BUC FAMILY

A Publication of the BUC Family, Children and Possibility Ministries

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Where is the Love? A Plea for Compassion

Pr Les Ackie

Since the day Hamas terrorists slaughtered an estimated 1,300 Israelis and injured over 4000 others, the date, the '7th October' has been imprinted on our collective psyche. The attack, chilling in its malevolence, represents the worst eradication of Jewish lives since the holocaust. The response unleashed by Israel against Hamas and the Palestinian people has seen estimates of over 10,000 perish under the relentless bombardment of densely populated neighbourhoods in Gaza. As we watch the news coverage, our natural desire to be informed collides with the impulse to look away as parents carry their lifeless children, infancy is traumatised, families are torn apart - all collateral damage in a war in which there can only be losers. Our hearts break.

It is a tragic irony that both sides who, for decades, have fought 'tooth and nail' over the possession of 'holy' sites and 'sacred' lands, claim to serve a benevolent Creator who is the very personification of love. Yet both sides perpetrate acts of violence and dehumanising abuses convinced that they hold the moral high ground. Where is the love?

Despite attempts to use Hamas' barbarism as justification for reducing Gaza to rubble with the inevitable loss of civilian lives, 7th October did not happen in a vacuum. Palestinian/Israeli history is a long, blood-stained path. There is no lack of past atrocities that can be used to sanction present retribution. Despite Israel's goal to eradicate Hamas, it is more likely that the blood of those who die for the cause will be as seed germinating the next generation of mutual hatred.

What is it that happens in people's minds 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).

The parable of the Good Samaritan illustrates what can happen in our hearts when we lose sight of people's humanity. The priest and the Levite were not evil as we might define the term, but they

were overly concerned with their busyness, self-preservation and religious correctness and contempt for Samaritans, 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 practice. 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 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, "Are we 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."

So long as Israelis and Palestinians operate primarily out of fear and anger, a peaceful resolution will be impossible. The same applies in our marriages, our families and in all our relationships. 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 tender-hearted, 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).

Please visit the BUC website for information and resources

Adventist® Family Ministries

Click this link to access the site

Adventist® Children's Ministries

Click this link to access the site

Adventist® Possibility Ministries

Click this link to access the site

KEEPING OUR CHURCH FAMILY SAFE

Click this link to access the site

Five Reasons to Teach Your Children to Pray

Pr Cyril Sweeney

I read a blog published 11.00 am on Monday 16th March 2015 by Janet Denison. Having read it, I thought this is something valuable for all parents and children to be reminded of. Janet begins by highlighting the fact that we teach our children the colours of the world and how to count their fingers and toes. We teach them how to say "thank you" when they should be grateful and "I am sorry" if they have made a mistake. We teach our children not to communicate what they are thinking and feeling. It is important that we teach them how to talk to others. It is crucial that we teach them how to talk with God.

Most mothers value the benefits of breast feeding new born babes on the milk her body naturally produces and which is eagerly consumed by the hungry infant. Her child, however, cannot grow and succeed unless he is weaned and learns to eat for himself. It is generally observed that content Christians are those who have learned how to spend time with God alone, growing and learning from that which they "consume" on their own. Prayer is a good way to begin the "weaning process" and raise children who will be strong, mature believers and followers of Jesus.

What will your child learn if you teach them to pray? They will learn that God is real, and that He is God. Jesus taught his disciples to pray saying, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:9, 10). When we teach our children pray, we teach them to talk to the Creator of the world who is listening in heaven. When we honour God's name, we honour Him as our King. When children pray, they will understand that they have access to the God of the universe and He wants to talk with them about His will for their lives. God wants to be their King.

Prayer is the way they will develop a close, personal relationship with God. "Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth" (Psalms 46:10). The strongest relationships in our lives are with people we have chosen to spend time with in a quiet, exclusive way. The same is true of our relationship with God. If the only time your child spends with God is in the presence of other people, then God is most likely to remain an "acquaintance" rather than a close, personal friend. Teach your children to be still and to spend time alone with God.

