

Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day 2005

Resource Packet

Peace in the Home

written by

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**Prepared by the General Conference
Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day Committee**

Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries

Adventist Review

Children's Ministries

Education Department

Family Ministries

Health Ministries

Ministerial Association

Women's Ministries

Youth Ministries

Dear Ministry Directors:

Our world is in chaos and strife. People are searching for peace—a haven from the storm. That place could and should be our homes and churches, but it is not always so. The Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day is an attempt on the part of the Adventist Church to bring that peace.

The Abuse Prevention Committee is so gratified by the response we have received from around the world to the special Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day and to the prepared material. We are happy to send you the packet for 2005 to use in your churches.

Each year the contents of the package are a little bit different so as to meet a variety of needs. This year, in addition to the sermon and a seminar, we also include a children's story/puppet show. You may want to ask your youth to help prepare this.

We have also included several resources that can be of benefit to you, to your pastor, and to those who can help educate the church and the church board about abuse. You will note the international flavor and variety of the material. The article "Domestic Violence" by Dr. Paul Wangai Jr. first appeared in the East Africa Division paper and has been reproduced with his permission. He wrote it while CEO of the Nairobi, Kenya, Gender Violence Recovery Center where they saw an average of 2000 women a month. When I first read it I was impressed. The article "The other side of silence" was recommended by Joy Butler of the South Pacific Division. You can go to the New Internationalist 373 web site at <http://www.newint.org/issue373/contents.htm>. It is also available in French: <http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/revues/newinternationalist>.

We are also enclosing the seventh in our series of brochures regarding abuse. This one is for the pastor. This may be the most important of the series—how well the pastor handles abuse will determine the success of abuse prevention in the church. You may order this brochure from our office or you can translate and print it yourself, whichever gets it to the pastors in the quickest, most efficient way.

The Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day will continue to make a difference only with your support and help in getting the message to the local church. As the Catholic Church has been rocked by scandal this past year or so regarding abuse, I have been so grateful that our church has been spared for the most part. I think prevention and pro-active action are part of the reason; we must stay alert and pro-active.

May God bless you and all those who work with you.

A Suggested Order of Service

Prelude

Call to Worship: Responsive Reading # 852, *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*
Or Psalm 63:1-5

Doxology

Invocation

Responsive Reading; *"Peace Blessing" as supplied, or Responsive Reading # 811,
Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal

Hymn of Praise: "How Great Thou Art" # 86, *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, or any
hymn of praise

Children's Story: How Spot and Stripe Made Peace

Prayer for the Congregation

Offering

Special Music

Sermon: "Design for Relational Power"

Hymn of Response: "Happy the Home," # 655, *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*

Benediction

*"Peace Blessing"

Postlude

* The "Peace Blessing" can be used in place of the Responsive Reading or as a closing blessing.

Responsive Reading:

Peace Blessing

Child 1: Do you come in peace?

Congregation: *What do you have to do with peace?*

Child 2: Will there not be peace and security in my lifetime?

Child 1: Cries of fear are heard—terror, not peace.

Congregation: *We hoped for peace but no good has come, for a time of healing but there was only terror.*

Child 2: The Lord is Peace.

Child 1: This is what the Lord says: “I will grant peace in the land, and you will lie down and no one will make you afraid.”

Congregation: *We will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make us dwell in safety.*

Child 2: I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever.

Congregation: *We will submit to God and be at peace with him; in this way prosperity will come to us.*

Child 1: My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest.

Congregation: *Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting, with strife.*

Child 2: For to us a child is born, to us a son is given. . . . And he will be called . . . Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end.

Congregation: *The punishment that brought us peace was upon him. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”*

Child 1: He came and preached peace to you: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Congregation: *LORD, you establish peace for us; all that we have accomplished you have done for us.*

Child 2: As the Father has sent me, I am sending you. Blessed are the peacemakers.

Congregation: ***How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace.***

Child 1: All your sons will be taught by the LORD, and great will be your children's peace.

Child 2: You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.

(Adapted from the following passages in the NIV: Lev. 26:6; Judges 6:24; 2 Kings 9:19; 20:19; Job 22:21; Ps. 4:8; Prov. 17:1; Is. 9:6, 7; 26:12; 32:18; 52:7; 53:5; 54:13; 55:12; Jer. 8:15; 30:5; Ez. 37:26; Matt. 5:9; Luke

Children's Story – Puppets:

How Spot and Stripe Made Peace

The Toymaker, adapted by Ron Flowers*

This story illustrates in a striking way how human beings are connected together through their Creator. You will need a number of small blocks of wood or cardboard for the wall, a small mirror, two small sticks, and two simple mitten-style hand puppets, one with a spotted face and the other with stripes.

Spot: *(He comes in singing.)* I'm like you, you're like me. We're like each other and it's fun to be! Wheeeee! *(Spot and Stripe laugh).* Well, what shall we do today? Would you like to build something with my building blocks?

Stripe: Oh, I don't know. You build something with my blocks.

Spot: *(Laughter)* Well, it really doesn't matter who builds with what, as we are both alike.

Stripe: Yes!

Spot: Isn't it nice we have the same kind of head!

Stripe: Yes, and the same kind of hands.

Spot: Yes, and the same kind of shirt.

Stripe: Yes, and the same kind of spots!

Spot: What did you say?

Stripe: I said it's nice we both have spots!

Spot: Who has spots?

Stripe: We do!

Spot: *(Laughter)* You mean stripes. We have stripes!

Stripe: Well, I know the difference between spots and stripes!

Spot: All I know is that we have stripes!

Stripe: Spots!

Spot: Stripes!

Stripe: Spots!

Spot: Spots! I mean stripes!

Stripe: Don't be silly. Look at yourself!

Spot: How can I look at myself?

Stripe: In a mirror! Here!

Spot: *(He looks.)* Hey! I *do* have spots!

Stripe: That's what I told you. We have spots!

Spot: No! No! Just me! You have stripes. *(He shows him the mirror.)* Look!

Stripe: *(Looking in the mirror)* Hey, I *do* have stripes!

Spot: That's what I told you.

Stripe: Yaaaah! And they're very handsome too! *(He whispers to*

himself.) He doesn't have stripes. Only I have stripes. There must be something special about me. I don't know that I ought to have any more to do with him. (*Admiring himself in the mirror again*) Mm . . .mmm! Oh, you handsome fellow!

(*Looking again at Spot, he mutters to himself.*) He's different from me. I'd better watch him. You can't trust people who are different! They might take advantage of you. I'll just not have any more to do with him. Instead, I'll play with my own blocks. (*Stripe begins to build a wall with his blocks*)

(*Spot begins to build also. A common wall goes up between them with each adding a block when the other isn't looking.*)

Stripe: There now! And you stay on your side of the wall! I don't allow anybody over here unless he has stripes like mine!

Spot: Well, who cares! I wouldn't come over there if you begged me to! Stripes! Stripes are nothing. Anybody can have stripes. Chipmunks have stripes. (*He shouts over the wall.*) Skunks have stripes!

Stripe: (*Stripe, upset with Spot's remarks, peers around the wall and jeers.*) Nah, nah, ni, nah, nah. Blaaaaaaaaah! (*He retreats behind the wall and then calls out.*) So what are you going to do about it? (*No answer*) What's the matter? Are you jealous or something?

Spot: (*Spot creeps close to the wall and makes a loud noise like a gun*

firing.) Bang! Bang! Bang! (*He chuckles to himself.*)

Stripe: Sounds like a gun! I'll bet it *is* a gun! He's getting ready to fight me! (*Sounds frightened.*) I don't want to fight him. What am I going to do?

Spot: Now what do you think, Stripe? (*Silence*) It's too quiet over there. He's up to something. He's probably getting ready to hurt me! I don't want to fight him! I don't want to fight anybody! If I could just scare him enough, then he wouldn't dare hurt me!

Stripe: (*Stripe pretends he is a big snake and practices making loud hissing sounds and snake-biting gestures.*) I'm a big snake! (*Laughter*) When old Spot meets me, he will run like a sissy! Yaaaah!

Spot: (*Spot pretends he is a lion and growls fiercely.*) I am a lion. (*He laughs*) When Stripe meets the king of beasts he'll fall in a faint. (*More laughter*). I guess I'd better practice my roar. (*Each one dances around on his side of the wall, getting ready to look over it to scare the other.*)

Both: (*They suddenly look over the wall, making their fierce noises and gestures at each other. Both then scream in fear and retreat.*)

Spot: (*Crying*) He's too big for me to fight! I'm too little! (*He wails*) I need help!! There's nothing to me but my little head (*touching each part*) and my little hands and my little shirt and . . . (*He discovers a large arm and then sees the Toymaker*). Ooooooh! Who are you?

Toymaker: I am the Toymaker!
 Spot: What do you make?
 Toymaker: I made you.
 Spot: You did?
 Toymaker: Yes.
 Spot: Well then, do you like me?
 Toymaker: Yes, very much.
 Spot: Well, if you like me, you must be on my side! And you're so big, too! Much bigger than my friend, Stripe, I mean my enemy, Stripe. Wait till I go get my club and I'll show old Stripe who's more important around here. *(He leaves to get his club.)*
 Stripe: *(Stripe moans and cries.)* What am I going to do? I can't fight him. He's too fierce. I know what I'll do, I'll hide. Here's a hill. *(The Toymaker's biceps and shoulder.)* I'll climb up in the hills and hide. *(He climbs up the Toymaker's arm and snuggles behind his neck).*
 Toymaker: What are you doing?
 Stripe: I'm climbing this hill Wait a minute! . . . Hills can't talk! See here! You're no hill!
 Toymaker: No, I'm the one who made you!
 Stripe: Well, when did you get here?
 Toymaker: I've been here all the time.
 Stripe: Well, I never saw you before!
 Toymaker: You never looked. But I'm right with you every minute.

Stripe: Is that so?! Well, then I can beat the spots off Spot! You will be right behind me?
 Toymaker: Oh, I'll be closer than that!
 Stripe: Good! *(To himself)* I wonder what he meant by that? Oh, well, with him behind me, what can I lose! *(He leaves to get his weapon.)*
(Spot returns with a club, humming a military song behind his wall. Stripe comes with a stick.)
 Stripe: *(Taunting from behind his wall)* All right you over there, get ready to fight like a man! *(He beats the air with his stick.)* I defy you! *(The swinging of his stick breaks parts of the wall and they grimace at each other.)*
 Spot: *(Challenging)* You'd better not hit anybody with that stick, boy!
(Spot cries out as the blows fall on him.) Ow! Ow! Ow!
(They exchange blows, with shouts and cries of pain. Finally they butt heads and knock each other unconscious.)
(As Spot regains consciousness, the Toymaker is sitting in the background.)
 Spot: What happened! Something went wrong. What became of the Toymaker?
 Toymaker: I'm still right here.
 Spot: Well, I thought you were on my side!
 Toymaker: I am.

Spot: Then why didn't you help me beat Stripe?

Toymaker: Because I'm on his side too. *(Stripe regains consciousness.)*

Spot: You are?

Toymaker: Of course. I made you both, and I love you both. And I couldn't take sides against either of you. After all, you are both the same thing.

Spot: Oh no we're not. We're very different! I have nothing in common with him!

Toymaker: Well, lets see if that's so. Stripe, go over and hit Spot.

Spot: Now wait a minute!

Toymaker: Be still, Spot. I just want to show you something. Go ahead, Stripe.

