psychotherapist,
Marriage and Family
Therapist
Bahamas Conference*

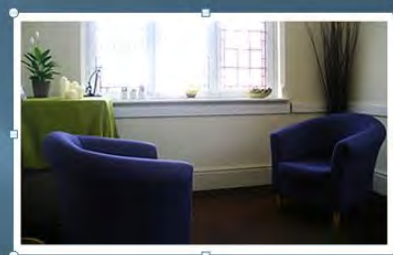
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FOR MORE INFORMATION
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Sabbath School Speaker: Forrest Douglas Main Speaker: Sophia Peart

SAT 15th AUG 2015
9.30am
BALHAM SDA CHURCH
83 Elmfield Road, Balham
London, SW17 6AD

Fellowship Lunch Provided!


Workshops Commence at 5.00pm

Time of Visitation


Join us from 7pm to 8.30pm for a time of **PRAYER, PRAISE & POWER** as you step into your future with conviction!

And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. Romans 13:11


The SEC Family Ministry Marriage Retreat



Blended Hearts



An exploration of biblical principles to nurture love, trust and emotional intimacy



Presenters:
Irma & Les Ackie

23rd - 25th October 2015

Venue: Denham Grove, Tilehouse Lane, Denham, Buckinghamshire, UB9 5DG

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

Register at sec.adventist.org.uk/events

New Life Church Family Trip to Skegness



Sunday 2nd August 2015

Adults £20

Children £17.50

Under 2's Free (on lap)

There's so much to do in Skegness from Go Karting, Donkey riding, funfair, adventure play and not forgetting just chilling on the wonderful sandy beaches! A great family day out!

DON'T MISS OUT!

For a ticket or more information please contact: 07852702787

Payment deadline Monday 8th June 2015

Meeting Outside the church at 7 am

8-10 Lennox Road, LONDON, N4 3NW

Coach promptly leaving 7.30 am

If you are late you will be left! Expected time of arrival back to New Life is 20.30 PM





Date: 12th September 2015

Time: 7-11pm

Marriage Enrichment Dinner

The Marriage Enrichment Fellowship invites you to their quarterly dinner for couples. Enjoy a special evening with your spouse and great fellowship.

Presenter: Dr Daniel Duda

Invest the time in your marriage, because it's worth it! (Narwest)

Venue: The Park Inn Hotel, Bath Rd Heathrow, Middlesex, UB7 0DU

Payment of £50 per couple to be made in advance to:
Account Name: **The Marriage Enrichment Fellowship.**
Sort code: 60-17-21
Account Number: 89169174
Please reference payment with your name.

Contacts:
Ada (adasage@yahoo.com)
07818441761
Nora (nora.hainmond.com)
07988 237728
Peterson
(psentenga@yahoo.com)
07916328316



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

TRUST
G O D ' S . H E A R T

Asna Carers Weekend

£110 Double Occupancy Rooms (£90 ASNA Members)
£130 Single Occupancy Rooms (£110.00 ASNA Members)

30th Oct - 1st Nov 2015
Hellidon Lakes Spa Hotel
Hellidon, Daventry, NN11 6GG

SPEAKER
Pr. Maureen Rook

Contact Sophia Nicholls/Helen Batten on 07768 298 297 / info@asna.info or www.asna.info

ASNA - SUPPORTING PEOPLE LIVING WITH DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS

Inspirational workshops for spiritual, physical, emotional and social development. This event has been heavily subsidised by ASNA thanks to funds raised from donations and grant from ADRA UK. ASNA Reg. Charity Number 1100447



Asna
Adventist Special Needs Association

Family Fun Day

23rd August 2015

Virginia Waters

GU25 4QF Ascot, Bracknell Forest, United Kingdom

12.30 – 3.30pm

Meet at the Virginia Water Car Park at 12.30pm for a picnic, cycle and gentle walk. Please email if you are planning to be there!