They will learn that God loves them and listens to their prayers. Jesus said, "I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it" (John 14:13, 14). It is normal for children to pray for everything they want, and to expect God to do whatever they ask of Him. Most parents struggle with helping their child understand that God's answers to prayer are not always the same as their requests.

Jesus said, "If you ask in my name, I will do it." He said, when you ask for what His holy and perfect character wants to give or do, He will do it. When children pray they will learn that God

loves them too much to give them something that is not perfect. They will also see their prayers answered, just as they asked. God loves to show his children that he loves them and listens to them. When children pray, they will see God answer and know He heard their prayers.

Children will learn that God's answers are unique and important. "Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know" (Jeremiah 33:3). Children will often ask parents or friends for advice. One of the most important things a child can learn is that the only perfect advice is God's. God's answers are unique wisdom that can only be gained by "calling on Him." One of the reasons parents need to "wean" their children spiritually is so that their children will learn to turn to God for the answers that are "hidden" and that cannot be "known" any other way. That is a lesson that will carry them through life. (And it can make the high school and college years a little less stressful for parents!)

Prayer will teach your children that when they make a mistake, there is help and forgiveness available to them, to make it right. "If we confess our sins, He is able faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Prayer will help your children understand God's will for their lives, and that nobody makes perfect choices. Prayer is the first and best response when your children need discipline.

Prayer teaches them that God knows their failure and has a plan to redeem. When a parent prays with their child and ask God for wisdom to know how to discipline, the child is much more likely to learn from that discipline. Your child will learn that they need to make their mistakes right with God and right with others. Prayer will show your child that there is both consequence and forgiveness for mistakes and teach them that God redeems for His greater purpose (see Romans 8:28).

We know that our children must be weaned physically if they are to grow and become successful adults. God calls us, as parents, to wean our children spiritually as well. Prayer is one of the best ways to introduce your toddler to God. A prayer-filled life will teach children to grow from a toddler relationship to a strong walk with God as their King. Our children deserve the chance to become all that God has called them to be and prayer is key to providing them that opportunity.