Stripe: *(Stripe hits Spot with his fist. Spot howls with pain. Stripe laughs at first, then sadly drops his head.)*
Ooooh!

Toymaker: What's the matter, Stripe?

Stripe: I don't know . . . I don't feel so good. I guess I don't really want to hit him.

Toymaker: That's what I want you both to understand. Do you know what you are?

Stripe: Sure! Here's my little head and my little hand and my little shirt and my . . . a . . . a . . . and your arm, and your shoulder and you! And I'm part me and I'm part you!

Toymaker: Yes, but there's more than that. Keep going.

Stripe: Well, then there's your other

shoulder and your other arm and then, there's . . . Spot! Hey, Spot! We're all one thing! You, me and the Toymaker!

Spot: *(To Stripe)*
Then, when you hit me it hurts you, because . . .

Toymaker: Because?

Stripe: Because I'm really hurting part of myself.

Toymaker: That's right.

Spot: But wait! I have spots and he has stripes. If we are both the same thing, why don't we look alike?

Toymaker: I never make any two things look exactly alike. Else how could anyone tell them apart? But you are really both the same. You are *really* part of me.

Stripe: Hey, Spot?

Spot: Yeah?

Stripe: If the Toymaker is always with us, then we don't need to be afraid! Or angry or lonely.

Spot: You can play with my blocks any time you want to!

Stripe: Thank you. That makes me very happy.

Spot: And that makes me very happy! *(He laughs in a deep giggle.)*

Both: *(They sing.)* I am you, you are me. We are each other and it's fun to be.

* Adapted from the film script *The Toymaker*(1959).
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Sermon:

A New Design for Relational Power

by Karen and Ron Flowers

Enjoying the Ride, Until . . .

When I (Ron) was a fourth grader, the old wooden see-saw on our school playground broke. I told my dad about it. One Sunday not long after, this farmer/builder father of mine motioned to me to come along as he loaded some lumber and tools on his farm truck and drove down the road to our one-room country school. There he removed the remnants of the rotted seesaw, our “teeter-totter” as we called it, and installed a new one. When Monday came, I was first at school, proudly presenting to each student who arrived the shiny new teeter-totter, freshly painted with leftover red barn paint.

Everybody wanted a turn on it. For a while things went well with friends riding on opposite ends, balancing one another, gliding up and down. Then something changed. Boys riding opposite girls started to dangle them in the air. The playground was filled with their squeals to get off while most of us fourth grade boys (sad to say now) were delighted at the sight. Then, one recess, I was riding on the seesaw when some really heavy fifth-grade boys pushed my friend off the other end and got on instead. Instantly I was jerked into the air and bounced there. It was scary. “Do you want down?” they jeered after a while. “Okay, you’re down!” And with that they hopped off. I crashed! Though bruised, I somehow avoided broken bones. I avoided the see-saw for a long time. That toy of which I was once so proud, that toy so capable of bringing much joy, had become a place of pain.

Relational “seesaws.” Close relationships resemble a see-saw. Each of us brings a certain “weight” or “power” to our relationships. The way we use our weight affects our experience and our partner’s experience. Just as a teeter-totter feels most satisfying when we achieve a sense of balance and a pleasant rhythm, so everybody experiences the most satisfaction in relationships when there is goodwill, unconditional acceptance and warm regard for each other. The apostle Paul made an interesting statement that describes the attitude necessary on a relational see-saw: “Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Phil. 2:4 NIV).

In this delicately-worded verse the apostle places “your own interests” on one end of a relationship see-saw and “the interests of others” on the other. Both are to receive appropriate attention. The “but also” in the middle acts like a fulcrum that helps balance the two. Just as we are to love our neighbors as ourselves (cf. Matt. 22:39) so it is appropriate that each “should look not only to [his] own interests, but also to the interests of others.” Philippians 2:4 thus insures that the concept “consider others better than yourselves” of verse 3 does not mean the neglect of one’s own vital interests. When this gospel principle of harmony is not followed, where mutual goodwill, acceptance and respect are not present, relationships may be unsatisfying at best and, at worst, painful, perhaps even terrifying.

Relationships Out of Balance

Selfishness causes a relational see-saw to lose its balance. If we are self-absorbed, we are often insensitive to the needs and feelings of others. If we don’t feel very valuable or secure, we may try to build ourselves up by putting others down. We give our partner a bumpy ride. Selfishness manifests itself in a variety of ways.

Dominance. Some people are dominant types and seek relationships with those who are more submissive.

Pursuit of social status. Some seek to acquire the social weight that society often ascribes to those who have certain attributes. The wealthy enjoy greater status than the poor, the employed receive more respect than those who do not have jobs. Educated people are considered more valuable than the uneducated; the physically attractive are paraded above those deemed less attractive. The talented are

sought after and rewarded more than the untalented. And in many parts of the world the male is more valued than is the female.

Aggressiveness and abuse. Some who are thinking about their own ride on the see-saw, who are self-absorbed and insensitive to the needs and feelings of others, tend to be more aggressive toward others. Abuse is about using one's real or perceived power to control another person. It is about choosing to get what I want at the expense of others.

See-Saw Struggle

Attempts to cope. Because their families are so important to people, some who are weaker will do their best to adjust, just to keep the family together, just to avoid conflict, just to achieve family stability and balance. Some will even sacrifice themselves and accept abuse, though family relationships are then a source of much unhappiness and pain.

God does not require a person who is being abused in a relationship to stay in that relationship and bear that pain. But those who work with victims of abuse know that many have a very hard time escaping the ties that bind them to their abusers.

While some submit to achieve balance, others resist. They may opt for unhealthy ways to exert themselves in order to right a power imbalance in their relational "see-saw," to keep from being constantly "dangled in the air."

How not to ride a see-saw: Isaac & Rebekah. Struggle on the relationship see-saw is illustrated by the household of Isaac and Rebekah (Gen. 27). Father Isaac pulled first-born twin son Esau onto his end of the marital see-saw. Isaac favored Esau and schemed to bestow the birthright upon him, despite God's instruction and with no consultation with his wife. Isaac rationalized that he had custom on his side and employed the excuse that he had to take action immediately because he was old and feeble, when in fact he had many more years of life in him.

Mother Rebekah countered by dragging second-born twin son Jacob, her favorite, with her onto her side. Taking full advantage of her husband's failing eyesight and her intimate knowledge of his tastes and habits, Rebekah sought to gain power for herself in the relationship and to promote the interests of Jacob, the son she loved. She determined that Jacob must receive the birthright blessing. Besides, hadn't God foretold that the elder (Esau) would serve the younger (Jacob) (cf. Gen. 25:33)?

Both Isaac and Rebekah plotted to secure the greater power on their side and deliberately involved the twin brothers in their conflict. However, as is often the case, rather than achieving balance on the relational see-saw, conflict and pain were the inevitable result. The latent marital conflict was enflamed and the fire spread to engulf the sons. As a mother, Rebekah would never again see the son she loved, for he fled to Haran to escape Esau's wrath. She died before he returned. The two brothers were thus pitted against one another for two decades. For his part, Isaac lost a one-in-a-million opportunity to willfully bestow his blessing on the son of promise who would take his place in the covenant line that would lead to the birth of the Messiah.

Horns and roses. Those who feel weaker in a relationship often spend a lot of energy trying to achieve relief from the dominating, controlling people in their families or relationships. It is as though some ancient script is being played out, reminding us that God created humankind to be equal with each other. Because of human brokenness and sin, however, we seldom are content with equality. We tend to go for "one-up" status, scheming, plotting, and working our way toward superiority over others.

Doug was a dominating husband and father and ordered his family about as if he were a military commander. His wife, Matilda, had her own way of dealing with him. One day, for example, he was in a particular rush for them to go someplace in the car. He went out to the garage, started the engine, and backed the car out onto the driveway. It was his way of demanding that she hurry.

When Matilda didn't come, he blew several long blasts on the horn. She heard the horn, but instead of joining him, detoured to the backyard and leisurely inspected her rose garden, plucking a few weeds, sniffing the fragrance of a few of the emerging blossoms. She made her way to the car in her own good time. (Flowers, 1997, p. 17)

The Gospel's New Design for Relationships

The good news of the gospel is that Christ has drawn us into fellowship with Himself (Eph. 2:19, 20; 1 John 1:3). He has triumphed over sin, paying its penalty (Rom. 3:25; 1 John 2:2) and breaking its power (Rom. 6:14; 8:3, 4, 9). Whereas sin causes division, discord, and a desire to assume superiority over one another, we can now relate to one another in fundamentally different ways, because through Him we are related (Matt.20:25-27; Gal. 3:28).

Though Christ and the apostles did not assault society and culture directly, they presented ideas of equality and mutuality in the family of God that would work a transformation from inside the human heart outward. Think about the barriers they crossed.

Every ethnic group included. The narratives of Jesus and the centurion (Matt. 8:5ff), Jesus and the Samaritan woman (John 4: 7ff), Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10:34, 35), as well as Paul's mission to the Gentiles stand as witness: "How true it is that God does not show favoritism, but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right" (Acts 10:34, 35).

Every social class included. Jesus and the disciples broke down the barriers between social classes. Living examples of this are Jesus' contact with all classes of people, with the nobleman (John 4:46-50), with Zacchaeus (Luke 19:2ff), and with the leper (Matt. 8:2-4). In Christ, wrote Paul, there is no favoritism shown between social strata (Eph. 6:9).

A dramatic example of this inclusion of all social groups is found in the shortest, but most profound letter of Paul, the letter to Philemon. A convert of Paul, Philemon was a wealthy resident of Colossae and, like many such residents, a slaveholder. One slave, Onesimus, had evidently robbed his master, escaped, and made his way to the sprawling capital city of Rome, perhaps hoping to lose himself amid the masses. There he encountered Paul. Paul preached the gospel to him and came to accept him as a son (Philemon 10). Onesimus was awakened to his responsibility to repent and make as much restitution as he could to Philemon for the wrongs he had done.

As he went back to Philemon, he carried with him a note of recommendation which Paul prepared. What we have in our Bibles is that note. In it is found a radical Christian message: Receive him "no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother . . . in the Lord" (Philemon 16). Paul presents to Philemon a revolutionary concept of reconciliation, that of finding in Onesimus a beloved brother. Because of Jesus, believers see each other through new glasses, as it were, and love each other as members of one family.

That "thing" is working here. For nearly three decades we were members of a church congregation in Washington, D.C., a truly unique fellowship of believers. When we first joined the Capital Memorial Seventh-day Adventist Church, it was in a process of change from being mostly all-Caucasian to becoming a multi-national Christian family of some 45 nations. Over the years, CMC has responded to the preaching of the good news of God's love and has endeavored to live by 1 John 4:11: "Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." If the truth be told, the congregation didn't especially like the same foods, nor enjoy the same music. Members wrestled hard with one another on church boards, but, with dedicated and persistent, Christ-centered pastoral leadership, this diverse group became family.

A crowning moment came one Easter season, when the church came together for a Friday evening agape meal and communion service. Assembled around the table of fellowship, illumined with candlelight, members bore testimony to their love for Christ and their love for one another. One African brother, serving in the diplomatic corps from South Africa, had been a member of the church since rediscovering Adventism at a prayer breakfast held at CMC for diplomats and their Seventh-day Adventist

world leader counterparts at the time of an Annual Council. In the several years since, this brother, so familiar with the policies and practices of apartheid, had often marveled aloud that people from so many nations could worship, work, play and pray together. With a face lit with a light greater than that of the candles, Ezra stood and told a little of his story. We still remember the joyful comment he made: "That thing they speak about—that the gospel brings together red and yellow, black and white—it's working here."

