



Issue 35

# SEC Family

Connecting Lives for Eternal Living

A Publication of the South England Conference Family Ministry Department

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## Where Are The Men? - A Perspective on Christian Masculinity

Pr Les Ackie

In the aftermath of the General Conference Session last year, many were left licking their wounds from the disappointment over the defeated vote to allow women to be ordained to pastoral ministry. Others breathed a sigh of relief, content in the belief that disaster had been averted and that unity and uniformity are synonymous concepts. Still others shook their heads wondering what all the fuss was about.

Long before the multitude converged in San Antonio, it had been obvious that the church lacked a coherent theology of ordination. Attempts to hammer out a consensus merely seemed to polarize the proponents into their respective viewpoints. As the debate unfolded, it was abundantly clear that while many arguments were couched in biblical rhetoric, much of the discussion was heavily influenced by deeply entrenched cultural and social norms on both sides of the argument. Rather than adjusting cultural biases to fit biblical principle many interpreted

biblical counsel to fit their cultural preferences. Central to the discussion were conflicting understandings of the roles God created men and women to occupy. The debate revealed that not only did we lack a clear position on ordination, but we also lacked a clear theology of masculinity and femininity.

The task of defining Christian masculinity is far more difficult than we might at first believe because the Bible does not offer us a "job description" for masculinity. It is plainly evident that as early as the first chapter of Genesis, the Bible emphasizes a distinction between the genders. The Word states, "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." God built into us gender distinctions that go way beyond the anatomical, and include, emotional, physiological, chemical and psychological differences. Neuroscientific discoveries have clearly demonstrated that male and female brains are wired differently, giving scientific credence to many long-held stereotypical beliefs about the genders.

The fact that God is particular that gender distinctions are maintained is highlighted by an often-misused Bible text. Deuteronomy 22:5 states, "A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so are an abomination to the Lord your God." A superficial reading of the text has led to ridiculous arguments about women wearing trousers in church. However, historical evidence indicates that Moses (who wore no trousers) was addressing the issue of transvestism that was common in pagan worship and fertility rituals. The abomination was men acting like women and vice-verse, challenging the gender nuances that God instituted at creation.

While we must always recognize and appreciate that wide variations in personality, gifts and abilities

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

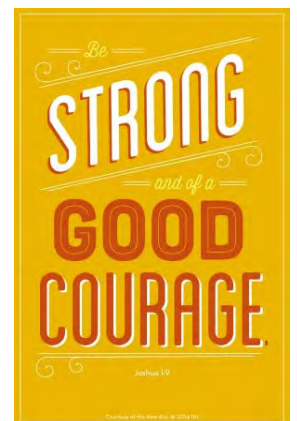
# SEC FAMILY

exist across the genders, it is also self-evident that we are endowed with gender-determined strengths and capacities. It is by design that women give birth and produce milk, while men possess nipples that serve little purpose. It was not by accident that it was men who were commanded, “Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your families, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes” (Nehemiah 4:14). What would we think of a man who sent his wife to investigate a suspicious noise in the house in the middle of the night? Paul also recognized gender differences when he counselled men, “each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband” (Ephesians 5:33). Paul’s words are not intended to indicate that men do not need love or that women do not need respect. However, his emphasis recognizes that men and women have different primary drives for affection and recognition. Of course, we must make adaptations to fit specific circumstances, but God made us different for a reason. Eve was given to Adam as a “helpmate” to complement him. As Evangelist E E Cleveland put it, “God gave Eve to Adam so that Adam would have the sense He didn’t give him.” God created Adam and Eve different, but equal.



The reality is that we live in a society in which gender distinctions are falling like a stack of dominoes against the backdrop of gender equality and political correctness. The LGBTIQ lobby has aggressively claimed ground traditionally occupied by those who espouse a traditional Christian heritage. Dissenting voices are increasingly silenced by charges of bigotry and homophobia. The legalization of same-sex marriages has been a significant “game-changer” which has opened the floodgate to a slue of challenges to biblical values, further blurring the landscape of authentic masculinity. While seeking to create a society in which men and women operate on a level playing field in all walks of life, liberal socialism has also sought to eradicate the concept of masculinity as an irrelevant social construct.