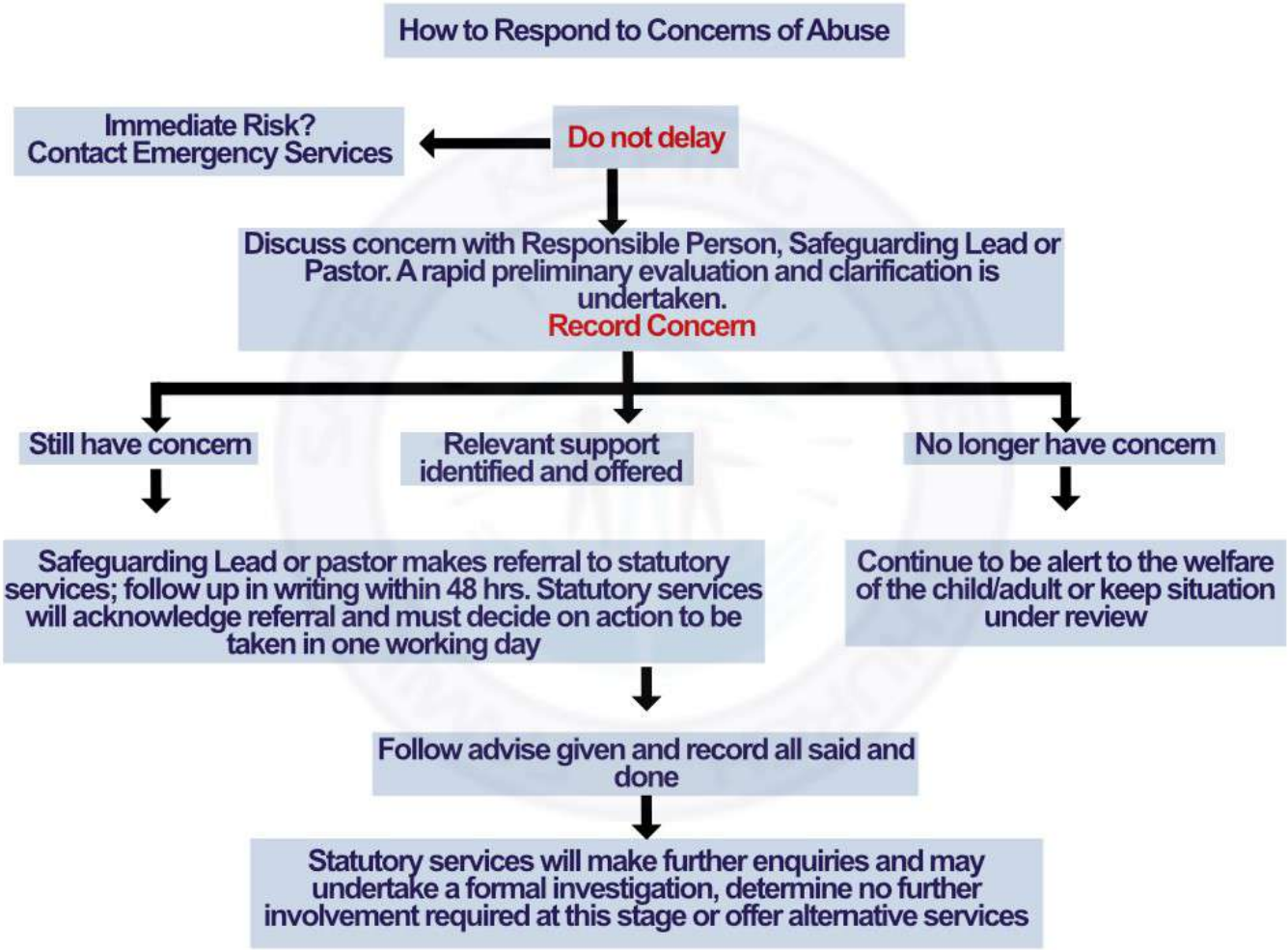
"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you" (Jeremiah 29:11, 12).

How to Respond to Concerns of Possible Abuse

Seventh-day Adventists believe that safeguarding the spiritual, emotional and physical well-being of the vulnerable is integral to practically demonstrating the grace of Christ in our churches and communities. We recognise our duty and responsibilities as a church to provide an environment which seeks to eliminate the risk of abuse. We therefore take all reasonable steps to safeguard the welfare of children and adults at risk. In doing so, we work in partnership with statutory and other agencies.

Each church is required to appoint a **Designated Safeguarding Lead** (DSL) who ensures that Keeping Our Church Family Safe policy and procedures are followed. As well as advocating for the vulnerable, DSLs provide support, guidance and training to staff and volunteers.

Each department head is designated as a **Responsible Person,** appointed by the local church/ management to be responsible for a specific sphere of activity involving children and adults. While these role carry specific obligations, **combatting abuse is everybody's responsibility.** Below is a summary of the actions to be taken where there are concerns about the safety of children and adults at risk of harm.



The BUC Needs You! Departmental Advisory Committee

Are you looking to make a difference in the Seventh-day Adventist community? Do you believe that your professional experience and skills could improve or strengthen the way in which the British Union Conference (BUC) operates? If so, this is the opportunity for you!

As part of our new strategic plan, we at the BUC are seeking talented, interested and committed individuals to serve on our advisory committees for Family, Children's, Possibility Ministries and Safeguarding. These committees will provide expert advice and guidance to help our departments achieve our goals and serve our Union and the nation more effectively.

We are looking for individuals with significant experience in their respective fields. Whether you're a seasoned professional or a rising star in your industry, we welcome your unique perspective and insights. If you're passionate about strengthening marriage, family life education, emotional wellbeing, single adults, safeguarding children, domestic abuse, supporting people with disabilities or ministry to children, your expertise and insights will be invaluable to our committees.

