



January 2014

SEC Family

Connecting Lives for Eternal Living

A Publication of the South England Conference Family Ministry Department

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The Love Disconnect

Pr Les Ackie

For some time now I have had a great concern regarding the apparent disconnect between the values that we as Christians espouse and how we actually relate to one another. This is particularly disturbing in light of the fact that God's Word makes it abundantly clear, on numerous occasions, that we cannot compartmentalise our relationship with Him from our relationship with each other.

Jesus was not playing games with words when He said to His disciples, "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). As the dark shadow of Calvary loomed on the horizon, Jesus' primary concern was their relationship with each other. He said "A new command I give you: Love one another." This would have been challenging enough for this disparate group of men, but Jesus adds, "As I have loved you, so you must love one another" (John 13:34). Really? Is that even possible? Well, if Jesus said it, it must be. Right?

What is certain is that we cannot demonstrate this kind of love in our own strength. Paul states, "I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh (Galatians 5:16). The fifth chapter of Galatians highlights the stark contrast between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. The 'flesh' may be defined as our emotions operating on their own apart from dependence on the Holy Spirit. The 'flesh' is our default mode of operation. The 'works of the flesh' are the things we do to each other when we are not relying on the Holy Spirit to guide our thoughts and behaviour (see Galatians 5:19). A failure to rely upon the Spirit to overcome our differences essentially says to God, "I don't need you. I will handle this by myself." However, if we are open to the Spirit of God, He will convict us when we are unloving toward each other. The role of the Spirit is not to point out other people's faults, but to arouse us to our own deficiencies. No matter how others treat us, our response is our responsibility and says more about us than it does about them.

Peter invites us to, "¹⁶Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves. ¹⁷Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honour the emperor" (1 Peter 2:16-17). We cannot live as free people if we are harbouring resentment in our hearts. We may wish to salve our consciences as we approach God with our acts of devotion, but He stops us in our tracks, spins us on our heels and ushers us out of the door of our complacency with a flea in our ear. "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matthew 5:23-24).

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

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We often read this passage incorrectly. Jesus did not say, “If you have something against your brother”, but “If your brother has something against you.” In effect, He is saying “I don't care who started it, you go and sort it out.” Jesus is saying that we have to take the initiative to effect reconciliation, regardless of who is right or wrong. He does not permit us the expensive luxury of nursing our grievances because He knows that an unforgiving spirit will rob us of our peace, poison our relationships and ultimately estrange us from Him. In 1 John 4:20 the Apostle makes the scathing comment that, “Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister [add husband, wife, child, colleague etc.], whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen.”

In his excellent yet challenging book *Love & Respect*, Emmerson Eggerichs comments that, “I have concluded that we don't have a ‘marriage crisis’ in the Christian community; we have a crisis of faith” (p.276). In other words, how we choose to relate with each other indicates our response to Jesus’ command to love one another. While addressing marital conflicts, Eggerichs articulates a principle which is applicable across all of our relationships. He states, “Your marriage is a test of your devotion to Christ” (ibid, 295). Similarly, 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).

We are called to be in the world, but not of the world. We are challenged to operate a much higher standard than those who have no faith in God. Jesus said to his disciples, “For if you love those who love you, what reward have you?” (Matthew 5:46). During the height of the struggle for Civil Rights in the 1960s Martin Luther King delivered a sermon entitled *Loving Your Enemies*. He said, “There are a lot of people that I find it difficult to like. I don't like what they do to me. I don't like what they say about me and other people. I don't like their attitudes. I don't like some of the things they're doing. I don't like them. But Jesus says love them. And love is greater than like.” Agape love is a decision of the will. It allows us to make decisions about the way we treat others not based on our emotions, but based upon our values. It prompts us to extend to others the grace God has showered upon us. Paul expresses this truth when he states, “And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32).

The stark reality which we must confront is that our standing with God is inseparably intertwined with our willingness to obey His Word, which includes the command to love one another. The degree to which we embrace this command in no small measure determines our eternal destiny. Ellen White comments, “Men and women, children and youth are measured in the scales of heaven in accordance with that which they reveal in their home life” (*Sons & Daughters of God*, 255). Our standing with God is indicated by our willingness to extend to others the grace He has shown us. Ultimately, the question we must confront is not so much, “Should I swallow my pride and extend an olive branch to the person who has offended me?” The real question is, “Will I humble myself and show Jesus I love Him?” because He says “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me” (Matthew 25:40). As I contemplate these sobering truths the question comes to mind, “This is a hard saying, who can hear it?” (John 6:60).

“As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn't leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I'd still be in prison.”

Nelson Mandela

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



Could You Be A Foster Carer?

