

BUC FAMILY

A Publication of the BUC Family, Children and Possibility Ministries

In this issue:

The Burden of Forgiveness: A Reflection on Forgiveness, Abuse and Accountability

Adventists, Valentine's Day and the Romantic Imperative

Safeguarding Our Church Policy Statement

Events & Notices

Recommended Reading

The Burden of Forgiveness: A Reflection on Forgiveness, Abuse, and Accountability

Joanna Daniel - Counsellor and Author

Forgiveness is a central tenet of the Christian faith. The Bible teaches that if we forgive others, our Heavenly Father will forgive us (Matthew 6:14). This directive guides believers on the importance of extending grace. In the well-known exchange between Peter and Jesus, Peter asks how often he should forgive someone who wrongs him. Jesus replies, “seventy times seven” (Matthew 18:21-22), implying that we should consider generously offering forgiveness as Christians.

But what happens when forgiveness is misapplied, especially in the context of abusive relationships? Christians get called to forgive, but God does not give commands meant to cause harm. So, how do we reconcile the principle of “seventy times seven” with the harsh reality of abuse, particularly in marriages?

A Misunderstood Mandate

From a therapeutic perspective, I have spent over two decades working with women, many of whom are Christian and have experienced abuse.

A troubling pattern I’ve seen is how the burden of forgiveness often falls solely on the victim. The church, at times, inadvertently places the responsibility of healing the relationship entirely on the woman, the victim, while neglecting to hold the perpetrator accountable. This approach can be damaging.

Forgiveness is also frequently misunderstood as the path to changing the abuser’s behaviour, but this interpretation is flawed. Time and again, I’ve seen women give their all—praying, forgiving, and trying to mould themselves into whatever shape their abusive spouse demands—only to discover that nothing changes. The promise that forgiveness will somehow transform their abuser rings hollow.

It can be devastating when these women realise that their forgiveness will not lead to the change they had hoped for. The light of hope dims in their eyes as they confront the painful truth: forgiveness, as the church teaches, does not stop the abuse or make the abuser a better person.

The Emotional Toll of Misapplied Forgiveness

Forgiveness, when misapplied, places an overwhelming emotional burden on the victim. Many women who are in abusive marriages develop anxiety due to the constant state of hypervigilance they must maintain to avoid upsetting their abuser. They may also experience depression as they internalise

feelings of guilt, shame, fear, and sadness. When leaders frame forgiveness as the solution to abuse, the victim is left feeling responsible not only for the abuse but also for “fixing” their abuser. Blaming victims is not the type of forgiveness that Jesus meant when He instructed Peter to forgive “seventy times seven.” Jesus’s command does not ask us to remain in harmful situations or to bear the sole responsibility for someone else’s change.

Forgiveness vs. Accountability

In Luke 3:8, John the Baptist taught that people should “bear fruits worthy of repentance.” This principle is crucial when addressing forgiveness in the context of abuse. Repentance requires genuine change, not just lip service or empty promises. True repentance is a transformation from the inside out, reflected in changed actions, behaviour, and character.

For an abuser, bearing fruit worthy of repentance means taking full responsibility for their actions, seeking help, and demonstrating consistent behavioural change. It means no longer insulting or belittling their spouse but instead building them up and living out the command in Ephesians 4:29: “Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.” A repentant person will also prioritise their family’s emotional and spiritual safety.

For a woman in an abusive relationship, actual change will be evident when her home no longer feels like a place of fear or dread but becomes a safe, loving environment. She will no longer have to live in constant anxiety, waiting for the next cycle of abuse to begin. A truly repentant man will take ownership of his emotional triggers, work on his self-awareness, and grow in emotional and spiritual maturity.

Forgiveness alone cannot achieve this kind of transformation. Forgiveness is not a magic key that unlocks a new heart in someone else. Change is the external reflection of internal work that individuals must undertake for themselves.

The Church’s Responsibility

When the church places the burden of forgiveness on victims without addressing the need for accountability and repentance from perpetrators, it is not teaching the true gospel of Christ. Instead of leading people toward genuine heart transformation through God’s grace, it risks enabling abuse to continue unchecked.