As a member of our advisory committees, you'll have the opportunity to give meaningful advice on the work of our departments, as we strive to execute our strategic plan (2023-26) in the BUC here in the UK and Ireland. You'll work closely with other industry experts, practitioners and interested individuals, as well as with the departmental director, to develop innovative tactics and solutions that address the most pressing issues facing our communities. Our Departmental Advisory Committees are unremunerated, and are open to all backgrounds, ages and levels of experience. The meetings will take place on Zoom at least twice per year.

If you're ready to join a dynamic and dedicated team, we want to hear from you. Contact Abigail Wright-Stephenson awright-stephenson@adventist.uk to learn more or complete the form to express your interest by clicking this link. https://forms.office.com/e/rsgZKPpJb4

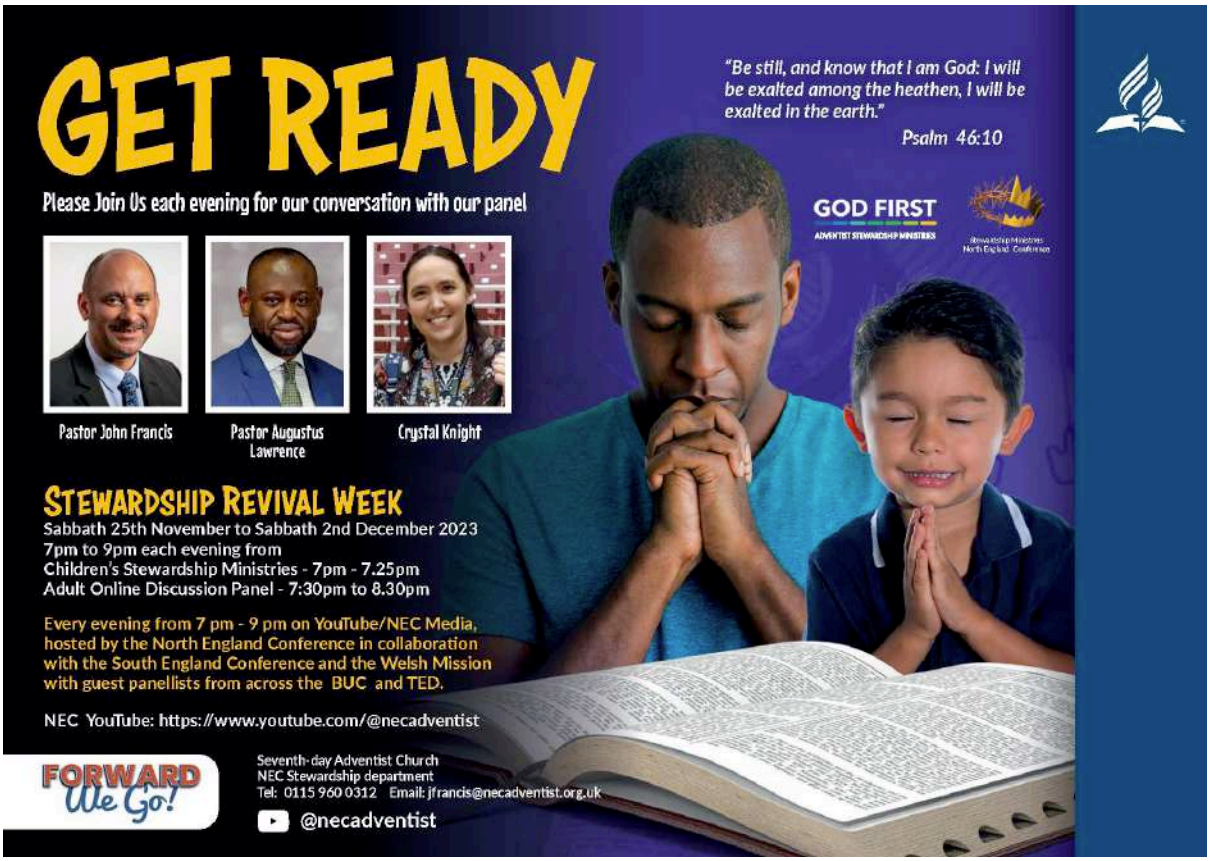
Adventist Family Ministries

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

Adventist Possibility Ministries

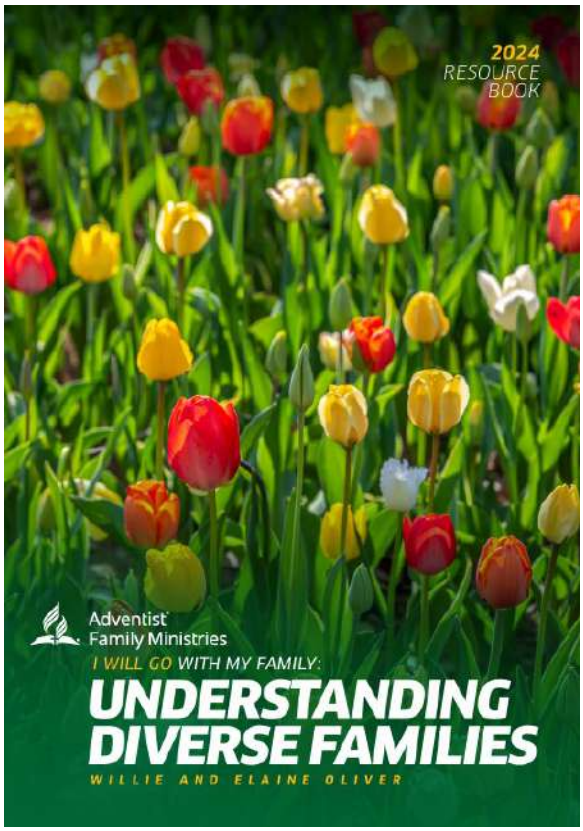
HOPE IN A FOREIGN LAND
WORLD ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN'S DAY
November 18, 2023
Adventist Possibility Ministries
I WILL GO
JESUS
Adventist Children's Ministries General Conference
Photo credit: Canva

NEC MEN'S DAY OF FELLOWSHIP
CREATED FOR PURPOSE AND TO PROSPER