On the opposite end of the scale, traditional values fuelled by the media has played a significant role in defining masculinity in terms of winning, risk-taking, violence, dominance, sexual prowess, self-reliance, primacy of work, power over women, and the pursuit of status. The continuing popularity of James Bond movies attest to the enduring appeal of an ‘alpha male’ among both genders. Unfortunately, some in the church have bought into this secular concept of masculinity. However, they have coated it with a religious veneer by misapplying biblical passages about submission and headship in order to justify abuse and discrimination. Yet Paul counsels us, “do not be conformed to this world” (Romans 12:2). The Message Bible renders the same text, “Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.”



Trying to define what constitutes biblical masculinity is a little like trying to nail a jelly to a wall. We have to be careful not to prescribe a “one size fits all” masculinity for the simple reason that no such thing exists. Even Jesus in His perfection, provides a limited model for masculinity in that He was never a husband or a father, and we are told very little about His working life. Jesus came primarily to “seek and to save” (Luke 19:10), not to initiate men into manhood. Whatever it is, biblical masculinity arises out of an unswerving commitment to remain true to God’s word and is modelled on the *character* of the man Christ Jesus. Unfortunately, a historically inaccurate portrayal of who Jesus is, has resulted in mass rejection of both Him and the church. Typically the name of Jesus conjures up stereotyped images of a wimpy hippy-type guy, with long flowing hair, white frock and sandals, who would be more comfortable at a tree-hugging convention than a football match.

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# SEC FAMILY

In his book *Why Men Hate Going To Church*, David Murrow argues that most men in Western society see church as an activity for women, children and non-masculine men. He posits that, “The ideology of masculinity has replaced Christianity as the true religion of men.”

In spite of the macho front men often present, it would be a great mistake to assume that they do not crave emotional connection, warmth, honesty, openness and authenticity. Many are genuinely interested in spirituality, meaning and purpose and are asking deep questions. They want to know how to become better husbands and fathers. They want to know how to deal with complex emotions. However, men are highly sensitive to anything that calls their masculinity into question and unfortunately, the way we tend to practice our faith does just that. Rather than provide the practical challenges; motivational messages; social activities; and sense of purpose that men tend to crave, we ask men to hold hands to pray, hug their neighbours, sing love songs to Jesus and express their emotions publicly. Nineteenth century evangelist Charles Spurgeon challenged the tendency to feminize the church when he said, “There has got abroad a notion, somehow, that if you become a Christian you must sink your manliness and turn milksop”. On the contrary, the call to surrender to Christ is a call to a life of courage and integrity, not passive conformity. Gentle Jesus meek and mild may appeal to some, but men generally prefer the Jesus who turns over tables; tells it like it is to the Pharisees; defends the damsel in distress; challenges the status quo and sends demons packing with their tail between their legs.



The same Jesus who said, “turn the other cheek” (Matthew 5:39) is the same warrior Jesus who will return to wage war on His enemies with fire in His eyes (see Revelation 19:11). The choice of which Jesus we will serve is not an “either/or”, it is a “both/and.” In seeking to make Christianity more appealing to men we must avoid substituting one stereotyped view of an insipid Jesus with another version who is an adventure-seeking, iron-pumping, back-slapping, “one of the lads.” Jesus is the prime example of what it means to be a real man who is fully in touch with his emotions and yet remain fully masculine. Western Christianity has overemphasized the

traits of Jesus’ character that are normally associated with femininity, while giving insufficient attention to those that demonstrate masculinity. However, our primary goal must not be to magnify the masculine traits of Jesus, but to emphasize His character. As men are transformed into His image they are empowered to live out His ideals in a manner consistent with their manhood. The true virtues of masculinity cannot be socially engineered. The values that we often associate with masculinity, like courage, honour, integrity, determination, and protectiveness, are all outgrowths of character transformation through a living connection with God.

There is no time in the history of the church when the demonstration of Christian manhood is more important. We live in a society where most boys and young men are educated by women at primary and secondary levels. In the church, men are vastly outnumbered and often to shy away from leadership responsibilities. Sabbath School teachers and Pathfinder leaders tend to be female. Add to that the fact that many boys in our communities and in the church, are raised (admirably) by single-mothers and that in many homes where fathers are physically present they are MIA (missing in action) when it comes to the mentoring of their sons. All these factors contribute to a lack of young men being trained by older men to be men and to become disciples of Jesus Christ. We desperately need men who are committed to Jesus Christ, dedicated to their families and God-honouring labour, to step up to the challenge issued by Paul to, “guide the young men to live disciplined lives. But mostly, show them all this by doing it yourself, incorruptible in your teaching, your words solid and sane” (Titus 2:6-8 *The Message Bible*).