Sexual equality for men and women. Jesus restored the sexual equality and nobility of women. Writes John Stott:

Without any fuss or publicity, Jesus terminated the curse of the Fall, reinvested woman with her partially lost nobility, and reclaimed for his new kingdom community the original creation blessing of sexual equality. (Stott, 1985, p. 136)

Women were among Jesus' closest disciples (Luke 8:2, 3). Paul recognized that in Christ old gender barriers have been taken away: "There is neither . . . male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

The Book of Acts shows that women believed and served in the church side by side with men. Acts reveals in the newfound status of all people in Christ. It does not elevate women above men, but shows that an equal fellowship and equal use of giftedness existed in the early church. "With the women" (Acts 1:14) indicates their inclusion with a new status in the new order. Peter acknowledges that the Spirit is being poured out on Christians without regard to gender in fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel 2:28, 29 (Acts 2:16-18). Both genders are especially mentioned as becoming baptized believers (Acts 5:14; 8:12). The apostolic evangelists made special efforts to reach women (Acts 16:13; 17:4). A number of these early women converts are named as possessing qualities of faith, loyalty, and service just as did men: Tabitha (Acts 9:36-42), the Jewish mother of Timothy (Acts 16:1), Lydia (Acts 16:14, 15), Damaris (Acts 17:34), and Priscilla (Acts 18:2, 18, 26). Priscilla (actually named ahead of her husband in vs. 18—which was significant in that time and culture—; cf. 2 Tim. 4:19) seems to be singled out especially for her giftedness in biblical understanding, evangelistic fervor and persuasion alongside Aquila. Paul dwelt for some time with this couple and eventually took them with him as evangelistic companions. Priscilla and Aquila again head the list of those to be greeted for Paul by Timothy (2 Tim. 4:19).

Mutuality between husbands and wives. The curse subjected the wife to the husband (Gen. 3:16). The gospel emphasizes the love and the service of husband and wife to one another (Eph. 5:21-33).

Like every other one of God's good gifts entrusted to the keeping of humanity, marriage has been perverted by sin; but it is the purpose of the gospel to restore its purity and beauty (*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 64).

The gospel restores marriage "to its original sanctity and elevation" (*The Adventist Home*, p. 99). Christians seek to recapture that original mutuality known by the first husband and wife who shared the image of God, shared the one name "adam"; shared dominion over the earth; and shared God's procreative blessing (Gen. 1:26-28). Peter instructs each husband to bestow honor ("great value") on his wife, for the two of them are "heirs together of the grace of life" (1 Peter 3:7). A text that stresses how absolute Christ would have mutuality in marriage to be is found in 1 Cor. 7:3, 4:

The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife.

Some Protestant reformers, who taught the super-ordination of the husband and the subordination of the wife, encountered difficulty with this passage. They concluded that, in the bedroom, there could be full equality and mutuality, but that outside, the wife was to be submissive. The gospel of Christ, however, does not limit marital mutuality only to the couple's sexual life.

I hid my salary from my wife. An African pastor shared this story:

“Don’t tell your wife the amount of money you have,” my father whispered to me one evening as one of his counsels to me. Traditionally, many African husbands do not tell their wives the amount of money they possess. All the money, all the wealth belongs to the husband and father as head of the family. It is his monopoly. He uses it as he wishes, he squanders as he wants, and the wife just gets a little portion for clothing, shoes, and food for her and the children. . . .

The reason for not telling the wife the amount of money is just a matter of suspicion that she may constantly demand more, or that she may steal some money and pass it to her parents, relatives, and close friends. This suspicion is not well founded. It is just a selfish motive, and it must be discarded.

Hiding my salary from my wife caused a lot of problems and misunderstandings. She requested some money when I really had nothing. Since she was not involved in financial arrangements or the home budget, she did not know for sure when I had no money. So she made her demands. We almost had a big fight one day.

The solution came to us one day when one pastor preached at our campmeeting about the family or home budget which must be made out by the two, husband and wife. The subject was strange and new to me, but it came with deep meaning. The income must include the total of all money from me and from my wife’s small financial projects. The expenses must include the major four items:

- Tithe and offerings – God’s funds
- Food
- All other necessary life items
- Savings or fixed account for future use

The pastor closes by saying: This saved my home, for we all knew what we owned and what was to be expended. We discarded the husband’s monopoly of funds. . . .

Mrs. White has counseled us: “Let there be mutual love, mutual forbearance. Then marriage, instead of being the end of love, will be as it were the very beginning of love” (*The Adventist Home*, p. 106).

This kind of mutuality ought to be extended to financial planning of the budget. It will inspire trust and confidence and happiness to family life. (Kisaka, 1992, p. 71)

How the Gospel Redefines Power

Jesus redefined power both by His teaching and in His relating to others. Matthew records the comments of Jesus when James and John asked their mother to secure for them the top spots in His kingdom:

You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them,” He said. “But it shall not be so among you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Matt. 20:25-28)

Empowerment. The practical outworking of the acknowledgement of Christ as Lord for Christians is that the sinful misuse of power is replaced by empowerment.

“Empowering can be defined as the attempt to establish power in another person. . . . Empowering is the process of helping the other recognize strengths and potentials within, as well as to encourage and guide the development of these qualities” (Balswick & Balswick, 1987, pp. 44, 45).

Instead of exerting “power over,” we become “the wind beneath the wings” of those we love. This “power under” approach to relationships means that our weight on the see-saw is used to lift up those with whom we are in relationship, to build them up, to give them every opportunity and encouragement to become all that they can be. Note these “empowerment” verses from Paul:

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (Eph. 5:21).

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2).

Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification (Rom. 14:19).

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up (1 Thess. 5:11).

This Christian “empowerment” principle for relationships means that we are no longer thinking only about our ride on the see-saw, we want our partner to get a good ride also. The principle applies in the church and in the domestic relationships at home—the smallest church. Everything we learn from Christ about relationships at church must go into our homes also.

Conclusion

The power of God is mighty to save us and to change us. In *Fulton's Footprints in Fiji* Eric B. Hare tells of the conversion of Ratu Ambrose. The cruel chief had squandered the lives of many of his faithful subjects while pursuing his aggressive goals. Scarred and broken in body, one old fisherman, Matui, had survived the torturous experience of being one of the human “logs,” men bound with ropes and used as rollers upon which Ratu Ambrose had launched his heavy war canoes.

Pastor John Fulton's evangelistic efforts brought both Ratu Ambrose and Matui into the same Seventh-day Adventist church. God's power to transform hearts and habits powerfully demonstrated itself when the new believers celebrated their first Lord's Supper and footwashing service. Ratu Ambrose quickly took a towel and basin and knelt down before Matui to wash his feet. The bent, elderly fisherman at first resisted. “It is not right for you to wash my feet; you are a great chief.” As Ratu Ambrose went on to bathe the feet of his former subject with tears filling his eyes and his heart, he replied, “There is only one Chief here in this room tonight, and that is Jesus.” (Flowers, 1992, pp. 85, 86)

May there be one Chief in all our rooms—Jesus. May His empowering Spirit flood our lives, so that we learn what it means to love, to serve, to exercise our power and influence in our relationships in ways that demonstrate not “power over,” but “power under.”

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A Seminar on Nurturing Non-Violent Children:

Great Peace for Children

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Important note. *This program is not intended to be therapeutic treatment for abusers or persons experiencing abuse and violence in relationships. Nor is it specifically designed as treatment for those who have experienced abuse in the past. Treatment in cases of abuse and violence belongs in the hands of a network of professionals with appropriate training and expertise. Spiritual leaders should identify such professionals in the church and community about them and encourage and support individuals who have special needs as they avail themselves of such services. Because the seminar does open the issue of abuse and violence in relationships, it would be wise to have a pastor or counselor present (someone who is not involved in leading the seminar) in case the discussion brings up concerns for one or more of the participants that call for personal attention.*

Theme

This seminar is designed to help parents nurture children for non-violence. It is built on the premise that the church can be a strong support to parents in their responsibility to nurture children for healthy relationships.

Key Bible Text

“And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children”
(Isaiah 54:13 KJV).

Purpose and Overview

Relationships in which persons demonstrate respect, love and a willingness to listen to one another are much more likely to experience peace-filled living and positive relationships and less likely to experience aggression, outbursts of anger and wrath, and violent episodes. An understanding of the biblical principle of honoring one another provides a foundational motivation for developing relational skills that can help God's children of all ages connect with one another in positive ways. This program will help families—and the church family—explore useful ways of talking and relating that show honor and support for each other, and that model non-violent ways of living together, and meeting one another's needs for our children.

The seminar incorporates multigenerational learning experiences through which important people skills can be developed that will help children grow toward relating to others in positive ways. The focus will be on developing a more supportive communication style, becoming more caring and compassionate in our responses to others, and learning to manage anger in ways that contribute to positive relational growth. These skills are hallmarks of non-violent relationships—in the family as well as in the church and community.

How to Use This Seminar Resource

This resource is an idea bank of interactive activities designed to bring together the entire congregation for a multigenerational nurturing experience. The seminar resources are divided as follows:

- Section A** Personal or leadership-group preparation.
- Section B** An icebreaker to draw seminar participants into interaction with one another.
- Section C** “Activity Idea Bank” - seminar activities from which to pick and choose as interest, time, and facilities allow.
- Section D** Closure activity for the seminar.

Section A

Leadership Preparation

Sensitivity required. As we explore ways of helping children to relate to others in non-violent ways, it is important to think about our own attitudes, ideas, and beliefs about violence and the ideas of those around us. An individual might decide they would rather not lead such a seminar. There are a number of understandable reasons for this, and any request to be excused should be honored—no questions asked.

Identify resources. As you open these issues in the church, even among your leadership team, people should always be made aware of resource persons in your community, i.e., a pastor, counselor, or others in the helping professions, who can assist them in finding help if they or someone they know are dealing with personal issues related to abuse and violence.

Devotional thought. Reflect on the Scripture: “*All thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children*” (Isaiah 54:13 KJV).

The peace of the Christian gospel was brought to us, delivered to us in Christ. That peace was personified in the person of Christ. When Christ was born, God’s attitude toward earth became one of peace (Luke 2:14). “*I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil . . .*” (Jer. 29:11 KJV). Jesus was the One prophesied to be the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6; cf. Eph. 2:14-17). His wish for His followers was for His peace to be with them (John 14:27).

Why is it important for children to know this peace? In what ways is it in our power to convey it to them? The prayer, “Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace” is attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi. How can we be instruments of God’s peace in our children’s lives? Let us dedicate ourselves and this seminar to that purpose. [You may want to share some of your devotional insights on peace as an introduction to the seminar itself.]

Questions worth thinking about. The following questions are worth considering before leading a seminar on how to nurture children in ways that will make them less likely to use violence against others. Take time to reflect personally on these questions and discuss your thoughts together with other group leaders.

- What concerns do you share as a leader regarding violence in the family and in the community?
- What messages about violence are being conveyed by the media in your context?
- In what ways does your society promote non-violent relationships?
- In what ways might your society be inadvertently encouraging people to resort to violence?