09:45 Sabbath Nov 18th all day for all males
Lunch provided 16:00 AYS
18:00 AN EVENING CONCERT OF MALE VOICES
Venue: Winson Green SDA Church, Bishop Latimer Memorial Church, B18 4QD
MOT YOURSELF
AYS Errol Mckellar
Pastor Andrew R-H Sabbath School
Pastor/Dr Kirk Thomas
Keith Questel-Lewis AYS Man about the House
AYS Wesley Bishop
Day is free but please reserve your space/s here. A donation will be appreciated
https://bit.ly/46WxR3g
Money In My Pocket. Money Management For Success. Nov 21 - 23 @ 19:30 Zoom 870 9821 2190 Pass 992099


GET READY
Please Join Us each evening for our conversation with our panel
Pastor John Francis
Pastor Augustus Lawrence
Crystal Knight
"Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth."
Psalm 46:10
GOD FIRST
STEWARDSHIP REVIVAL WEEK
Sabbath 25th November to Sabbath 2nd December 2023
7pm to 9pm each evening from
Children's Stewardship Ministries - 7pm - 7.25pm
Adult Online Discussion Panel - 7:30pm to 8.30pm
Every evening from 7 pm - 9 pm on YouTube/NEC Media, hosted by the North England Conference in collaboration with the South England Conference and the Welsh Mission with guest panellists from across the BUC and TED.
NEC YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/@necadventist
FORWARD We Go!
Seventh-day Adventist Church
NEC Stewardship department
Tel: 0115 960 0312 Email: jfrancis@necadventist.org.uk
@necadventist