By failing to hold abusers accountable, the church does a disservice to both victims and perpetrators. Victims get tasked with the impossible job of changing someone else through their forgiveness. At the same time, leaders deprive perpetrators of the opportunity to confront their sins, repent, and seek true healing through Christ.

What Forgiveness Looks Like

According to the Bible, forgiveness is a powerful and necessary act of grace. However, it shouldn’t be weaponised against victims, forcing them to remain in unsafe situations. Forgiveness does not mean condoning sin, ignoring harm, or taking responsibility for someone else’s change.

Forgiveness is about releasing bitterness and allowing yourself to heal from the wrongs done to you. It’s about entrusting justice to God, knowing He is righteous and will ultimately deal with those who refuse to change. But forgiveness does not negate the need for boundaries, nor does it require staying in an abusive relationship.

In cases of abuse, the church should empower victims to set healthy boundaries, seek safety, and protect themselves from further harm. Forgiveness may still be part of their journey, but it should never be used as a tool to control them or to avoid holding the abuser accountable.

Conclusion

The burden of forgiveness should never fall solely on the victim, especially in abusive relationships. While forgiveness is a powerful part of the healing process, it is not a substitute for accountability or genuine repentance.

If done well, the church can support both victims and perpetrators, encouraging repentance and heart transformation while protecting the vulnerable and ensuring their safety.

However, what often happens is that abusers are protected, not encouraged to repent and still allowed to serve even in leadership positions instead of stepping back in humility. And to make everyone comfortable, the victims are shamed for the hurt they carry.

When understood correctly, forgiveness offers freedom and healing. But it should never shield abusers from the consequences of their actions. As we navigate these problematic dynamics, we must remember that God calls us to forgive, but He also calls for justice, accountability, and the protection of the oppressed.



YOU ARE NOT ALONE

CCS is here for you

CONTACT
0330 133 2495
 Dedicated listening line
0207 723 8050
 Office Number / Appointments
connect@ccscounselling.org.uk
www.ccscounselling.org.uk

"I am not living,
 I am just surviving."
Together we can make it happen.

Often, it is not the initial experience that creates the overwhelming pain, but the lack of support.

Do not suffer alone
 Do not suffer in silence
 CCS is here to support you
 Together we can win your struggle.

CCS
 Cornerstone
 Counselling Service



Facing Difficult times or issues, Need to talk?

The first step is the hardest. Call the NEC Counselling Service Today!

07539 211 442

We can arrange for you to access support.

FORWARD We Go!

North England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
 office: +44 (0) 115 960 6312 mobile: +44 (0) 7918618606
 22 Zulia Road, Nottingham, Notts - NG3 5DB
franch@necadventist.org.uk • necadventist.org.uk

Seventh-day Adventist Church



Adventists, Valentine's Day and the Romantic Imperative

Pr Les Ackie

The media and retail outlets are awash with stories and merchandise, fuelling the romantic fever surrounding Valentine's Day (14 February). While some Adventists embrace the opportunities that the day affords to declare their undying love to their beloved, others recoil from the occasion as a relic of pagan debauchery. The origin of the day is clouded in speculation. However, in spite of revisionist attempts to romanticise the origins of Valentine's Day, the strongest evidence indicates that it has its roots firmly in a pagan ritual called Lupercalia, a feast held in honour of the Roman god, Lupercus. This amounted to a sexual lottery in which names were drawn out of a box at random to select sexual partners for a year until the next Valentine's Day came around. The modern practice of giving cards to ask/tell someone to "be my Valentine" seems to be a holdover from this ancient sexual lottery. So, should we take a firm stand and "touch not the unclean thing" (2 Corinthians 6:17), or can we in all good conscience separate ancient pagan practices from modern observance?

Does Valentine's pagan roots invalidate the modern-day practice of sharing romantic gestures that are consistent with good Christian values? If the mere connection to paganism was sufficient to warrant our rejection, we would have to go back to referring to the days of the week by their number designation rather than the pagan names dedicated to Norse gods that we have adopted. In the same way that Ellen White took a very pragmatic approach toward the Christmas season, Valentine's Day can also be, "made to serve a very good purpose" (The Adventist Home, 478).