• What do you think the Bible teaches about violence? What Scripture principles can you identify? Locate appropriate Bible texts and passages.

• What do you perceive as the most significant benefits of nurturing non-violent children?

• What might make nurturing non-violent children difficult in your particular setting?

• What legitimate concerns might be raised about encouraging children to respond non-violently in all situations?

Note: *Sadly, children must be made aware that some older youth and adults—even family members and people that they know—cannot be trusted and may try to hurt them. Children must be taught that it’s okay to say “No” forcefully and to resist adults who would harm them in any way—such as through acts of violence, sexual abuse, etc. They need to know how to report such action to an adult who can help them.*

Section B

Icebreaker: Demolition Squad or Construction Crew?

This icebreaker is designed to introduce the seminar by contrasting the kinds of communication and actions that build people up and strengthen relationships or with the kinds of communication and behaviors that tear people down and are destructive to relationships.

Materials needed:

• Fifteen large boxes, identical in size. You may be able to find these at a grocery store or shipping company.

• White paper for covering boxes as indicated.

• Felt-tip marker pens (one red and one blue) with thick tips (the actual colors you use are not important, but using two different colors will be helpful in doing the activity).

• Black marker pens with thick tips (you will need several, depending on the size of the seminar group).

Set-up instructions:

Make the following preparations in advance of the seminar:

• Stack the boxes at the front of the room (as if they were bricks or cement blocks) to form a large 5 x 3 “cube” or “wall” (5 boxes high x 3 boxes deep). You will end up with a front and a back sidewall, each made up of the 15 boxes showing. Depending on the size of the boxes, and the size of the group, you may wish to assemble the visual aid on a platform or table so all can see.

• Cover those sides of the boxes that form the two large front and back walls of the cube with white paper. You need to cover each outer box face separately, as you will be taking the cube apart and putting it back together.

• Number the boxes on one side face of the cube to help you reassemble the cube as instructed for the activity.

• With the white paper in place, restack the boxes. Then, on the front face of the cube, draw a simple outline of a person with the red marker (see Leadership Resource 1, pg. 11 – *Artwork for Boxes*).

- On the back side of the cube, draw a similar outline of a person with the blue marker.

Icebreaker activity directions:

- At the start of the meeting, talk about the effect of our words and actions on others. Some Bible texts illustrate the point: “*Reckless words pierce like a sword . . .*” (Prov. 12:18). “*Death and life are in the power of the tongue*” (Prov. 18:1). Describe how the things we say and the things we do can either build people up or tear them down, just as a construction crew can build a wall or a building, or a demolition squad can bring one down.

- Invite seminar participants to offer ideas about the kinds of words and behaviors that tear people down. Talk also about why such words and actions are so destructive to persons and to relationships.

- Invite those who are contributing ideas to come forward and write these hurtful words and actions on the boxes that have bits of the red outline of a person on them. (Use the black felt tip markers.) This will take a few minutes. Cover the outline of the person from head to toe with the written words, phrases and descriptions of hurtful actions. You may have to add ideas of your own if the group does not come up with important ones you wish to highlight in the discussion.

- As the space around the red body outline showing on each box is filled, slowly dismantle the outline of the person by removing box after box from the cube, placing them around on the floor with the words and ideas still visible to the group. You will end up with a “person” who has been taken to pieces and left in disarray.

- Next, discuss with the group how much better it is when words and actions encourage the people around us and build them up. “*The tongue of the wise brings healing*” (Prov. 12:18). “*An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up*” (Prov. 12:25). Invite people to share the kinds of words and actions that have brought them encouragement and made them happy to be in a particular relationship.

- As you talk, turn the boxes on the floor around, so that the blue outline shows on them. Invite participants to write their positive ideas on the sides of the boxes that have bits of the blue outline. Start with the boxes that form the base of the cube (use the numbers you placed on the sides of the boxes to help you). Then slowly put together the blue outline of the person by stacking the boxes once again to create the cube with the design in place, visually demonstrating how to build a person up.

- Leave the cube with the blue “person” and all the constructive ideas for building people up visible at the front throughout the program. Use it to help groups further develop their ideas during other activities.

Section C

Activity Idea Bank

Activity 1

Relationships of Honor: Jesus and the Young, Lonely, Weak and Vulnerable

Use this activity to discover how Jesus relates to people and to learn how His responses can shape our own words and actions toward our children.

Invite someone to read Romans 12:10: *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.*

Small group activity: Seeing people through God's eyes of love and wonder can help us respond to them—especially the young, lonely, weak and vulnerable—with care and compassion. For this activity, divide participants into small groups of 4-6 people. Assign each group one of the following Bible passages from the Gospel of Luke. Instruct them to read it together and discuss the questions below. When the groups are winding down, have the groups come back together again; open discussion in the large group about each question, learning what you can from each of the stories.

- Luke 7:36-50 Jesus and the woman who anointed His feet
- Luke 8:40-48 Jesus and the woman who was bleeding
- Luke 17:11-19 Jesus and the lepers
- Luke 18:15-17 Jesus and the children
- Luke 19:1-10 Jesus and Zacchaeus

Questions to consider:

- How does Jesus respond to the main character(s) in this story?
- How does Jesus practically demonstrate His compassion for them and offer them His grace?
- What does Jesus do and say that conveys His honor and respect for each individual?
- What do you think they appreciated most about Jesus' response to them?
- How do you think this encounter with Jesus transformed the way they thought about themselves? How did it transform their relationship with Jesus? Their relationships with others?
- What practical ideas can we glean from Jesus' dealings with these and others to whom He ministered? How can His words and actions guide our responses to our children and others to whom God wants to communicate His love, honor, and respect through us?

Activity 2

Proverb Projects

Use this activity to help participants to explore relational wisdom from the Book of Proverbs and then to consider the benefits of this wisdom about compassion and caring for their own relationships.

Materials needed:

- Copies of Proverb cards. See Leadership Resource 2, pg. 12 – *Proverb Projects* for 10 Proverb cards. (Cut the sheet into individual Proverb cards. Each group of four participants will need one card.).
- Assorted craft supplies (large sheets of paper, colored paper, clay, pipe cleaners, colored markers, cotton balls, yarn, etc.)
- Stick adhesives (glue, paste, tape)
- Large sheets of sturdy poster board
- Assorted newspapers and magazines
- Pieces of fabric, clothes and other props for costuming
- Musical instruments as available (may be as simple as makeshift rhythm sticks or clean combs with sheer paper to hum through, etc.)
- Individual sheets of writing paper and pens

Small group activity:

- Divide the group into small groups of four (or by families or whatever suits your setting). Keep the groups quite small, however, so everyone can participate.
- Give each group one Proverb card.
- Allow groups 30 minutes together to develop a short drama, role play, mime, song, poem, collage, poster or other visual aid, etc. that illustrates the proverb they have been given and/or how it can be applied in relationships today.
- Give each group opportunity to share their creation with the large group.
- After each group has presented their selection, open up discussion about what they learned about supportive communication, compassionate caring, and relationships of honor from working on their Proverb Projects.

Activity 3

What Do You Make of This Report?

Use this activity to reflect on the basic needs of children and how improved efforts to understand and provide for them could powerfully influence their behavior. Read or tell the following story, then reflect as a seminar group on the question that is provided.

In Great Britain there was a man whose job it was to inspect the prisons and to make sure that the prisoners were treated well and the staff members were happy. As the inspector sat in the office of a prison director drinking a cup of coffee, he asked the administrator a question. "If I could give you money for anything that would help you do your job better, what would you spend it on?"

The director thought for a moment and then said, "Well, if I lost all my staff here, but could keep one person, I'd keep the speech and language therapist. So I guess I'd spend the money on more speech and language therapists."

The inspector was amazed! This was a surprise! He'd not heard this from the other prison directors he'd visited.

"Why the speech and language therapist?" he asked

"Well, I'd say that 90% of the men in here have some kind of language and communication problem, and I reckon that many of them wouldn't have resorted to crime and violence if they could have expressed themselves more clearly, helped others to understand their needs, held down jobs and built closer relationships with people."

Question for reflection:

- What might we do differently as parents, as a church family, if we believed that improved communication could lead to less violence in our homes and in society?

Activity 4

Reflections on a Poetry Classic: *Children Learn What They Live*

This activity highlights the beneficial outcomes of relationships in which family members honor one another and communicate in supportive ways. Use the poem to emphasize the importance of modeling the behavior we desire to see in our children through our own words and actions.

Materials needed:

- Copies of the poem for each seminar participant (See Leadership Resource 3 – *Children Learn What They Live*)

- Pencils for anyone who may not have a writing instrument.

Activity directions:

- Read the poem aloud and invite people to jot down on the back of their sheet the thoughts the poem brings to mind as they reflect on the following questions:

- ? Can you remember a time as a child or as an adult, when you experienced a moment in relationship with another that was uplifting and encouraging?
- ? Which line of the poem best describes your experience?
- ? What effect has this experience had on your life?
- ? How might this poem help us to relate in ways that promote health and well-being in the lives of the children with whom we are in relationship?
- ? Where will you begin?

- Invite group members to share the personal reflections they feel comfortable sharing with one other person.

- After 5-10 minutes of sharing in two's, invite feedback in the large group and summarize ideas on a flip chart.

- Sum up the ideas positively, looking at how the ideas can help us to understand the effect of supportive communication, respectful attitudes, compassionate caring, and "honoring" relationships on those with whom we are in close relationship.

Activity 5

Becoming a Supportive Communicator

Use this activity to develop more supportive communication. When we communicate with others we can choose to defend ourselves, our ideas, our ways of doing things and our power in the relationship, or we can communicate in ways that show respect for others and invite co-operation and a sharing of ideas, hopes and feelings.

Materials needed:

- Two large posters to illustrate the difference between the approach of a defensive communicator and that of a supportive communicator. Use your creativity to make an attractive poster to convey your message as a presenter about the tactics defensive communicators use and the more positive approaches of a supportive communicator.

- Two easels or other means of displaying your posters for all to see.

Activity instructions:

- Review the two styles of communication in the large group.

- Defensive communicators use tactics like:

- ? Evaluation—judging the other person, blaming, using words like “you always” and “you never.”

- ? Control—imposing one’s own ideas on others.

- ? Strategy—manipulating the situation and others to get one’s own way.

- ? Neutrality—showing a lack of care and concern for others.

- ? Superiority—using one’s knowledge or power in a relationship to influence people to do things the way we want them done.

- ? Certainty—declaring one’s own way the “right” or “better” way to do things.

- Supportive communicators use approaches like:

- ? Making requests—inviting the other person to share information and their perspectives.

- ? Sharing problem ownership—considering the problem to be “ours” rather than the other person’s problem.

- ? Spontaneity—being straightforward and honest, giving each person opportunity to talk about what they would find helpful in the situation.

- ? Compassion—showing caring concern for the other person and their needs.

- ? Equality—placing oneself on an equal footing with the other person, remembering that God shows no partiality.

- ? Experimentation—being willing to explore different alternatives for solving a problem until one can be found that meets the needs of all involved.

Small group activity:

- Invite group members to share in small groups, as they feel comfortable:

- ? an experience when they have seen a defensive communicator in action.

- ? a time when they might have used a defensive communication style with their children or another adult.

- ? a time when someone used this approach toward them.

- As participants reflect on these experiences with defensive communicators, ask them to consider the following questions:

- ? What was the effect of this experience on the person receiving the communication?