THE NORTH ENGLAND CONFERENCE CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT
PRESENTS
Straight Talk
about dating sex and marriage
NOVEMBER 4,11,18,25 2023
Banquet NOVEMBER 26 2023
SMART LOVE
'CHANGING LIVES FOR THE GOOD, FOR GOD!'
Present it at your church
Smart Love...
It's about Dating God's Way
Register online
For further information please contact the Children's Ministries Secretary
on 0115 960 6312
or email admin@necadventist.org.uk
Designs by KS Enterprise©
www.kendranesewell.com

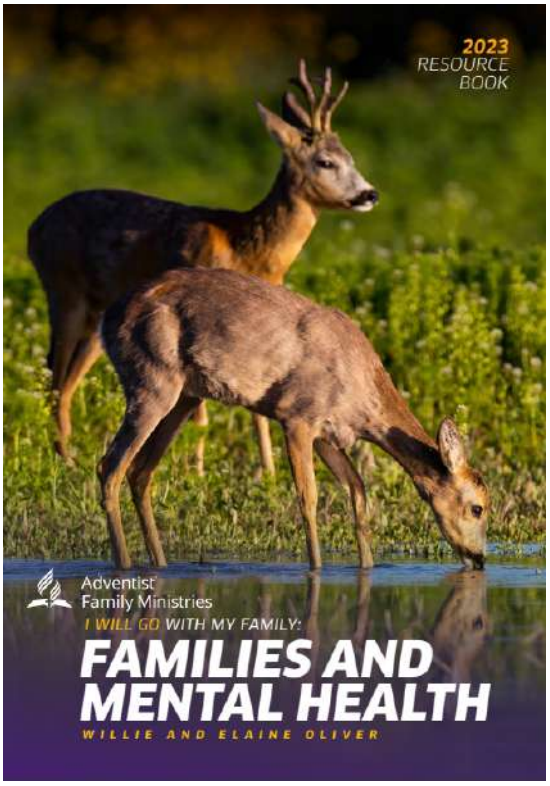
Family Celebrations
Rainer Wanitschek
04 December 2023
18.00 London = 19.00 Zürich = 20.00 Bucharest
Zoom ID: 995 5816 1739
Passcode: family
Family Ministries Webinar



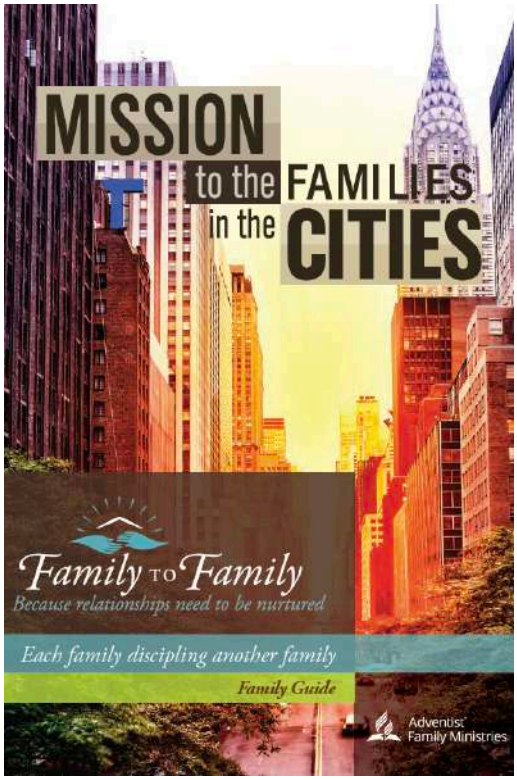
Click the link to download the Resource Book
Understanding Diverse Famiilies

Click the link to learn more and download the resource
Flourish

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



Click the link to download the Resource Book [Family and Mental Health]



Click here to download the Missions Resource [Mission to Families]

