

The Marriage Course

A Personal Report

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In 2004, we attended a marriage conference in London that had a profound impact on our marriage and launched us into a special ministry for couples.

Sila and Nicky Lee, on staff at the Anglican parish of Holy Trinity Brompton and founders of *The Marriage Course*, facilitated our training in the use of their eight-session marriage-strengthening program. We found the course very encouraging and well-structured, considering the fact that some 100 couples attended. *The Marriage Course* addresses communication, conflict resolution, healing past hurts, recognizing each other's needs, making each other feel loved, in-law relationships, sex and how to have fun together. The Lees were dynamic speakers and we came away feeling empowered to take up the challenge to run similar courses in our church.

We conducted an eight-week marriage course in our local church and were able to adapt the materials to suit the needs of our congregation. We have also found segments of *The Marriage Course* video resources to be very useful during shorter marriage enrichment weekends for couples. Parts of the marriage course material were put to good use in a marriage weekend we conducted in Scotland at the invitation of our church there.

The emphasis in *The Marriage Course* on leading people to want to investigate the Bible further was something we appreciated. As we have adapted the material to fit our Seventh-day Adventist context, we have incorporated a biblical base and Spirit of Prophecy material as well to help people know more about God. As a result, we had a couple in one of our programs who decided they wanted Bible studies. We rejoice that they are now baptized members of our church.

We strongly believe that we as Seventh-day Adventists should be doing more to produce marriage strengthening materials like *The Marriage Course*. Helping build stronger marriages and families is so central to the heart-turning, rebuilding and restoring Elijah message in which we believe and helping people to have loving relationships is such a practical demonstration of the everlasting gospel message of the three angels of Revelation. The devil is unceasing in his attack on marriage and the home today and our job must be to help couples strengthen their relationship with God and each other, and enrich their family life.

We are committed to strengthening relationships in Christ. We seek every opportunity to do as much as we can to use the skills and concepts we have learned about marriage as an effective tool in witnessing for Christ.

John and Delivon Francis are part of an advisory team with the North England Conference Family Ministries Department and have assisted in a number of marriage enrichment weekends.