- ? Do you think this was the response the communicator hoped to achieve?

- ? If you could rewind the tape and give the communicator another chance, how would you use what you have learned about supportive communication to coach them on a better approach? What would you like to see them do and say differently to communicate more positively?

Activity 6

What Would You Do?

Use this activity with case studies to discern non-violent ways to resolve situations that are highly charged with emotion and conflict.

Materials needed:

- The 5 drama scenarios below printed on sheets of paper, providing at least one scenario per small group as needed. As an alternative, you may wish to arrange ahead of time for young people to dramatize the scenarios, improvising with their own dialogue, etc.

Scenario #1

Luke is fourteen. While he is washing the car with his dad, he gets up his courage to mention that some of the guys are talking about their girlfriends, making sexually explicit comments about their appearance and the kinds of things they would like to do with them. Luke doesn't like this talk, but if he says anything the guys get angry and call him a prude. Now just being with them has started to make his stomach churn, but they are the only friends he has.

Scenario #2

Heather is twelve. Since she was much younger, Heather has been the brunt of many cruel jokes and is often bullied by her classmates. She is very distressed about the situation. Her older brother Danny feels sorry for her and gets angry whenever she talks to him about it. He says that whenever she's ready, he'll step in and give those bullies a beating.

Scenario #3

Ten-year-old Sarah has been playing with her little brother Jonah. He has gotten hold of one of her dolls, and she is afraid he will break it. When she tries to take it from him, he won't let go. In desperation, she pinches him hard to get him to let go. Jonah starts to scream and brings Mother running from the other room.

Scenario #4

John is thirteen. As he is walking home from school after band practice, a couple of older boys approach him and try to steal his cell-phone. John resists, but he's afraid he's going to get hurt.

Scenario #5

The Smith family is together in the family room. On the evening news there is a feature on the rising incidence of family violence in their community. Mr. Smith grew up next door to a man who used to beat his wife and children, but he has never talked with his family about the affect that this experience had on him or the deliberate decision he made never to use force or physical violence in his own home. The news item makes him wish he could talk about the problem of abuse and family violence with his family, but he's not sure how.

Activity instructions:

- Read the scenario assigned to your small group or watch as it is dramatized for you from the front (in which case all the groups will discuss the same scenario simultaneously).
- Debrief on the scenarios in small groups and then recap in the large group. Talk about how you can apply what you have learned to help the main characters resolve the situations in which they find themselves in non-violent ways.

Section D

Summing Up

- Give everyone a chance to volunteer an “I learned . . .” statement for the seminar. Then give participants time to share with one other person something they would like to do differently or something they are more committed to doing than ever before because they have been part of this seminar. To close, invite each two-some to pray for one another and for each other’s families and their relationships in the wider circle.

- You may wish to make copies of Leadership Resource 4 - *Growing Non-Violent Children* and distribute it as a handout to take home.

- After the seminar, you may wish to collate the ideas from the cube, flip charts, and other discussion notes and use them to write a report on the seminar for your church newsletter.

Sample outline of body shape to be drawn on the boxes



Leadership Resource 1 – Artwork for boxes

Proverb Projects Cards

<p>Proverbs 10:12</p> <p><i>Hatred starts fights, but love pulls a quilt over the bickering.</i></p> <p><i>Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.</i></p>	<p>Proverbs 11:16</p> <p><i>A woman of gentle grace gets respect, but men of rough violence grab for loot.</i></p> <p><i>A gracious woman retaineth honor: and strong men retain riches.</i></p>
<p>Proverbs 11:25</p> <p><i>The one who blesses others is abundantly blessed; those who help others are helped.</i></p> <p><i>The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.</i></p>	<p>Proverbs 15:1</p> <p><i>A gentle response defuses anger, but a sharp tongue kindles a temper-fire.</i></p> <p><i>A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.</i></p>
<p>Proverbs 16:24</p> <p><i>Gracious speech is like clover honey - good taste to the soul, quick energy for the body.</i></p> <p><i>Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.</i></p>	<p>Proverbs 16:32</p> <p><i>Moderation is better than muscle, self-control better than political power.</i></p> <p><i>He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.</i></p>
<p>Proverbs 22:11</p> <p><i>God loves the pure-hearted and well-spoken; good leaders also delight in their friendship.</i></p> <p><i>He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend.</i></p>	<p>Proverbs 11:17</p> <p><i>When you're kind to others, you help yourself; when you're cruel to others you hurt yourself.</i></p> <p><i>The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh.</i></p>
<p>Proverbs 15:18</p> <p><i>Hot tempers start fights; a calm, cool spirit keeps the peace.</i></p> <p><i>The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is his delight.</i></p>	<p>Proverbs 17:1</p> <p><i>A meal of bread and water in contented peace is better than a banquet spiced with quarrels.</i></p> <p><i>Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife.</i></p>

All verses have been taken from *The Message Bible and The King James Version.*

Leadership Resource 2 – Proverb Projects

Children Learn What They Live

Dorothy Law Nolte

If children live with criticism, they learn to condemn.

If children live with hostility, they learn to fight.

If children live with ridicule, they learn to feel shy.

If children live with shame, they learn to feel guilty.

If children live with encouragement, they learn confidence.

If children live with tolerance, they learn patience.

If children live with praise, they learn appreciation.

If children live with acceptance, they learn to love.

If children live with approval, they learn to like themselves.

If children live with honesty, they learn truthfulness.

If children live with security, they learn to have faith in themselves and in those about them.

If children live with friendliness, they learn the world is a nice place in which to live.

Excerpted from the book CHILDREN LEARN WHAT THEY LIVE
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Leadership Resource 3 – *Children Learn What They Live*

Growing Non-violent Children

The first place to start growing non-violent children is in your own heart.

- Take time every day to experience God's love and peace in your heart. When you know His love and peace personally, you are more able to pass them on to others.
- Think how you can show God's loving grace and compassion to everyone you meet each day, including your children and other family members.
- Consider each person a child of God, a crowning glory of His creation, and be filled with wonder toward them.

Handle children with care.

- Always deal with your children gently, compassionately, and with a loving firmness so that they learn to deal with others this way.
- Demonstrate the respect and honor you have for them in your words and actions.
- Speak lovingly and respectfully to them as much as you can.
- Handle issues of discipline with generous amounts of grace.
- Encourage children to be gentle with people and property from an early age.
- Involve them in compassionate acts of service for others.
- Teach them how to treat pets and animals with care.
- Help them understand the pain others feel when they are treated unkindly or physically hurt by them.
- Let your children know when you do and don't feel honored and supported by them. Your affirmation and gentle rebuke will encourage them to honor you and others in relationships.

Be a good role model for your children.

- Model respect and compassion for others no matter who they are. Let your children see that you respect and care for people regardless of position, wealth, or gender.
- Model good management of your own emotions, and talk about how you manage powerful emotions when you experience them.
- Teach your children to identify their emotions and to find useful ways of expressing themselves.
- Model an open, respectful and loving marriage so that your children can see what a good relationship looks like. Even if you are a single parent, your children can see how well you treat friends, relatives and people you meet everyday.
- Model equal power sharing in the home.

Talk about important issues.

- Use news stories, TV shows, cartoons, music, whatever is in your children's media, to discuss violence in relationships. Talk together about what you are hearing and seeing.
- Talk about where to seek help when you are having difficulty respecting others and relating in positive ways.
- Role-play how to handle difficult circumstances.
- Develop good communication skills.
- Listen to your children and enable them to make a significant contribution to the ideas in your family.

Leadership Resource 4 – *Growing Non-Violent Children*

Reprinted from Flowers, K. & Flowers, R. (2004). *Celebrate Marriage!* Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Family Ministries, 63-76. Used by permission.

Resources

MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

(Gleaned from a variety of government and NGO web sites)

MYTH # 1:	<i>Domestic violence is a "loss of control"—an anger control issue</i>
FACT:	Violent behavior is a choice—domestic violence has nothing to do with anger. Anger is a tool abusers use to get what they want. We know abusers are actually very much in control because they can stop when someone knocks on the door or the phone rings. They often direct punches and kicks to parts of the body where the bruises are less likely to show and they are not abusing everyone who makes them “angry,” but wait until there are no witnesses and then abuse the one he says he loves. Domestic violence is about batterers using their control, not losing control. Their actions are very deliberate.
MYTH # 2:	<i>The victim is responsible for the violence because she provokes it.</i>
FACT:	No one asks to be abused. And no one deserves to be abused regardless of what they say or do. Everyone has the right to live free of violence. No one would want to have their partner be abusive. Women who find that their second or third partner are abusers will often be blamed by others for the violence —"it must be something about her" or she will blame herself —"I always seem to pick abusers." In reality, the abuser uses the tactic of charm early in the relationship to find out that she was previously abused. He uses this information to blame her for the violence —"see it must be something that you are doing wrong, or there would not have been two of us" or to silence her - "you are not going to tell anyone, because if you do they will never believe you because you said that before.
MYTH # 3:	<i>If the victim didn't like it, she would leave.</i>
FACT:	Victims do not like the abuse. They stay in the relationship for many reasons, including fear. Most do eventually leave. Victim provocation is no more common in domestic violence than in any other crime. Battered women often make repeated attempts to leave violent relationships, but are prevented from doing so by increased violence and control tactics on the part of the abuser. Other factors which inhibit a victim's ability to leave include economic dependence, few viable options for housing and support, unhelpful responses from the criminal justice system or other agencies, social isolation, cultural or religious constraints, a commitment to the abuser and the relationship and fear of further violence. It has been estimated that the danger to a victim increases by 70% when she attempts to leave, as the abuser escalates his use of violence when he begins to lose control.
MYTH # 4”	<i>Domestic violence only occurs in a small percentage of relationships.</i>
FACT:	Estimates report that domestic violence occurs in ¼ to ? of all intimate

	relationships. This applies to heterosexual as well as same-sex relationships.
MYTH # 5:	<i>Middle and upper class women do not get battered as frequently as poor women.</i>
FACT:	Domestic violence occurs in all socio-economical levels. Because women with money usually have more access to resources, poorer women tend to utilize community agencies, and are therefore more visible.
MYTH # 6:	<i>Batterers are violent in all their relationships.</i>
FACT:	Batterers choose to be violent toward their partners in ways they would never consider treating other people.
MYTH # 7:	<i>Alcohol/Drugs cause battering behavior.</i>
FACT:	Many batterers don't drink or use drugs at all. Although many abusive partners also abuse alcohol and/or drugs, this is not the underlying cause of the battering. Many batterers use alcohol/drugs as an excuse to explain their violence.
MYTH # 8:	<i>Once a battered woman, always a battered woman.</i>
FACT:	While some battered women have been in more than one abusive relationship, women who receive domestic violence services are the least likely to enter another abusive relationship.
MYTH # 9:	<i>It's easy to just pack up and leave an abusive relationship.</i>
FACT:	This is not true. The batterer tends to isolate their partner from money, obtaining a job, family, and friends. The difficulty of paying for childcare and living expenses make it almost impossible to just pack up and leave.
MYTH # 10:	<i>Women are the only victims of domestic violence.</i>
FACT:	Men are also victims of domestic violence, but many are embarrassed to report the abuse. A well-publicized study conducted by Dr. Murray Strauss at the University of New Hampshire found that women use violent means to resolve conflict in relationships as often as men. However, the study also concluded that when the context and consequences of an assault are measured, the majority of victims are women. The U.S. Department of Justice has found that 95% of the victims of spouse abuse are female. Men can be victims, but it is rare.
MYTH # 11:	<i>Children in domestic violence households tend to grow up to be victims or abusers.</i>
FACT:	This is unfortunately true. Even though children appear to be asleep or don't talk about what they hear or see, they are affected. Children mimic what the adults in their lives do, and the cycle of violence continues.
MYTH # 12:	<i>Batterers are always mean and vicious people.</i>
FACT:	Not true. Some of the nicest people you know are batterers, and they come from all social and economic classes. 90% of batterers don't have a criminal history.