While people's minds are focussed on love and romance, we can use the opportunity to promote the best principles for healthy relationships in our programming and outreach. On a personal level, I am no fan of Valentine's Day. I have a strong objection to being dictated to as to when I should demonstrate affection to my wife, by organisations and companies who have a vested interest in the day. A major part of the value of romantic acts is their unexpected nature. Giving gifts out of a sense of obligation can actually rob the deed of real value. Matt Groening partly expressed my objections to Valentine's Day when he said, "Romance is dead. It was acquired in a hostile takeover by Hallmark and Disney, homogenised, and sold off piece by piece."

While I agree with Groening's amusing observation that 'romance' has been blatantly commercialised in the pursuit of 'filthy lucre', I fundamentally disagree with the view that romance is dead. Romance is alive and well and should always remain so in every marriage. However, if we have to rely on a 'day' in order to 'be romantic' we have bigger problems to worry about than the distant taint of paganism. In the context of marriage, far from being just a pleasant bonus, romance is an essential element of a healthy marital relationship. The fact that a marriage cannot depend on the warm fuzzy feelings generated by acts of love, does not invalidate the value of these warm fuzzies. A marriage devoid of affectionate emotional input becomes dry, lifeless and monotonous.

Because there is no one size fits all, trying to define romance is like trying to nail jelly to a wall. One man's romantic gesture is another woman's passion killer. In general terms, Jimmy Evans, founder of Marriage Today, defines romance as "self-initiated pursuit . . . Romance says, 'I like to think about you and I want to please you as a priority in my life.'" Romance shows that the object of our love is on our heart and that we really care. The effort and creativity that we invest to demonstrate our love communicates the value we see in each other. So, in the words of the Apostle, "let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband" (1 Corinthians 7:3).



The Seventh-day Adventist Church values every human being as part of God's creation. We are committed to safeguarding all children and adults at risk who take part in our services and activities.

Safeguarding Policy Statement

The Seventh-day Adventist Church commits to:

- Promote a safe environment for children and adults at risk of harm
- Respond promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation
- Provide compassionate care and support for survivors of abuse
- Ensure that those working with children and adults at risk are trained and supported
- Raise awareness of safeguarding responsibilities throughout all church programming and provisions
- Work collaboratively with safeguarding agencies
- Follow legislation, statutory guidance and recognised best practice in order to protect the vulnerable
- Implement, maintain and regularly review the procedures outlined in our safeguarding policy



Safeguarding is Everybody's Responsibility

[Click here to download the BUC Safeguarding Policy and Procedures](#)



Celebrate Our Family

through Marriage, Creation and Sabbath

CHRISTIAN HOME AND MARRIAGE WEEK

8th February to 15th February 2025 | Every night 7- 9pm except Thursday

8th Feb Sabbath Morning Service 9:30am to 1pm and 15th Feb 9:15am to 1pm

Followed by Question and Answer session in the afternoon 4pm to 6pm

@ 24 Windsor Street, South Birmingham B7 4HY



Pastor John Francis

8th February 2025

Let's Celebrate Family

12th February 2025

God's Wonderful Design for Relationships



Pastor Les Ackie

8th February 2025

Experience the Joy



Dr Kirk Thomas

9th February 2025

Image Bearers



Dr Beatrice Kastrati

11th February 2025

Exploring Creation
and Human Sexuality



Pastor Winsome

Brown-Baadjes

11th February 2025

The Seven Secrets of Storm-Resilient
Family Relationships



Elder Clarence Jackson

14th February 2025

What's Love Got to Do With It



Pastor Ian Sweeney

15th February 2025

Parenting Boys



Dr Gina Miller

15th February 2025

Sabbath School

Broadcast live each night on NEC YouTube | Question & Answer Session | Health Spot