**“Be of good courage, and let us play the man for our people, and for the cities of our God”  
2 Samuel 10:12**

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## SEC Family Ministries Department Calendar of Events 2016



DATE	EVENT	VENUE
Sunday 11 January	Evangelism Expo	Newbold College
Sunday 7 February	Family Ministry Training SEC Certificate in Family Life Education Pt 1	Stanborough Centre
Saturday 6 February - Saturday 13 February	Christian Home & Marriage Week (see GC Plan Book downloadable from SEC Website)	All Churches
Sunday 13 March	Family Ministry Training SEC Certificate in Family Life Education Pt 2	Stanborough Centre
Friday 18 March - Sunday 20 March	SEC Blended Hearts Marriage Retreat	Wokefield Park, Reading
Sunday 17 April	Family Ministry Training SEC Certificate in Family Life Education Pt 3	Stanborough Centre
Sunday 8 May	Family Ministry Training SEC Certificate in Family Life Education Pt 4	Stanborough Centre
Monday 6 June - Sunday 12 June	SEC Camp Meeting (Guest Family Life Speaker Dr Allan Walsh for Andrews University)	Camber Sands, Sussex
July/August	Solofest - Singles' Day of Fellowship	TBC
Friday 15 July Sunday 17 July	Singles' Weekend Retreat - Cultivate Purpose & Let God (This is not an SEC FM event - see poster for details)	Wokefield Park
Sunday 7 August - Sunday 14 August	SEC Family Camp	Chapel Porth, Cornwall
Sunday 14 August - Sunday 21 August	SEC Lone Parent Camp	Chapel Porth, Cornwall
Saturday 3 September - Saturday 10 September	Family Togetherness Week (see GC Plan Book downloadable from SEC Website)	All Churches
Friday 14 October - Sunday 16 October	SEC Blended Hearts Marriage Retreat	Denham Grove, Uxbridge
Sunday 2 October	Family Ministries Training Divorce Recovery Ministry	Stanborough Centre
Sunday 13 November	Family Ministries Training Supporting People Coping With Loss	Stanborough Centre

**For more information about any of the listed events please contact:**

**SEC Family Ministries Department, 25 St John's Road. Watford, WD17 1PZ**


**tel: 01923 232 728 fax: 01923 250 582 email: [fm@secadventist.org.uk](mailto:fm@secadventist.org.uk)**

**web: [sec.adventist.org.uk](http://sec.adventist.org.uk)**

 **The SEC Family Ministry Marriage Retreat** 

## Blended Hearts

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



**Presenters:**  
Irma & Les Ackie

**18th - 20th March 2016**

Venue: Wokefield Park, Goodboys Lane, Mortimer, Reading, Berkshire, RG7 3AE

Cost: £250 per couple (subsidies and split payments available for early booking)

Register at [sec.adventist.org.uk/events](http://sec.adventist.org.uk/events)

**MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT FELLOWSHIP**  
INVITES YOU TO THEIR QUARTERLY DINNER WITH GUEST SPEAKER  
**DR CHIDI NGWABA**  
INVEST TIME IN YOUR MARRIAGE...BECAUSE IT'S WORTH IT




**March 5, 2016, 7PM - 11PM**

Park Inn Hotel  
Bath Road, Heathrow, Middlesex UB7


£60 per couple.

Account Name: The Marriage Enrichment Fellowship [Natwest]  
Sort code: 60-17-21 Account Number: 89169174

FOR MORE INFORMATION & CONFIRMING ANY PAYMENTS MADE CONTACT:  
ADA SIAGE @ [ADASIAGE@YAHOO.COM]  
[07818 44 17 61]  
NORA HAMMOND @ [NORA.HAMMOND.COM]  
[07988 23 77 28]

  
Adventist Family Ministries

**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:**

- Leading Family Ministry
- 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 DEPARTMENT  
25 St John's Road, Watford Hertfordshire, WD17 1PZ  
Phone: 01923 23 27 28  
Email: [fm@secadventist.org.uk](mailto:fm@secadventist.org.uk)

