



SEC Family

Connecting Lives for Eternal Living

A Publication of the South England Conference Family Ministry Department

In this issue:

Addicts in the Church?

Pause for Thought

Upcoming Events

Recommended Reading

Addicts in the Church?

Pr Les Ackie

Some time ago I read a book authored by Carol Cannon entitled *Never Good Enough*. Among many challenging realities, the book explored the concept of 'clean addictions,' which include nonchemical dependencies like workaholism, perfectionism, churchaholism, care giving, and the need for control. While we frown upon the various forms of chemical addiction, these 'clean addictions' are not only often considered acceptable within the church, but are often encouraged and celebrated.

I was particularly disturbed by the idea of 'clean addictions' because the book suggested that these subtle dependencies in ourselves may lay the foundations for more overt forms of addiction in our children and our children's children. Apparently, children of workaholics are just as likely to develop crippling addictive disorders as children of alcoholics. More often than not, children learn addictive traits from their parents, but may exhibit their own addictions in different ways. I find that frightening, because I wonder about what I am modeling to my own children.

An addiction is any practice in which we willfully engage as a priority, which robs other more important priorities of time and attention; and which creates negative consequences that we ignore in order to continue engaging in the behaviour.

If I spend every available moment in front of a computer screen week in, week out preparing the next sermon, seminar, counseling session etc., to the detriment of family time and my own self-care, does that make me an addict? What makes this potential addiction even more dangerous is that it is easy to justify because I may reason that, "I am about my Father's business."

Addictions are not just about what we do, but more importantly, why we do it. For example, the difference between normal compassionate care giving and addictive care giving, is the extent to which we help others and our reason for doing it. We should feel good when we help others, but if we help others in order to feel good, we need to question our motives. Ellen White stated that "It is carrying that which is lawful to excess that makes it a grievous sin" (The Adventist Home, 122).



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

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In one sense we are all addicts. If we define addiction as a compulsive behaviour in which we willingly engage in spite of the negative effects upon us and those around us, then sin itself may be seen as a form of addiction (see Romans 6:16). We can all identify with the apostle Paul when he laments, “For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do . . . ¹⁸ For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. ¹⁹For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice (Romans 7:15, 18-19). More appropriate words to sum up the addict’s condition would be hard to find.

Paul acknowledged his struggle and we need to acknowledge our own, because denial will keep us enslaved. When Jesus confronted the Pharisees with their spiritual bondage, they claimed, “We are Abraham’s descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can you say, “You will be made free?” (John 8:33). Not only does denial perpetuate bondage, but it also limits our capacity to relate to others with understanding and compassion. It can be easy for us to look down on the heroin addict or the alcoholic because they make us look good; like the Pharisee’s view of the Publican in Luke 18:10-14. As long as we measure ourselves by those we consider to be beneath us, we will fail to do the healthy introspection necessary to confront our own frailties. Maybe if we can acknowledge the reality of our own addictions we will develop empathy with those who exhibit more explicit forms.

Our religion can provide an appealing cocktail of pleasures, none of which are a problem in and of themselves such as exhilaration, prestige, power, relationships etc.,. However, when our religious practices become an end in themselves, they can become a detriment to true devotion, personal growth and healthy relationships. Ellen White commented that, “A religion of externals is attractive to the unrenewed heart” (Great Controversy, 567).

In the absence of healthy mechanisms to deal with the stresses of life, addictions serve a similar purpose to anaesthetics in medical treatments - pain relief. Addictions distance us from our true feelings. Our ‘drug’ of choice may vary depending on our circumstance, but whether they take the form of alcohol, drugs, pornography or more subtle forms like perfectionism and workaholism, addictions are a way to escape painful reality.

Paul encourages us to examine ourselves to see whether we are living the truth (2 Corinthians 13:5). Freedom from addiction necessitates that we cultivate the kind of ruthless honesty David displayed when he invited the Lord to, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” Psalm 139:23. It has been said that the longest journey we will ever take is the journey within. Are we ready for that degree of openness? Are we willing to see what He might reveal?

‘Clean addictions’ can be very hard to identify because they can look very much like genuine virtues. Very rarely do addicts experience freedom without help. That includes divine intervention but also assistance from a supportive community, including professional help. The sad reality is that like the Prodigal Son, addicts often have to hit rock bottom before they are ready to make the journey home. The joyful reality, however, is that there is a loving Father who is waiting to receive us and rejoice over us with singing (Luke 15:11-24; Zephaniah 3:17).

Whatever our addictions may be, chemical, psychological or even the ‘clean’ ones, Jesus promises that if we embrace His truth we will experience freedom (John 8:32). The Apostle reiterates this truth when he assures us that, “creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Romans 8:21).

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

Pause for Thought

A man came home from work late, tired and irritated, to find his 5-year old son waiting for him at the door.

SON: 'Daddy, may I ask you a question?'

DAD: 'Yeah sure, what is it?' replied the man.

SON: 'Daddy, how much do you make an hour?'

DAD: 'That's none of your business. Why do you ask such a thing?' the man said angrily.

SON: 'I just want to know. Please tell me, how much do you make an hour?'

DAD: 'If you must know, I make £50 an hour.'

SON: 'Oh,' the little boy replied, with his head down.

SON: 'Daddy, may I please borrow £25?'

The father was furious, 'If the only reason you asked that is so you can borrow some money to buy a silly toy or some other nonsense, then you march yourself straight to your room and go to bed. Think about why you are being so selfish. I don't work hard every day for such childish frivolities.'