MYTH # 13:	<i>The abuse will eventually stop.</i>
FACT:	Without professional help for the batterer the abuse will not stop. The abuse usually becomes more frequent and more violent, sometimes resulting in death.
MYTH # 14:	<i>The cycle of violence is broken when the relationship ends.</i>
FACT:	The most dangerous time for a victim can be when they leave without a safety plan. Without intervention, batterers will continue to abuse.
MYTH # 15:	<i>Domestic violence is usually a one time, isolated occurrence.</i>
FACT:	Battering is a pattern of coercion and control that one person exerts over another. Battering is not just one physical attack. It includes the repeated use of a number of tactics, including intimidation, threats, economic deprivation, isolation and psychological and sexual abuse. Physical violence is just one of these tactics. The various forms of abuse utilized by batterers help to maintain power and control over their spouses and partners.
MYTH # 16	<i>Men who batter are often good fathers and should have joint custody of their children if the couple separates.</i>
FACT:	Studies have found that men who batter their wives also abuse their children in 70% of cases. Even when children are not directly abused, they suffer as a result of witnessing one parent assault another. Batterers often display an increased interest in their children at the time of separation, as a means of maintaining contact with, and thus control over, their partners.
MYTH # 17	<i>When there is violence in the family, all members of the family are participating in the dynamic, and therefore, all must change for the violence to stop.</i>
FACT:	Only the batterer has the ability to stop the violence. Battering is a behavioral choice for which the batterer must be held accountable. Many battered women make numerous attempts to change their behavior in the hope that this will stop the abuse. This does not work. Changes in family members' behavior will not cause the batterer to be non-violent.
MYTH # 18:	<i>Abusers and/or victims have low self-esteem.</i>
FACT:	Abusers do not have low self-esteem. They believe they are entitled to have power and control over their partner. Abusers will pretend to have low-self esteem, if it will make others believe the violence is not their fault. Survivors of abuse may have had great self-esteem at the beginning of the relationship, but the abuser uses emotional abuse: calling her names, putting her down, telling her it is all her fault, in order to destroy her self-esteem. Some abusers look for women with low self-esteem, as they believe she will be more likely to blame herself and less likely to report his behavior. Other abusers will seek women with high self-esteem, as they may represent a greater challenge to control over time.

From: <http://www.newint.org/issue373/silence.htm>

The other side of silence

Women are still being beaten and killed by their husbands and partners, but they are finding ways to fight back. **Nikki van der Gaag** reports.

Rania al Baz's husband was angry because he came in and found her on the telephone. It was not the first time he had beaten her, but this time when she begged him not to hit her, his reply was: 'Hit you? I'm not going to hit you, I am going to kill you.'

He then repeatedly smashed her face against the marble floor and walls of their home and tried to strangle her. He left her unconscious for a couple of hours while he showered and changed then bundled her up in a sheet and put her in the family van.

'When my daughter regained consciousness,' related Rania's mother, 'she found herself in the van and she thought he was taking her to Obhur to bury her. When he heard her moaning and trying to speak, he must have panicked because he pulled into Bugshan Hospital.'

According to security at the hospital, he dumped the injured Rania at the emergency room entrance, telling nurses and staff that she was the victim of a car accident and was dead. He then left quickly saying he was going to bring other victims of the accident.

Rania al Baz is one of Saudi Arabia's few women TV presenters. She was well known for her chatty, magazine-style show *The Kingdom this morning*. As a result of the assault, her face was fractured in 13 places.

Rania was not alone in suffering in this way though she was unusual in that she spoke out about her injuries. The statistics on such violence – often disparagingly called 'domestic', are astounding. It crosses all boundaries of race and class. In Europe, it is the major cause of ill-health for women between 16 and 44 – more common than cancer or traffic accidents. In the US, a woman is beaten every 18 minutes. In Peru, 70 per cent of all crimes reported to the police involve women beaten by their husbands.¹ In Russia, one woman in five is regularly



He smashed her face against the marble wall and floors of their home

beaten by her partner.² In India and Bangladesh, women are killed or burned with acid for not bringing enough dowry into their husband's family when they marry.

There have been major changes to laws on domestic violence over the past 10 years, prompted by activists and women like Rania who have run campaigns and lobbied international organizations and governments. In 1991, women's groups around the world launched an annual campaign of 16 days of activism against gender violence; 25 November is now International Day Against Violence Against Women. In 1994, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women asserted that the law should protect women from violence in both public and private spheres. And in the same year the Organization of American States adopted the Belém do Pará Convention, which sets out actions that governments must take to eliminate violence against women.

Organizations campaigning against gender-based violence are increasingly using all the tools at their disposal. In Rajasthan, India, when members of the Bal Rashmi Society – which actively opposes sexual exploitation, rape, dowry-related deaths and torture – were jailed, an internet alert led to the suspension of their trials. BaBe, a strategic lobbying group in Croatia, has used the internet to raise awareness of women's experience of violence during war, and to bring about a new family law that includes restraining orders against men in domestic rape cases. Women Living Under Muslim Laws has mounted a web campaign around the denial of women's rights in Islamic societies. WomenNet in South Africa used the Internet for a 'Stop Rape' campaign supported by international signatories.

At national level, many countries have enacted specific domestic violence legislation and taken other action – the first shelters for battered women were opened in Russia in 1994, in Mongolia in 1995 and in China in 1996.³

But still only 45 countries have legislation protecting women against domestic violence and many of these laws are not regularly enforced. The scale and pattern of the violence seems to have changed very little in the past decade – and there are places where it has increased. Where political tensions lead to conflict and violence outside the home, or where men feel disempowered because they have lost their jobs and their hope for the future, they often take it out on the nearest person available – their wives, girlfriends and partners. In some countries, this violence has taken on a new edge as reactions against what is seen as the West's sexual 'permissiveness' has meant that women have increasingly been viewed as the vessels in which culture is stored. They are abused and attacked if they seem to step outside cultural boundaries.

One extreme example of this is the increase in what have euphemistically been called 'honour killings' (see Keynote p11). In 2003 in Pakistan, such killings were reported to have increased by 50 per cent.⁴ There have been numerous examples in Western countries as well, where conflict between older and younger generations is thrown into sharp relief and fathers kill their daughters rather than see them in a relationship with someone from another ethnic or religious group. The Muslim Women's League notes that: 'Confronting the problem of "honour killings" and other crimes that disproportionately affect women requires a change in attitude that pervades all levels of society where such attacks occur.'⁵

Why don't women leave?

People sometimes put the blame on the woman – why did she put up with years of abuse? Why didn't she leave him? There are many answers to such questions, but one fact is that leaving actually increases the risk of violence. Professor Ruth Busch of Waikato University in New Zealand/Aotearoa notes: 'The most dangerous time for women is that first 18 months after separation. In the US, for instance, 80 per cent of women who turn up in accident and emergency rooms because of physical injuries have been assaulted by estranged partners. In New Zealand, 40 per cent of women who are killed die on contact changeover times.'⁶

And by putting the blame on the woman, society legitimizes the violence. Busch again: 'If a man gets fired and goes home and kicks his partner – what is the outcome? If he had walked into his boss's office and done the same to his boss, would the consequence have been counselling?'

In some countries, women simply have nowhere to go. 'If a woman is beaten by her husband and goes back to her parents for help, they are quite likely to send her back to her husband,' says Fatou Gibba, from the Gambia. 'And if you take your husband to the police it will tarnish the image of the whole family. It is just not done.'

Her words ring true in other countries as well: women have been taught that they have to put up with whatever their husband does to them. Surveys have shown high percentages of women who think it is acceptable for a husband to beat his wife 'for one or more specific reasons – burning food, arguing with him, going out without telling him, neglecting the children, refusing sex'. In Uganda 77 per cent of women surveyed believed this, in Turkmenistan 52 per cent, in Haiti 40 per cent and 29 per cent in Nepal.³

Society condones silence. And often the police take the side of the husband or even abuse the woman again. Academic Yolisa Dalamba from South Africa notes: 'It is... common knowledge that often when women report a rape to the police, they are raped again by those who are supposed to investigate. Case files go missing and women complainants are harassed and are subjected to more violence.'⁷

Victims of domestic violence are often afraid of retaliation, or are trying to protect their children; or they have no other means of financial support than the perpetrator, or nowhere to go. By leaving, they may lose the support of relatives and will lose their networks, their jobs and their home. Even then, they cannot be sure that the husband or boyfriend or partner who has been abusing them will be brought to justice – and they have mixed feelings about that as well. No wonder it is so difficult for women to escape.

What can make a difference?

If international and national legislation still does not stop the violence, what can make a difference? Dorian Solis Corrión, Vice-Mayor of the City of Cuenca, Ecuador, says: 'Laws by themselves are not enough, what is needed is a comprehensive programme to prevent and deal with the legal, psychological and health issues attached to violence.'⁸

First, society as a whole must begin to view the issue not as the silent, hushed-up problem of the past but as a serious situation affecting women's health. A study in Sweden notes that: 'a preventative and proactive approach needs to be taken' which involves not only the judicial system and the police but also medical and social services, who need to 'look at victims in a holistic and comprehensive manner'.⁹ And all parties must 'give these women adequate medical, psychological, and social support'.

The Zimbabwe Independent

Putting Gender Violence in the Public Domain

December 31, 1998

Harare – Gender violence is endemic in all communities and countries around the world. It is a phenomenon which cuts across class, race, age, and religion. Violence can be experienced in many different forms: it may be physical, sexual, economic, social or cultural abuse, but commonly it is a combination of these

The result is that many women in Zimbabwe, both inside and outside their homes, live in constant fear of being harassed, assaulted or killed. Violence against women is used by private and public sectors to deny the right to health, well-being and bodily integrity. It is also used to deny women's freedom of expression, freedom of association and participation in a broad range of activities including employment and property ownership. Women's social-economic status frequently is adversely affected by violence in their lives.

The Declaration on the Elimination Of All Forms Of Violence Against Women was adopted by the United Nations in December 1993. Zimbabwe has ratified this convention. The declaration calls on all governments to condemn violence against women and not to invoke any custom, tradition or religious consideration to avoid their obligations with respect to eliminating violence against women in the public and private spheres.

Traditionally, the home has been idealized as a place of safety and security. The relationships between members of the family are idealized as respectful and supportive. The reality is quite different. Recent surveys and studies suggest that far from being a place of safety the family can be a "cradle of violence".

Every year, for 16 days throughout the world, NGOs get together and educate the general public on violence against women and related issues. The 1997/1998 theme for the 16 days of activism against gender violence was "someone you know" because in one way or another we have all been affected by this social menace.

What is needed is the "education" of the girl children that they matter and that they have a life of their own which may or may not include family obligations. They have the right to a career and they have a choice of where to set up home.