Register with Ligia at [lbuzac@secadventist.org.uk](mailto:lbuzac@secadventist.org.uk) or call 01923 232 728

**Asna ANNUAL Family RESPITE & TRAINING WEEKEND**

# STRONGER TOGETHER

*Connecting People, Changing Lives*





**8-10 April 2016**  
SUNNINGDALE HOTEL, LARCH AVE  
ASCOT BERKSHIRE. SL5 0QE

- £120 Double Occupancy Rooms (£100 ASNA Members)
- £140 Single Occupancy Rooms (£120 ASNA Members)
- £40 - Children
- FREE - Children Under 5
- FREE - Children with disabilities up to 18 years
- £50 - Day Delegate Per Person
- £40 - ASNA Day Delegate Per Person

Contact Sophia Nicholls/Helen Batten on 07768 298 297 / [info@asna.info](mailto:info@asna.info) or [www.asna.info](http://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

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

# SEC FAMILY



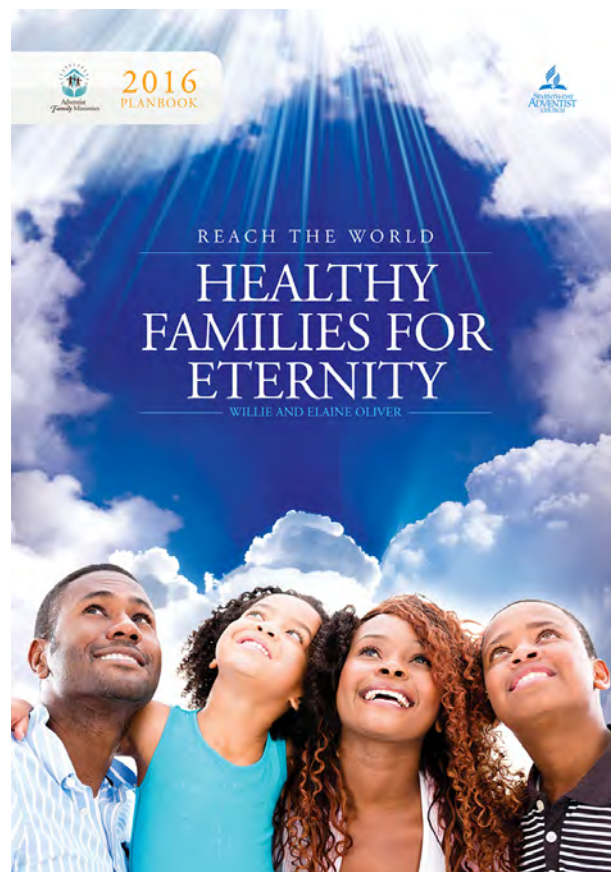
**SINGLES RETREAT 2016**  
15th-17th July 2016  
**Cultivate Purpose & Let God**  
Finding peace, happiness and spiritual fulfilment with yourself & how to create space for another person

Guest Speaker:  
Pastor Dewaine Frazer

Venue: De Vere Venues Wokefield Park Goodboys Lane Reading RG7 3AH  
Price: £149/person (double occupancy) & £159 (single occupancy)  
Limited spaces.....book your space now for this empowering event, you will surely be blessed and uplifted.

A non refundable deposit of £50 is required to secure your place by 30 January 2016 and the full amount should be paid in by 31 March 2016.  
We accept payment in instalments.  
Bank Details: Lloyds Bank Sort Code: 306676, Account no. 60146660  
Please put TSR as reference