NEC Family Ministries Department

Tel: 0115 960 6312 Email: family@necadventist.org.uk



@necadventist



Seventh-day
Adventist Church



**SOUTH ENGLAND
CONFERENCE**



Family Ministry Leadership training

2025

10 am-1 pm

9TH OF FEBRUARY

**BUILDING AND EQUIPPING YOUR
FAMILY MINISTRY TEAM**

DR. RIO ESPULGAR

**THE ROLE OF FATHERS IN THE
FAMILY**

DR. AUGUSTUS LAWRENCE

30TH OF MARCH

**REKINDLING EMOTIONAL AND
PHYSICAL INTIMACY**

DR. DENIAS CHIHWAI

**TACKLING DEBT AND SAVING FOR
THE FUTURE**

DR. PAUL THOMSON

27TH OF APRIL

**NAVIGATING CONFLICT: FROM TENSION
TO RESOLUTION**

DR. RIO ESPULGAR

**SUPPORTING FAMILIES WITH
SPECIAL NEEDS**

SOPHIA NICHOLLS

22ND OF JUNE

**RECOGNIZING AND MANAGING
STRESS IN FAMILIES**

HANNAH COMMODORE

**LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX: TEACHING
HEALTHY CONVERSATIONS FROM**

TODDLERS TO TEENS

PASTOR JOHN FRANCIS

ZOOM LINK:

**[HTTPS://US06WEB.ZOOM.US/J/87977000739?](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87977000739?pwd=SBFZGMWGEIQDTWMTYZYN9CYVOY5WZU.1)
[PWD=SBFZGMWGEIQDTWMTYZYN9CYVOY5WZU.1](#)**

MEETING ID: 879 7700 0739

PASSCODE: 958669

2025 SEC MEN'S CONFERENCE

STOP // THINK // LISTEN >> LET'S TALK

14 - 16 MARCH 2025

£179 pp (*share twin bed room*)

245 pp (*single room*)

DENHAM *Grove*
Hotel

Tilehouse Lane, Denham, Uxbridge,
London, UB9 5DG

Alberto Francis

Call 01923 232 728 or

Email: afrancis@secadventist.org.uk

REALMEN REALTALK // WORKSHOPS // NETWORKING // WORSHIP



2025 Dates for Your Diary

- Christian Home and Marriage Week: 8-15 February
- Christian Marriage Day: Sabbath 8 February (emphasises marriage)
- Christian Home Day: Sabbath 15 February (emphasises parenting)
- BUC Safeguarding Summit (date to be announced)
- BUC Children's Ministries Leadership Training (to be confirmed)
- Mother's Day: 30 March
- Global Youth & Children's Day: 15 March
- Youth Week of Prayer: 15-22 March
- TED Family Ministries Leadership Training (FMLT): 21-26
- Possibility Ministries Day: 19 April
- BUC Men's Day of Prayer: 26 April
- World Day of Prayer for Children at Risk: 24 May
- Special Needs Camp: Date to be confirmed
- Father's Day: 15 June
- Children's Sabbath: 26 July
- Education Day 16 August
- End It Now - Abuse Awareness Sabbath: 23 August
- Family Togetherness Week: 6-13 September
- Family Togetherness Day of Prayer 13 September
- Creation Sabbath: 25 October
- Week of Prayer: 1-8 November



SAVE THE DATE
FAMILY CAMP 2025
Friday 25th July to Sunday 3rd August
More details to follow in the New Year

Seventh-day Adventist Church
NEC Family Ministries department
Tel: 0115 960 6312 Email: family@necadventist.org.uk
@necadventist

The graphic features a vibrant illustration of a campsite with a yellow tent, a green backpack, and a white cooler. Below the illustration is a collage of nine photographs showing various activities at a family camp, including people playing sports, sitting around a campfire, and enjoying the outdoors. A small logo of a stylized flame is visible in the top right corner.