When children are unable to live with their own family, local authorities aim to find them alternatives. Foster carers are needed to help to care for the children who are currently being looked after by local authorities. There are many reasons why local authorities look after these children; there may be a crisis in the family, ill health, relationship difficulty or bereavement. Some children and young people need to be

looked after because they have experienced abuse and need to be protected. Some just need to be looked after for a short period before returning to their family. Others will need to be looked after for much longer.

Local authorities try to keep children from the same family together where it is in the child's best interests to do so. Foster carers provide homes for children of all ages from babies to teenagers. When children are unable to live with their own families, foster carers provide alternative care in their own homes, to allow time for difficulties to be sorted out. The time children stay may vary from day care to overnight stays, regular planned weekends or holiday stays to weeks, months and several years.

Children are generally placed with foster carers who live locally so that they can continue their schooling and stay in contact with family and friends. It is also important for children to be in families that reflect their racial, religious and cultural heritage whenever possible.

Foster carers need to be sensitive to the experiences and different needs of the children and young people they look after. They will be unsettled because of the changes in their lives and they may be very confused, angry or vulnerable.

Many children who are fostered return to their families.

Sometimes long term fostering is preferable to adoption for some children who cannot return to their families.

Caring for teenagers and helping them to prepare for independence is an important fostering task. So is helping a child move successfully to a permanent adoptive family.

Fostering is both a challenging and a rewarding job. Foster carers are important members of a team, working towards the best interests of each child. They share responsibility for the children they look after with parents and the local authority.

Foster carers are not expected to work in isolation. They receive support, supervision and training to help them provide a quality service for children in need.

If you would like to find out more about fostering, contact your local authority for details.



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SEC FAMILY



SEC FAMILY MINISTRIES LEADERSHIP TRAINING DAY



CONNECTING LIVES FOR ETERNAL LIVING

The Stanborough Centre,
609 St Albans Road WD25 9JL
9 February 2014 10:00 - 4:00

CERTIFICATE IN FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

The following modules will be covered:

- Leading Family Ministries in the Local Church
- Human Growth & Development
- Strengthening Marriage
- Spiritual Parenting

Further training dates:
23 March 2014
27 April 2014

Attendees will receive a resource CD packed full of
valuable material to facilitate effective ministry

Lunch will be provided based on the numbers registered

SEC FAMILY MINISTRIES
DEPARTMENT

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Watford
Hertfordshire
WD17 1PZ

Phone: 01923 23 27 28
Fax: 01923 25 05 82
Email: fm@secadventist.org.uk

Register @ secadventist.com/events or call Anna McLarty on 01923 232 728

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

28th - 30th March 2014
Venue: Latimer Place, Latimer,
Chesham, Buckinghamshire, HP5 1UG

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

Register at secadventist.com/events
or call Anna McLarty on 01923 232 728

Presenters:
Les & Irma Ackie

Jesus in the Family



15th - 19th
May 2014

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



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

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Useful Links

AdventSource -
www.adventsource.org/

Adventist Parenting -
www.adventistparenting.org/

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

BUC Family Ministry-
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/

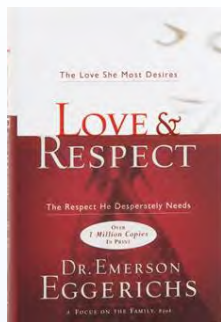
North American Division Family
Ministry - family.nadadventist.org

SEC Family Ministries
[secadventist.org.uk/who-we-are/
departments/family-ministries](http://secadventist.org.uk/who-we-are/departments/family-ministries)

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

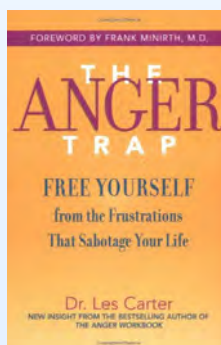
South Pacific Division Family
Ministry - [http://
adventist.org.au/family-](http://adventist.org.au/family-)

Recommended Reading



In *Love & Respect* Dr Emerson Eggerichs focuses on the implications of couples living out the principles of Ephesians 5:33. He asserts that cracking the communication code between husband and wife involves understanding one thing: that unconditional respect is as powerful for him as unconditional love is for her. It's the secret to marriage that every couple seeks, and yet few couples ever find.

Peacemaking for Families. Basic conflict-resolution skills found in Scripture can help you change your home from a battle zone to a love nest. Distinguishing between positive and negative conflict resolution, Ken Sande introduces the reader to valuable principles such as "The Peacemaker's Pledge," the "Seven A's of Forgiveness," and the "PAUSE Principle of Negotiation," helping the reader to acquire the skills needed to create a true "peacemaking family."



In *The Anger Trap* Dr Les Carter offers practical techniques to free you from anger, its hidden insecurities, fears, and selfishness and thereby improve the quality of your home and workplace life. The book clearly illustrates how the change process works and is filled with real-life examples of the ways people have come to terms with their anger by applying the concepts Dr. Carter outlines.

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



Contact Us

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