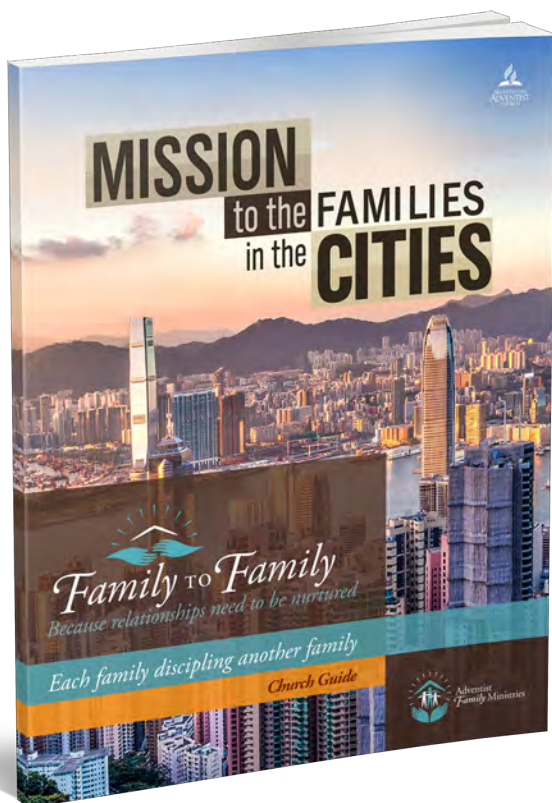
For enquiries, please contact:  
Christina Mithombeni: 07926 102 187 or Sister Patience: 07908 713 561



2016 PLANBOOK

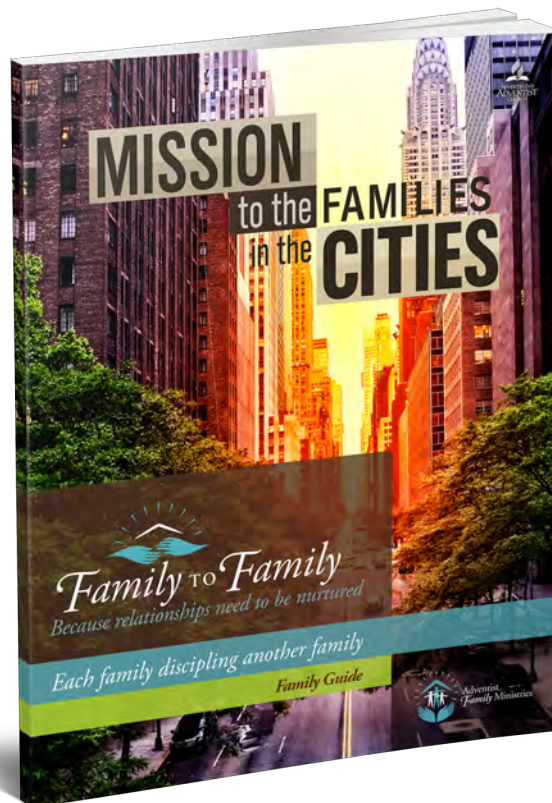
REACH THE WORLD  
**HEALTHY FAMILIES FOR ETERNITY**  
WILLIE AND ELAINE OLIVER

Click on the link to download the Family Ministry Planbook at <http://family.adventist.org/family-ministry-planbook.html>



**MISSION to the FAMILIES in the CITIES**

*Family to Family*  
Because relationships need to be nurtured  
Each family discipling another family  
Church Guide



**MISSION to the FAMILIES in the CITIES**

*Family to Family*  
Because relationships need to be nurtured  
Each family discipling another family  
Family Guide

Click on the link to download the Mission to the Families guides at <http://family.adventist.org/mission-to-the-families-in-the-cities-family-to-family.html>

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


Focus Arts Promotions & Lee NTCG Presents

## LOVE SAX AND ALL THAT JAZZ 2

### DA MANS DEM

Sat 13th Feb 2016  
NTCG 370 Lee High Rd  
London, SE12 8RS  
Show Starts 7PM  
Doors open at 6.30pm  
£15 Adv | £17.50 Door  
Early Bird £12 before 21st Jan

Online Booking: [www.theficketsellers.co.uk](http://www.theficketsellers.co.uk) | 0844 870 0000  
Focus Arts 07989 574 066 | Lee NTCG 020 8265 2120  
@Believe Books 0203 490 5515 | Bright Lights 07723 085 092

Supported by 



Final Call Productions Presents 

## AND THERE WAS WAR

Written & Directed by Jermaine Wong

WHOSE SIDE WILL YOU CHOOSE?

