

*"Lengthen and Strengthen"  
'Fadaich agus Neartaich'*



*Encouraging and resourcing mission  
in the Highlands and Western Isles*

## January 2009

Wherever we live in the Highlands and Western Isles we will be aware of the changing face of family life. In Scotland the number of divorces each year is about a third of the number of marriages. Research suggests that children from a broken home are more likely to become parents at an early age, divorce if they marry, or suffer a breakup if they cohabit. The percentage of cohabiting couple families the UK increased from 5% in 1986 to 13% in 2001 and is expected to be 18% by next year. In a recent BBC poll 7 out of 10 believed that family life is generally becoming less successful.

### Family Focus

Families are under pressure, marriages are failing at an alarming rate and the description of parenting as "the most difficult job we've never been trained for" has never been more apt. Where is God in all this and how do we, as part of his church, relate to the dizzying complexity of modern families and nurture faith in today's communities? At a time when it is increasingly viewed as an institution that is well past its sell by date, how can we best support and encourage healthy marriage? Read on ...

**Marriage & Lasting Relationships – Dream or Reality?** is a half-day conference for anyone who is interested in making a difference in the area of Marriage and Relationships - hosted by Inverness Presbytery.



**Inshes Church - Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> Feb 2009 - 9am-12.45pm**

- An Over-view of Marriage and Relationships in the 21st Century.
- Helpless or Hopeful? - Making a difference locally.
- Picking Up the Pieces after Separation and Divorce.

**Bookings :** vroden@btinternet.com or Tel. 07887 704 915

### Mentoring for marriage - Training Day.

Learn how to use "Prepare - Enrich" – a world-renowned resource for supporting and helping couples. Hilton Church, Inverness has been using this tool in helping couples in their relationships. ([www.prepare-enrich.co.uk](http://www.prepare-enrich.co.uk))

**21<sup>st</sup> March 2009** - Hilton Church 10-4pm Cost per couple £75

**Contact:** [families@hiltonchurch.org.uk](mailto:families@hiltonchurch.org.uk) / Tel. 01463 233310

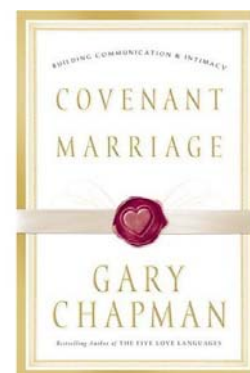


**Care for the Family** exists to promote strong family life and to help those hurting because of family breakdown. Its work is motivated by Christian compassion and its resources and support are available to everyone. They have excellent resources, advice, training etc. and are delighted to find opportunities to support churches. Their website is a goldmine: <http://www.careforthefamily.org.uk> The National Representative in Scotland is David Wilson: [david.wilson@cff.org.uk](mailto:david.wilson@cff.org.uk) Tel. 01506 846476

### Read any good books recently?

**Covenant Marriage (Building Communication & Intimacy)** by Gary Chapman. ([www.fivelovelanguages.com](http://www.fivelovelanguages.com)) Broadman & Holman.

Colm Black, Family Worker at Hilton Church, Inverness, writes: *"Whether you are in a healthy, loving and affirming relationship or you are in a marriage that is holding on by a thread, the keys to enrichment and survival are the same. Strengthening your marriage means improving the crucial aspects of your relationship: communication and intimacy. This book will help you understand these and it provides practical, biblical insights on how to improve in these areas. Purchase 3 copies: one for yourself, one for your friends, and one for your Church library."*



### Keep in touch with Christian research and social trends: Quadrant



"I used to go to church every week but not anymore, because I've got a dog now ..." (11 year old boy quoted in "Church, Families & Trying to Follow Jesus" in *Quadrant*, Sept., 2008) *Quadrant* is the bi-monthly bulletin of the Christian Research Association available from [admin@christian-research.org.uk](mailto:admin@christian-research.org.uk).

### Getting to grips with family life – as it really is

"The recognition of many different forms of 'family' and the creation of safe spaces for families in all their diversity will not only reflect the values of the Christian message, but also have the potential to fulfil the missionary calling of the church by sharing the good news in relevant ways with those who are as yet not Christian." (*Family Fortunes* by John and Olive Drane, Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd., Jan 2005)



**Leadership Jesus Style:** "While one of the prophets was working, his axe head fell off and dropped into the water." (2 Kings 6:5) Remember the story? As Christian leaders it is easy to lose our cutting edge! The Evangelical Alliance have launched a monthly email or podcast called **Slipstream**, which includes a talk given by a prominent Christian leader designed to encourage, equip and network leaders across the denominations and generations. <http://www.eauk.org/slipstream/>

**The Luis Palau Association** is working with churches around the Highlands to run a gospel festival in Inverness and satellite events in other villages and towns. Would you like to host such an event or find out more? Contact Greer Johnston: [greer.johnston@virgin.net](mailto:greer.johnston@virgin.net) Tel.: 01549 402113



**At your service:** Your Regional Development Officer, Steve Aisthorpe, is available for retreats and conferences for your congregation, Session or Presbytery; vision days, leadership seminars; to facilitate churches through the Future Focus process; assist in arranging training or identify resources ... or just to chat over ideas or concerns. Contact details below.

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