It is true to a certain extent that most of us do not feel that we are victims of gender violence because the term itself brings to mind rape, battering, incest, sexual harassment or pornography.

But gender violence comes in different forms. Article 2 of the Convention On The Declaration On The Elimination Of Violence Against Women identifies three areas where violence takes place:

- Physical, sexual and psychological violence that occur in the family, including battering; sexual abuse of female children in the household; dowry-related violence; marital rape;

female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women; non-spousal violence; and violence related to exploitation;

- Physical, sexual and psychological violence that occurs within the general community, including rape and sexual abuse; sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in education institutions and elsewhere; trafficking in women; and forced prostitution; and,
- Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the state, wherever it occurs.

Debates have been held, the issues on gender violence have been discussed and attempts have been made to come up with solutions. The common thing about these for a is that the discussions concentrate on physical and sexual violence that occurs in the family and in the community. Psychological violence is rarely tackled. Perhaps this is because the majority of the people are victims or perpetrators of this type of violence.

Before getting married, Sibusisiwe, a graduate teacher, had been promoted to be deputy head at a school in Bulawayo. She took the job for a period of one year upon which she got married. Her husband, also a teacher, lived in Mutare.

It was taken for granted that Sibusisiwe would move to Mutare, thereby giving up her job as deputy head, where she would have to content herself being a class teacher. Sibusisiwe is not alone in such a situation. She is a victim of psychological gender violence that most women are subjected to. Where a couple will live, how they will spend their combined income, how many children they will have are important decisions that must form part of the decision-making process before marriage.

In other societies prenuptial agreements are the norm. Maybe a modification of these is advisable in our context. Joint decisions must not end with marriage, in fact they must continue “until death do us part”. Society must therefore create an environment that encourages decision making within the home.

The roots of violence against women lie in the gender-based inequalities in our society. Such inequalities persist through socialization. Right from birth a girl child is perceived differently from a boy child. The boy is seen as a potential contributor to the family income.

All his future earnings will be ploughed back into the family. On the other hand a girl child will grow up and get married – she is a commodity. She will contribute only one sum into the family in the form of the lobola paid by her husband. For this reason the girl child is afforded only the few resources that will enable her to be marriageable.

As the girl grows, she is under pressure from the family and the community at large to get married and to believe that if she does not marry then she will be perceived as a failure and a social misfit. This in itself is a form of violence.

The socialization process prunes the girl’s ability to make decisions for herself regarding her education and career path. “If you are too educated, who will marry you? If you become a truck

driver, carpenter, or doctor, who will marry you? Don't you know that men fear educated women?

The payment of lobola traditionally gives the man the right over the women's reproductive and productive roles. Therefore on marrying, the woman again finds herself in a situation where she cannot make independent decisions that are crucial to her well-being.

This is confirmed by general beliefs that are prevalent in the Zimbabwean society that women should be disciplined in the same manner as children. Women need a "slap" here and there to keep them on the right track or else they get above themselves.

Musasa Project, an NGO set up in 1988 to deal with the problem of violence against women, received the following message on their answering machine: "Who do you think you are, you people? She's my wife and I can hit her if I want to. I paid for her, I can do what I want with her."

While we still have this mentality prevailing throughout our society we cannot afford to turn a blind eye. Violence against women is one of the key social mechanisms that force women into a subordinate position to men.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

By Dr. Paul Wanjai Jr.

THE FACTS

Family violence represents a significant threat to the well-being of individuals and societies world-wide. This violence is blind to age, social status, colour, culture and creed. There is no typical victim of abuse or perpetrator except by far, the victim is usually female and perpetrator, male. Three categories are noted:

- Men abuse women (commonest)
- Women abuse men (rare)
- Women abuse themselves (sometimes)

Abuse and violence may be physical, sexual or psychological in nature. Some of the cases end up in murder, suicide or incapacitation. Battering and assault are on the increase. It is estimated that 30% of all rape victims are also battered women.

Physical Abuse involves aggressive behavior towards another: pushing, pinching, spitting, kicking, biting, pulling hair, slapping, hitting, punching, choking, burning, clubbing, stabbing, limb twisting and confining. Sometimes it includes throwing objects (acid, boiling water, objects), throwing victim down, against a wall, downstairs or mutilating with knives, scissors or other dangerous objects including firearms.

Psychological or emotional abuse includes harsh criticism, degrading and disparaging name-calling. It also can lead to verbal threat, rage, violent language, isolation, deprivation and violent destruction of property belonging to victim such as clothing, furniture or pets.

Sexual abuse includes forced fondling, touching and verbal remarks or even frank forced actions of incest, molestation, rape, forced prostitution, oral/genital contact or fondling of genitals and breasts. An adult in a position of trust takes advantage of the vulnerability of the victim or of the trust relationship to meet his own needs or desires.

Christians are not exempt from this problem. Thirty per cent of batterers come from a non-violent home. However, witnessing domestic violence as a child had been identified as one of the most common risk factors for becoming a batterers in adulthood. It is a learned behavior. A choice made by the perpetrator. It is always inappropriate. It can be controlled and should be prevented. It is an area in which God expects His children to take action.

When Men Batter

Worldwide studies show a commonality in

the male behavior in domestic violence. The reasons are:

- ◆ **Physical dominance:** to maintain power and control in the relationship. Trying to force control rather than earning it.
- ◆ **Status:** Deriving prestige and status from subjugating and beating to submission.
- ◆ **Negative views of women:** as inferior or objects of use; rather than the value of a person that God gives to all humanity. Females are seen as objects created for their pleasure.
- ◆ **Cultural influences:** Degrading traditional gender roles with subtle dehumanizing of women.
- ◆ **Lack of accountability:** Men rarely are held accountable for abuse as women keep abuse secret.
- ◆ **Additional reason:** Poor laws, scanty resources, silence, all as part of a male dominated society.

Why Battered Women Stay and Don't Leave

- ◆ **To avoid more violence -** Leaving triggers more violence. Those who leave are at 95% greater risk of being killed by the batterers than the ones who stay. The batterers may follow to kill her, the children or family members.
- ◆ **Shame -** Pressure from society and church to keep family together "at all costs." Many are pressurized to maintain their "Christian duty" of providing a good home to the children in silence although abused. Their fear to incur God's wrath if they "leave" and hence hope this "sacrifice" is acceptable (and expected) by God. Leaving is therefore considered a "weakness" since they should be "strong enough" to persevere.
- ◆ **Lack of support -** Often the battered women are isolated, kept away from family and friends. Besides, often they are financially dependent on the abuser for survival.
- ◆ **Love -** Some genuinely love their mates in spite of violence. They stay hoping a magic moment will come and he will change. After all, aren't "all things possible with God?"
- ◆ **Fear of sinning -** They assume that by leaving, they contravene scripture which says "no man put asunder" and "till death do us part." They therefore feel obligated to persevere and "turn the other cheek" even as they pray for the abuser.

The Abuse Cycle

The abuse cycle has 3 phases that vary in time and intensity. However, the pattern is always there:

Phase One: Tension Building - The wife tries very carefully to avoid the behaviors she knows will upset her husband, but the batterer watches her, looking for reasons to blame. He will incite her with ridicule, threats, placing restrictions or other minor incidents to "pick a fight." It may last a long period (even years) and as the tension builds, he heaps on her abuses: tirades of faults, pinch, slap, verbal harangues, display of anger or simply frustrates her efforts to be nice to him.

Phase Two: Acute Explosion Stage - Rage gets out of control and the batterer looks for an opportunity to "teach her a lesson." The least incident triggers an explosion and display of physical force which discharges all the tension built up in the tension building phase. Uncontrollable and serious violence occurs - choke, punch, knife, twist, burn, throw or some other violent act as above.

The reign of terror can last for hours or weeks. The wife may hide after batterings so that others don't get to know what happened. Some may run away or seek help at this stage.

Phase Three: Resolution Calm and Loving Stage - After the batterer's wrath is spent, the tension is released. He becomes remorseful and he may even beg for forgiveness; promising to reform. This period of kindness, contrition and loving behavior can be very deceptive. He is tearful, regretful and makes up with gifts, tenderness and promises. He may even threaten suicide should she leave him. Most women want to believe that the husband has changed and want to give him another chance. When the resolution stage is accepted, it is only a prelude for a repeat of the tension building phase of the cycle. And it starts all over again.

Counselors are often amazed to see victims in acute explosive stage who are angry, lonely, hurt and frightened coming back in resolution calm - loving phase as a happy, smiling and confident woman. Infact, her husband has become a woman's "dream come true" for she believes this loving husband has changed. She senses his "desperation" and "lonely isolation" from the rest of the world. Infact, she stays because he needs her - He can't do without her. When the batterer is sure she is securely his once more, the cycle starts from the beginning all over again.

What Can We Do?

For the victim

- Find safety for herself and kids

- houses as refuge for victims.
- Be understanding and sympathetic - Provide emotional support.
- Emphasize God's acceptance - God loves her inspite of her husband's actions which are not a true representation of God's attitude towards her. She is made in God's image and worthy of respect and honor.
- Steer her to a professional who can help - counseling is mandatory to repair damaged self esteem and stop blaming herself.
- Listen and validate the victim's feelings - pressure is released by talking it out. Eliminate fear about tears - both ours and the victims.
- Prayerful support - the prayer framework to include the following:
- Praise - God's qualities of love, compassion, power.
- Confession - admit wrongs in the current mess.
- Thanksgiving - find something positive to thank God for.
- Requests - specifics that she needs from God. Be honest to God.
- Help her recognize that she can not change and she is not responsible for the abuser's action no matter how she changes her actions.

For the abuser - batterer

- If they are open to counseling, refer them to a counselor who will help them to explore issues that trigger abusive response.
- Help him to admit that he is solely responsible for his actions and therefore he is the only one who can change his behavior.
- Provide and learn new ways of dealing with anger and resentment.
- Recognize abuse as criminal and subject to discipline.
- Help him know that abusive behavior is learnt and therefore can also be unlearned.
- If he is not open to counseling, seek a professional counselor's advice on how to execute "tough love" and lead him to seeing his problem and therefore forcing him to accept his need of help.

As a community

- Hold abusers accountable no matter how wealthy, educated or their status. In so doing, we are being a community of healing.
- Believe victims and assist them with practical aid - food, shelter, refuge.
- Get appropriate authorities to step in and stop the violence cycle continuing.
- Provide marriage enrichment to strengthen homes. The home was designed to be a refuge from the stresses of life. A haven in a chaotic world. A place where we can hide from the "madness" of our fast paced living. When domestic violence reigns, it is a terrifying place for the wife and children.

- Get the church to provide protocols of assisting victims. What happens in a family is not a private matter when domestic violence sets in. Studies show that twice as many victims go to their pastors as go to doctors or counselors. Pastors should not take lightly the victims seeking help; as any down playing the seriousness of the abusive behavior validates the perpetrator's actions. Sermons and seminars should be provided in religious gatherings to highlight the problem and provide awareness.

RECOGNIZING A POTENTIAL BATTERER

Although there is no stereotype of an abuser, there are 10 ways of recognizing a man prone to battering behavior.