The little boy quietly went to his room and shut the door. The man sat down and started to get even angrier about the little boy's questions. How dare he ask such questions only to get some money? After about an hour or so, the man had calmed down and started to think:



Maybe there was something he really needed to buy with that £25 and he really didn't ask for money very often. The man went to the little boy's room and opened the door. 'Are you asleep, son?' He asked.

'No daddy, I'm awake,' replied the boy. 'I've been thinking, maybe I was too hard on you earlier' said the man. 'It's been a long day and I took out my aggravation on you. Here's the £25 you asked for.'

The little boy sat straight up, smiling. 'Oh, thank you daddy!' he yelled. Then, reaching under his pillow he pulled out some crumpled up bills. The man saw that the boy already had money and started to get angry again. The little boy slowly counted out his money, and then looked up at his father.

'Why do you want more money if you already have some?' the father grumbled. 'Because I didn't have enough, but now I do,' the little boy replied . . . 'Daddy, I have £50 now. Can I buy an hour of your time? Please come home early tomorrow. I would like to have dinner with you.'


The father was crushed. He put his arms around his little son, and he begged for his forgiveness.

It's just a short reminder to all of you working so hard in life. We should not let time slip through our fingers without having spent some time with those who really matter to us, those close to our hearts.

Do remember to share that £50 worth of your time with someone you love.

If we die tomorrow, the company that we are working for could easily replace us in a matter of hours. But the family and friends we leave behind will feel the loss for the rest of their lives.


SEC FAMILY

 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
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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

 A supporting ministry sponsored by the
SEC Family Ministry Department

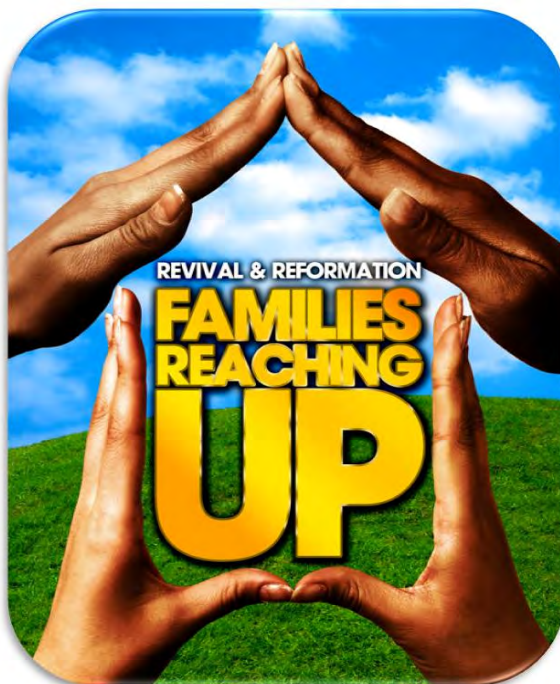
SEX AND THE SANCTUARY

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



Family Togetherness Week 13-20 October

Download the Family Ministry Planbook at
www.adventistinfo.org.uk/departments/familyministries.php


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/departments/childrenministries.php



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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/

North American Division Family Ministry -

family.nadadventist.org

South Pacific Division Family Ministry - <http://adventist.org.au/family-ministries>

adventist.org.au/family-ministries

General Sites

Association of Christian Counsellors -

www.acc-uk.org/

Care for the Family -

www.careforthefamily.org.uk/

Christians Against Poverty

<http://www.capuk.org/home/index.php>

Family & Parenting Institute -

www.familyandparenting.org/

Family Friendly Church Trust -

www.familyfriendlychurches.org.uk/NewSite/ffc.php

Heritage Builders -

www.heritagebuilders.com

Prepare Enrich - www.prepare-enrich.co.uk/

www.prepare-enrich.co.uk/

Through the Roof (Disability outreach) -

www.throughtheroof.org

Women's Aid -

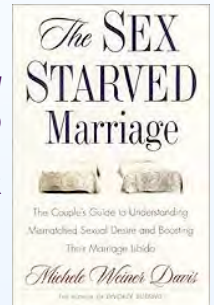
www.womensaid.org.uk/

Recommended Reading



In *Revolutionary Parenting*, George Barna presents the results of thousands of parents who have successfully raised spiritual champions. All their advice is collated and summarized into a list of principles that have been proven to be effective. Barna does an excellent job reminding parents that there is no more important responsibility than to raise their children to be faithful to God.

It is estimated that one of every three married couples struggles with problems associated with mismatched sexual desire. In *The Sex-Starved Marriage*, Michele Weiner Davis helps couples to understand why being complacent or bitter about ho-hum sex might cost their marriage. The book addresses every aspect of the sexual libido problem and provides practical advice on revitalizing an intimate connection in marriage.



In *Never Good Enough*, Carol Cannon draws on a wealth of experiences from her work as a therapist to provide examples of success, strength, and hope in winning the battle over addiction and codependence. While many of us may not wrestle with substance abuse addiction, what the author describes as 'clean addictions' are common i.e. workaholism, churchaholism, caring addictions etc. Do not read this book unless you are prepared for a healthy dose of self-examination.

777
Seventh-day Adventist Families Worldwide
Praying 7 Days a Week
at 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

Join families around the globe praying for:

- ✦ The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on families
- ✦ God's protection over families
- ✦ God to use our families as agents of hope and salvation
- ✦ Our relatives, neighbors, and friends' openness to accept Jesus
- ✦ Other families' prayer requests

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.



Contact Us

SEC Family Ministries
25 St John's Road
Watford WD17 1PZ
fm@secadventist.org.uk

Pr Les Ackie, Director:
01923 656 510

lackie@secadventist.org.uk

Anna McLarty, Secretary:
01923 656 530

amclarty@secadventist.org.uk