REAL FAMILY TALK
WITH WILLIE & ELAINE OLIVER

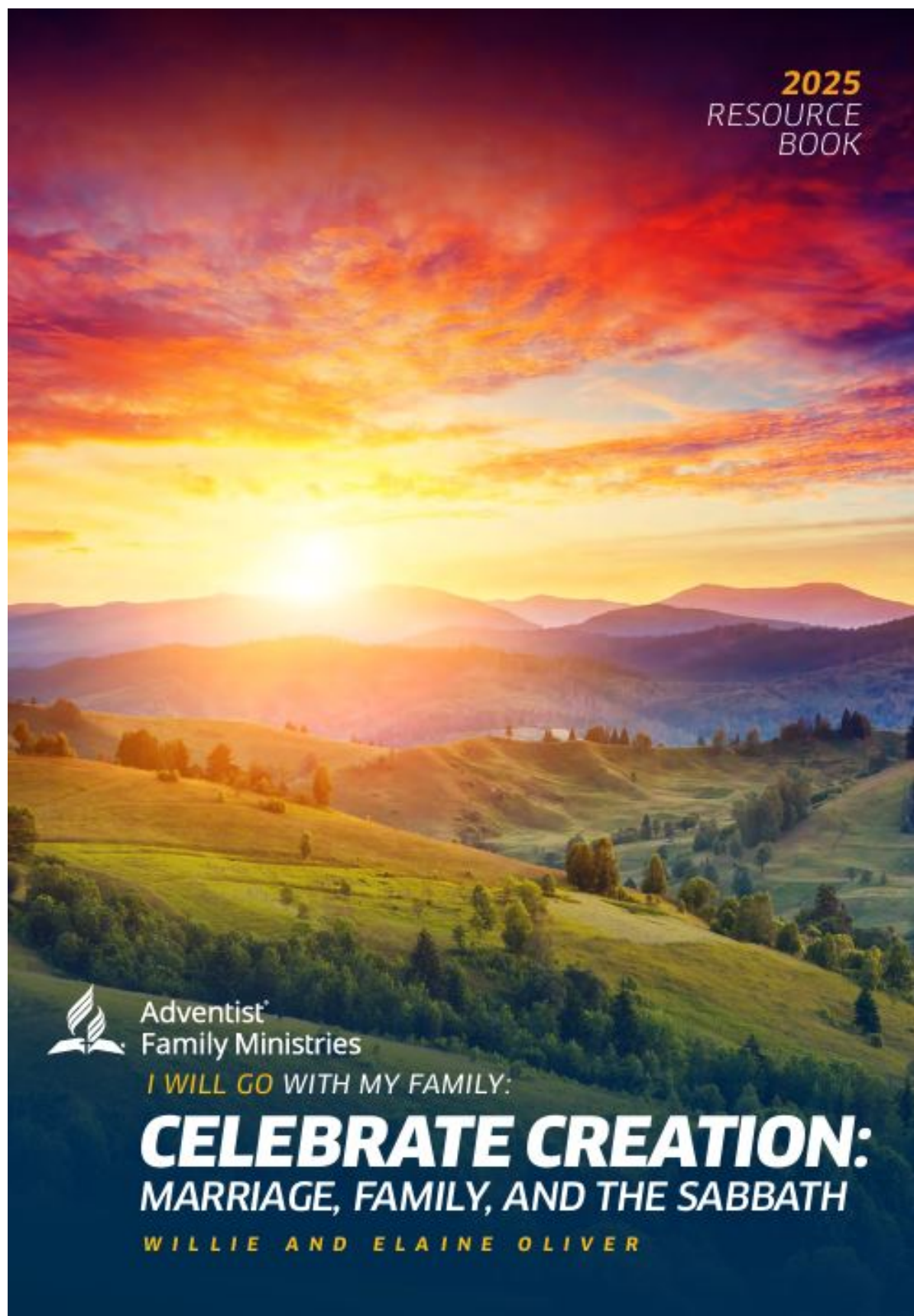
Through engaging, informative, and spiritual discussions about issues facing today's families, Real Family Talk seeks to strengthen families and inspire hope.

[Real Family Talk](#)

The graphic features a large, stylized house icon with a purple heart inside. To the right of the house icon is the text 'REAL FAMILY TALK' in bold, black, uppercase letters. Below this is the text 'WITH WILLIE & ELAINE OLIVER' in a smaller, black, uppercase font. To the right of the text is a photograph of Willie and Elaine Oliver, a man and a woman, smiling and standing together. Willie is wearing a dark suit and glasses, and Elaine is wearing a blue blazer and a black skirt. Below the text is a paragraph describing the show's purpose. At the bottom is a link to 'Real Family Talk' and a row of social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Email, and Telegram.

Click the link watch past episodes of [Real Family Talk](#)



SEC Men Ministry presents

REAL MEN REAL TALK

REAL MEN EMBRACING GOD'S PRESENCE

It's a forum where Men can talk about how they really feel about issues that matters to them.