1. He tends to avoid problems rather than face them.
2. He demonstrates feelings of insecurity or inferiority.
3. He takes great pride in his physical strength.
4. He is very possessive and unusually jealous of his partner's time, family and friends.
5. He behaves violently towards objects and animals.
6. He is very rigid in his ideas about male and female roles.
7. He loses his temper frequently.
8. His partner works unusually hard to keep him from becoming angry.
9. He swings to extremes emotionally and socially. He may appear to be extraordinarily cruel one moment and extraordinarily kind the next.
10. He was battered as a child or saw his father abuse his mother.

THE CHURCH RESPONSE

As a "shelter" from the "storms" of life, the church is God's vehicle to restore healing to society. The pulpits should have sermons addressing domestic violence and uphold the sanctity of life. Man is God's most precious asset in the universe. Any degrading, battering or abusive behavior by one towards another goes contrary to God's will for mankind. Christians need to be made aware of the incompatibility of abuse and domestic violence with a biblical understanding of human relationships.

The teaching role of the church is invaluable. Provide education and awareness regarding: abuse cycle, statistics locally found of violence, parenting and discipline, personality profiles, communication skills, conflict resolution and where victims can get help and perpetrators reported for justice making to take place.

Vitally important is the availability of a place of shelter (a "safe house") where victims (wives, mothers, children) can be protected in an emergency. Associated with these "shelters" should

be a network of helpers and friends. Most governments have a legal framework for reporting abuse and violent incidents to the authorities. The pastor or network designees should liaise with such authorities to report each case that lands in the shelter. This action enables perpetrators to understand that their act is unacceptable to the family, church and legal authorities. It is a way of saying, "we care enough about you to hold you accountable for behavior which is destructive to both you and your family" (Horton and Williamson).

The Pastor's role is invaluable as part of the treatment team. Encouragement and assurances of God's rich compassion and forgiveness are critical to healing of victim; whereas repentance (including restitution where possible) and forgiveness are crucial for the perpetrator.

The Church is a healing community within society. Her response to the domestic violence victims and perpetrators is part of her divine mission to a "fallen world" with subsequent "sin-sick" society that "breeds" domestic violence. Her role in protecting the victims, stopping the abuse, salvaging relationships and facilitating reconciliation is part of God's ministry to this world.

Dr Paul Wangai, Jr, is the Health Ministries Director of the Eastern Africa Division.

I GOT FLOWERS TODAY

I got flowers today. It wasn't my birthday or any other special day. We had our first argument last night. And he said a lot of cruel things that really hurt me. I know he is sorry and didn't mean the things he said. Because he sent me flowers today.

I got flowers today. It wasn't our anniversary or any other special day. Last night, he threw me into a wall and started to choke me. It seemed like a nightmare. I couldn't believe it was real. I woke up this morning sore and bruised all over. I know he must be sorry. Because he sent me flowers today.

I got flowers today, and it wasn't Mother's Day or any other special day. Last night, he beat me up again. And it was much worse than all other times. If I leave him, what will I do? How will I take care of my kids? What about money? I am afraid of him and scared to leave. But I know he must be sorry. Because he sent me flowers today.

I got flowers today. Today was a very special day. It was the day of my funeral. Last night, he finally killed me. He beat me to death. If only I had gathered enough courage and strength to leave him, I would not have gotten flowers... today.

Courtesy of Internet

Seventh-day Adventist Statement on Family Violence

Family violence involves an assault of any kind—verbal, physical, emotional, sexual, or active or passive neglect—that is committed by one person or persons against another within a family, whether they are married, related, living together or apart, or divorced. Current international research indicates that family violence is a global problem. It occurs between individuals of all ages and nationalities, at all socioeconomic levels, and in families from all types of religious and non-religious backgrounds. The overall rate of incidence has been found to be similar for urban, suburban, and rural communities.

Family violence manifests itself in a number of ways. For example, it may be a physical attack on one's spouse. Emotional assaults such as verbal threats, episodes of rage, deprecation of character, and unrealistic demands for perfection are also abuse. It may take the form of physical coercion and violence within the marital sexual relationship, or the threat of violence through the use of intimidating verbal or nonverbal behavior. It includes behavior such as incest and the mistreatment or neglect of underage children by a parent or another guardian that results in injury or harm. Violence against the elderly may be seen in physical, psychological, sexual, verbal, material, and medical abuse or neglect.

The Bible clearly indicates that the distinguishing mark of Christian believers is the quality of their human relationships in the church and in the family. It is in the spirit of Christ to love and accept, to seek to affirm and build others up, rather than to abuse or tear one another down. There is no room among Christ's followers for tyrannical control and the abuse of power or authority. Motivated by their love for Christ, His disciples are called to show respect and concern for the welfare of others, to accept males and females as equals, and to acknowledge that every person has a right to respect and dignity. Failure to relate to others in this way violates their personhood and devalues human beings created and redeemed by God.

The apostle Paul refers to the Church as “the household of faith” which functions as an extended family, offering acceptance, understanding, and comfort to all, especially to those who are hurting or disadvantaged. Scripture portrays the Church as a family in which personal and spiritual growth can occur as feelings of betrayal, rejection, and grief give way to feelings of forgiveness, trust, and wholeness. The Bible also speaks of the Christian's personal responsibility to protect his or her body temple from desecration because it is the dwelling place of God.

Regrettably, family violence occurs in many Christian homes. It can never be condoned. It severely affects the lives of all involved and often results in long-term distorted perceptions of God, self, and others.

It is our belief that the Church has a responsibility—

1. To care for those involved in family violence and to respond to their needs by:
 - a. Listening to and accepting those suffering from abuse, loving and affirming them as persons of value and worth.
 - b. Highlighting the injustices of abuse and speaking out in defense of victims both within the community of faith and in society.
 - c. Providing a caring, supportive ministry to families affected by violence and abuse, seeking to enable both victims and perpetrators to access counseling by Seventh-day Adventist professionals where available, or other professional resources in the community.
 - d. Encouraging the training and placement of licensed Seventh-day Adventist professional services for both church members and the surrounding communities.
 - e. Offering a ministry of reconciliation when the perpetrator's repentance makes possible the contemplation of forgiveness and restoration in relationships. Repentance always includes acceptance of full responsibility for the wrongs committed, willingness to make restitution in every way possible, and changes in behavior to eliminate the abuse.

- f. Focusing the light of the gospel on the nature of husband-wife, parent-child, and other close relationships, and empowering individuals and families to grow toward God's ideals in their lives together.
- g. Guarding against the ostracism of either victims or perpetrators within the family or church community, while firmly holding perpetrators responsible for their actions.

2. To strengthen family life by:

- a. Providing family life education which is grace-oriented and includes a biblical understanding of the mutuality, equality, and respect indispensable to Christian relationships.
- b. Increasing understanding of the factors that contribute to family violence.
- c. Developing ways to prevent abuse and violence and the recurring cycle often observed within families and across generations.
- d. Rectifying commonly held religious and cultural beliefs which may be used to justify or cover up family violence. For example, while parents are instructed by God to redemptively correct their children, this responsibility does not give license for the use of harsh, punitive disciplinary measures.

3. To accept our moral responsibility to be alert and responsive to abuse within the families of our congregations and our communities, and to declare that such abusive behavior is a violation of Seventh-day Adventist Christian standards. Any indications or reports of abuse must not be minimized but seriously considered. For church members to remain indifferent and unresponsive is to condone, perpetuate, and possibly extend family violence.

If we are to live as children of the light, we must illuminate the darkness where family violence occurs in our midst. We must care for one another, even when it would be easier to remain uninvolved.

(The above statement is informed by principles expressed in the following scriptural passages: Ex 20:12; Matt 7:12; 20:25-28; Mark 9:33-45; John 13:34; Rom 12:10, 13; I Cor 6:19; Gal 3:28; Eph 5:2, 3, 21-27; 6:1-4; Col 3:12-14; 1 Thess 5:11; 1 Tim 5:5-8.)

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Seventh-day Adventist Statement on Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse occurs when a person older or stronger than the child uses his or her power, authority, or position of trust to involve a child in sexual behavior or activity. Incest, a specific form of child sexual abuse, is defined as any sexual activity between a child and a parent, a sibling, an extended family member, or a step/surrogate parent.

Sexual abusers may be men or women and may be of any age, nationality, or socio-economic background. They are often men who are married with children, have respectable jobs, and may be regular churchgoers. It is common for offenders to strongly deny their abusive behavior, to refuse to see their actions as a problem, and to rationalize their behavior or place blame on something or someone else. While it is true that many abusers exhibit deeply rooted insecurities and low self-esteem, these problems should never be accepted as an excuse for sexually abusing a child. Most authorities agree that the real issue in child sexual abuse is more related to a desire for power and control than for sex.

When God created the human family, He began with a marriage between a man and a woman based on mutual love and trust. This relationship is still designed to provide the foundation for a stable, happy family in which the dignity, worth, and integrity of each family member is protected and upheld. Every child, whether male or female, is to be affirmed as a gift from God. Parents are given the privilege and responsibility of providing nurture, protection, and physical care for the children entrusted to them by God. Children should be able to honor, respect, and trust their parents and other family members without the risk of abuse.

The Bible condemns child sexual abuse in the strongest possible terms. It sees any attempt to confuse, blur, or denigrate personal, generational, or gender boundaries through sexually abusive behavior as an act of betrayal and a gross violation of personhood. It openly condemns abuses of power, authority, and responsibility because these strike at the very heart of the victims' deepest feelings about themselves, others, and God, and shatter their capacity to love and trust. Jesus used strong language to condemn the actions of anyone who, through word or deed, causes a child to stumble.

The Adventist Christian community is not immune from child sexual abuse. We believe that the tenets of the Seventh-day Adventist faith require us to be actively involved in its prevention. We are also committed to spiritually assisting abused and abusive individuals and their families in their healing and recovery process, and to holding church professionals and church lay leaders accountable for maintaining their personal behavior as is appropriate for persons in positions of spiritual leadership and trust.

As a Church we believe our faith calls us to:

1. Uphold the principles of Christ for family relationships in which the self-respect, dignity, and purity of children are recognized as divinely mandated rights.
2. Provide an atmosphere where children who have been abused can feel safe when reporting sexual abuse and can feel that someone will listen to them.
3. Become thoroughly informed about sexual abuse and its impact upon our own church community.
4. Help ministers and lay leaders to recognize the warning signs of child sexual abuse and know how to respond appropriately when abuse is suspected or a child reports being sexually abused.
5. Establish referral relationships with professional counselors and local sexual assault agencies who can, with their professional skills, assist abuse victims and their families.
6. Create guidelines/policies at the appropriate levels to assist church leaders in:

- a. Endeavoring to treat with fairness persons accused of sexually abusing children,
 - b. Holding abusers accountable for their actions and administering appropriate discipline.
7. Support the education and enrichment of families and family members by:
- a. Dispelling commonly held religious and cultural beliefs which may be used to justify or cover up child sexual abuse.
 - b. Building a healthy sense of personal worth in each child which enables him or her to respect self and others.
 - c. Fostering Christlike relationships between males and females in the home and in the church.
8. Provide caring support and a faith-based redemptive ministry within the church community for abuse survivors and abusers while enabling them to access the available network of professional resources in the community.
9. Encourage the training of more family professionals to facilitate the healing and recovery process of abuse victims and perpetrators.

(The above statement is informed by principles expressed in the following scriptural passages: Gen 1:26-28; 2:18-25; Lev 18:20; 2 Sam 13:1-22; Matt 18:6-9; 1 Cor 5:1-5; Eph 6:1-4; Col 3:18-21; 1 Tim 5:5-8.)

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