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

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 Zulla Road, Nottingham, Notts - NG3 5DB
jfrancis@necadventist.org.uk • necadventist.org.uk
Seventh-day
Adventist Church

HYLAND HOUSE
DOMINUS MAGISTER LUDI NOSTRI
The Lord is the
Master of our school
"Excellent!
Everything
about the
school is just
fantastic!"
A co-educational
primary school providing
the best in Christian
education
Places available
for children aged
2-11 Years
Enrol now!
Our school ethos is to show love, joy, kindness, perseverance
and self-control. These values are to help our children to grow
into resilient, well-rounded, moral citizens with characters of
which society can be proud.
We pride ourself on:
Achieving academic excellence
Developing positive traits
Making lasting friendships
Encouraging leadership
Admission
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info@hylandhouseschool.org

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Website www.lifesourcebookshop.co.uk

Click the link watch past episodes of Real Family Talk

If you have something to say on family matters, children's spirituality, safeguarding, disability, relational themes, emotional wellbeing, men's issues, 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 awright-stephenson@adventist.uk

2024 Dates for Your Diary

- 10 Days of Prayer: 10-20 January
- Christian Home and Marriage Week: 10-17 February
  - Christian Marriage Day: Sabbath 10 February (emphasises marriage)
  - Christian Home Day: Sabbath 17 February (emphasises parenting)
- Mother's Day: 10 March
- Global Youth & Children’s Day: 16 March
- Youth Week of Prayer: 16-23 March
- Possibility Ministries Day: 20 April
- BUC Men's Day of Prayer: 27 April
- World Day of Prayer for Children at Risk: 25 May
- Special Needs Camp: Date to be confirmed
- Father's Day: 16 June
- Children’s Sabbath: 27 July
- Education Day 17 August
- End It Now - Abuse Awareness Sabbath: 24 August
- Family Togetherness Week: 1-7 September
  - Family Togetherness Day of Prayer 7 September
- Pathfinder's Day: 21 September
- Creation Sabbath: 26 October
- Week of Prayer: 2-9 November
- e-Week of Prayer for Youth and Young Adults: 9-15 November
- World Orphans & Vulnerable Children’s Day: 16 November

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

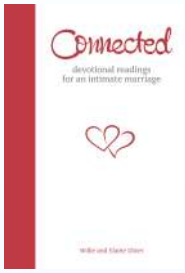
TED Family Ministries

TED Possiblity Ministries

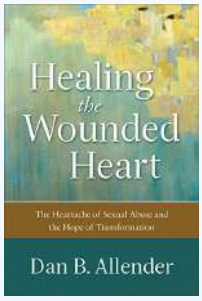
Through the Roof (Disability outreach)

Women's Aid

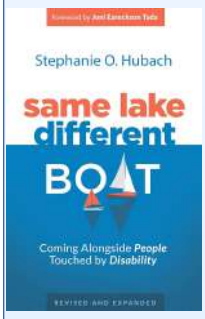
Recommended Reading



What if it were possible to go from a relationship that survives to one that thrives? In ***Connected***, Drs Willie & Elaine Oliver share 52 devotional reflections. There's a thought for each week of the year, specifically designed to help couples to pause (reflect on the ideas shared), pray (about the ideas shared and how they relate to their experience) and then choose (determine to experience change together.



Healing the Wounded Heart. For those who have experienced childhood sexual abuse and those who love and care for them, Dan Allender offers a tender, compassionate window into the psychological effects of abuse and the theological foundations for healing. This book helps victims of abuse learn to love boldly in defiance of their trauma. It offers an urgently needed word of grace in a world ravaged by sexual abuse.



Disability and the Church. Disability can seem frightening, abnormal or even irrelevant to those who do not experience it. Stephanie O. Hubach pinpoints what is true about disability, in contrast to common secular views, and what we need to rethink and relearn in order to support one another and make God's kingdom truly accessible to all. The book addresses how we can grow in grace and journey into maturity.

BUC Family, Children, Possibility Ministries & Safeguarding

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