  **EVERY MONDAY**
TIME: 7:30PM - 9:30PM GMT

[FACEBOOK.COM/SECMENSMINISTRY](https://facebook.com/secmensministry)



EVERY THURSDAY 8PM GMT

ADVENTIST SINGLES PRAYER MEETING

PRAYER MEETING FOR SINGLE ADVENTISTS
THURSDAYS 8PM UK TIME / 3PM EST
ROOM IS OPEN 24HRS A DAY TO PRAY
ZOOM ID: 846 3079 9939 PASSCODE: Pray

S.N.A.G.D. SDA Singles Ministry & Creative Spiritual Insights
invite you to join the:

LET'S BUILD
Singles Devotional Project

WANTED

SDA WRITERS WHO CAN SHARE ON THE JOYS, CHALLENGES, POSITIVES, NEEDS & OPPORTUNITIES THAT SINGLES FACE



ELIGIBLE WRITERS

- Must be members of the SDA Church
- Single and willing to share their experience
- Married and willing to write on their single experience
- Can be Conference Directors or Church leaders

Entries should be 500-750 words long



Interested?



EMAIL: submit@snagdsdasingles.org




HAY'S WOOD RETREAT

EST. 2022





BEYOND THE ORDINARY - UNFORGETTABLE EVENTS IN THE HEART OF NORFOLK

www.hayswoodretreat.com bookings@hayswoodretreat.com



Click the link to download the Resource Book [Keys to Healthy Minds](#)



Click the link to learn more and download the resource
[Flourish](#)

Useful Links

[AdventSource](#)

[Adventist Possibility Ministries](#)

[Adventist Single Adult Ministries \(ASAM\)](#)

[Adventist Special Needs Association \(ASNA\)](#)

[BUC Family Ministries](#)

[BUC Safeguarding](#)

[Care for the Family](#)

[GC Children's Ministries](#)

[GC Family Ministries](#)

[In Discipleship](#)

[Prepare Enrich](#)

[TED Children's Ministries](#)

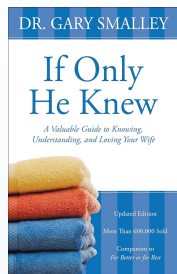
[TED Family Ministries](#)

[TED Possiblity Ministries](#)

[Through the Roof \(Disability outreach\)](#)

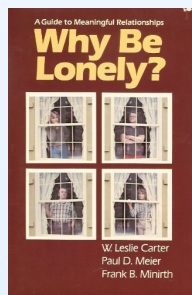
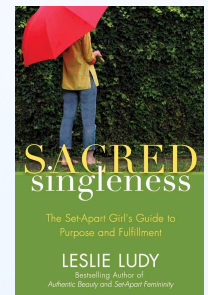
[Women's Aid](#)

Recommended Reading



If Only He Knew. Gary Smalley explains a woman's deepest needs, shows a man how to meet those needs, and gives ten simple steps to strengthen any marriage. He helps men to understand not only how to respond to a woman's feelings, but also how to make her feel important. Using humorous and touching illustrations from his own life, as well as case histories and biblical examples, he maps a blueprint to a better marriage.

Sacred Singleness. Leslie Ludy states that most Christian young women fall into one of two categories: those who are discontent and unfulfilled, and those who are consumed by a passionate romance with Jesus Christ and are living joyful, satisfied lives. She seeks to help readers move toward the totally surrendered and fulfilling experience rather than one of striving and disappointment.



In Why Be Lonely, Drs Carter, Meier, and Minirth address a topic with which many struggle, yet is not often discussed. This book defines what constitutes loneliness and examines the causes and consequences. The authors then address biblical principles for overcoming loneliness and cultivating meaningful relationships.

BUC Family, Children, Possibility Ministries & Safeguarding



Pr Les Ackie
Director:
 01923 665547
lackie@adventist.uk

Kathleen Hanson
Admin Assistant:
 01923 665546
khanson@adventist.uk

Postal Address: Seventh-day Adventist Church
 Headquarters Stanborough Park, Watford WD25 1PZ

BUC Website: adventist.uk