EASTER 2016 - 26<sup>TH</sup> - 28<sup>TH</sup> MARCH  
STRATFORD CIRCUS ARTS CENTRE  
THEATRE SQUARE, LONDON E15 1BX

DOORS OPEN: 7PM SAT, MON, 7:30PM SUN  
SUN 4PM MATINEE

ADMISSION £15 CONCESSION £12  
BOX OFFICE: 0844 357 2625  
[www.finalcallproductions.com](http://www.finalcallproductions.com)



If you have something to say on family matters, relational themes, emotional wellbeing, or would just like to let others know about what's happening in your church or community for families, why not put it in writing and submit it for publication? Email [fm@secadventist.org.uk](mailto:fm@secadventist.org.uk)

# MAD ABOUT MARRIAGE

ABOUT



[www.madaboutmarriage.com](http://www.madaboutmarriage.com)

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

## Useful Links

AdventSource -  
[www.adventsource.org/](http://www.adventsource.org/)

Association of Christian  
Counsellors - [www.acc-uk.org/](http://www.acc-uk.org/)

Barna Research -  
[www.barna.org/](http://www.barna.org/)

Care for the Family -  
[www.careforthefamily.org.uk/](http://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/)

Family & Parenting Institute -  
[www.familyandparenting.org/](http://www.familyandparenting.org/)

Family Friendly Church Trust -  
[www.familyfriendlychurches.org.uk/NewSite/ffc.php](http://www.familyfriendlychurches.org.uk/NewSite/ffc.php)

Focus on the Family  
[www.family.org](http://www.family.org)

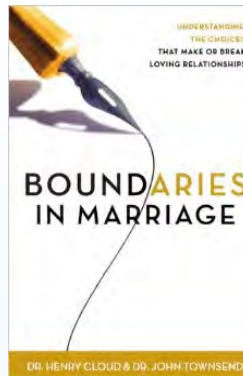
In Discipleship -  
[www.indiscipleship.org](http://www.indiscipleship.org)

Prepare Enrich -  
[www.prepare-enrich.co.uk/](http://www.prepare-enrich.co.uk/)

Through the Roof (Disability  
outreach) -  
[www.throughtheroof.org](http://www.throughtheroof.org)

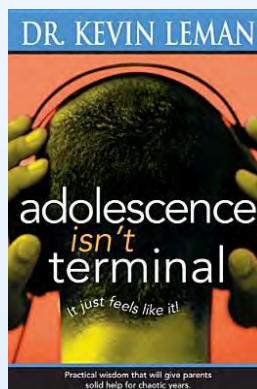
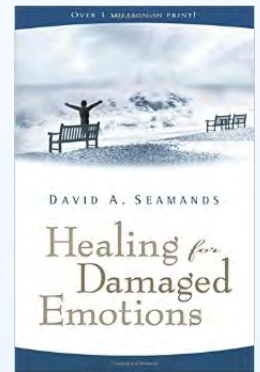
Women's Aid -  
[www.womensaid.org.uk/](http://www.womensaid.org.uk/)

## Recommended Reading



**Boundaries in Marriage.** According to Drs Cloud & Townsend, only when a husband and wife know and respect each other's needs, choices, and freedom can they give themselves freely and lovingly to one another. This book helps couples understand the friction points in their relationship and how to move beyond them to the mutual care, respect, affirmation, and intimacy for which they both long.

**Healing for Damaged Emotions.** Whether through our own fallen temperament, wilful disobedience, or as victims of the hurtful actions of others, many of us struggle with crippling emotions and low self-worth. The pain of such emotions is often present with us even though the incidents and relationships that caused the hurt may be long past. David Seamands provides biblical principles for healing and helping.



**Adolescence Isn't Terminal.** Trusted family relationship expert Kevin Leman helps parents navigate the choppy waters of their children's teen years with humour and grace. Emotive stories and practical advice give parents hope and encouragement as they guide their children to maturity. Topics include peer pressure, dating, risky behaviour, and more.

## Cornerstone Counselling Service

0207 723 8050  
or [ccs@secadventist.org.uk](mailto: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 Ministry



Pr Les Ackie  
Director:  
01923 656 510  
[lackie@secadventist.org.uk](mailto:lackie@secadventist.org.uk)



Ligia Buzac  
Secretary:  
01923 656 530  
[lbuzac@secadventist.org.uk](mailto:lbuzac@secadventist.org.uk)

Postal Address: 25 St John's Road, Watford WD17 1PZ

Email: [fm@secadventist.org.uk](mailto:fm@secadventist.org.uk)

SEC Website: [sec.adventist.org.uk](http://sec.adventist.org.uk)