<http://www.theroyallandscape.co.uk/gardens-and-landscape/virginia-water/>

www.asna.info | info@asna.info | 12 – 3.30pm | 07768 298 297



For Single and Shared-Parenting Mums and Dads



The Loop Young Families Club

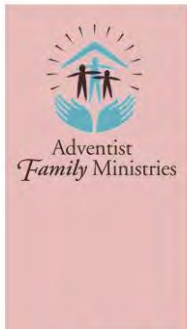
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SEC FAMILY MINISTRIES LEADERSHIP TRAINING



CONNECTING LIVES FOR ETERNAL LIVING

Venues: THE STANBOROUGH CENTRE,
609 St Albans Road WD25 9JL.
BRITISH UNION CONFERENCE,
St Albans Road, Garston, Watford Hertfordshire WD25 9JZ

CERTIFICATE IN FAMILY LIFE LEADERSHIP

Modules covered:

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- Biblical Foundations
- Human Development
- Spiritual Parenting
- Families as Systems
- Communication
- Anger & Conflict
- Strengthening Marriage
- Family Evangelism

Attendees receive all seminar materials and more to facilitate effective ministry

Modules are presented on a cyclical basis to allow access at any point in the programme

SEC FAMILY MINISTRIES
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25 St John's Road, Watford
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Phone: 01923 2327 28
Email: fm@secadventist.org.uk

Register with Anna at AMcLarty@secadventist.org.uk or call 01923 232 728

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time
at a
step
one

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SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH

Do you need to talk to a counsellor about:

- Relationships
- Abuse - Adult & Childhood
- Family & Marital Problems
- Loneliness
- Bereavement
- Depression
- Parenting
- Spiritual Problems
- Children & Young People

CCS is a confidential service supervised by professional counsellors. Supported/sponsored by Family Ministries of the SEC of SDAs. A registered charity.

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with singing, talks, challenges, cartoons and much more

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

CORNERSTONE PRICE STRUCTURE

Individuals: £20 per session

Couples: £25 per session

Families: £30 per session

SINGLESEVENTHDAYADVENTISTS.COM
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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



Useful Links

AdventSource
www.adventsource.org/

NAD Adventist Singles Ministry
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/

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/

Sounds of Encouragement
www.soencouragement.org/

Recommended Reading

AUTHENTIC HUMAN SEXUALITY

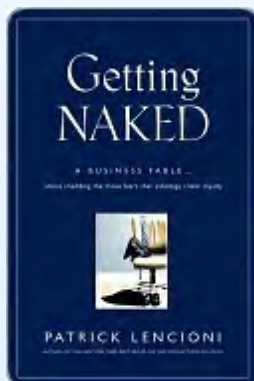
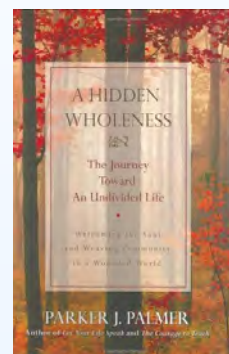


An Integrated Christian Approach

JUDITH K. BALSWICK & JACK O. BALSWICK

Despite all the attention and even obsession devoted to sex, human sexuality remains confusing and even foreboding. In *Authentic Human Sexuality*, Judith and Jack Balswick dispel many of the myths surrounding the topic. An excellent, up-to-date and wise introduction to an essential, endlessly fascinating and perplexing facet of human identity.

In *A Hidden Wholeness*, Palmer Parker speaks to our yearning to live undivided lives - lives that are congruent with our inner truth in a world filled with the forces of fragmentation. He maps an inner journey that we take in solitude “and” in the company of others. He shows how people in settings ranging from friendships to organizational life can support each other on the journey toward living “divided no more.”



In *Getting Naked*, Patrick Lencioni illustrates the principles of inspiring client loyalty through a fascinating business fable. He explains the theory of vulnerability in depth and presents concrete steps for putting it to work in any organization. He shows why the quality of vulnerability is so important in business. Lencioni's book presents universal principles which are applicable in the family and church contexts.

Cornerstone
 Counselling Service

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 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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