

# Premarital Education Resource

**NEED:** Marital stress and marriage dissolution continue to plague married couples in our church. The need assessment process of 1998 identified a *focus on families* as a top 10 priority in our NAD church. A family definition team was selected by the CRC Board and NAD Family Ministries working in tandem. The family definition team independently arrived at premarital education resources as a high priority for our church today.

**ADVISORY:** At the NAD Family Ministries advisory held in San Diego, California in January 1999, a premarital guidance policy was voted to recommend to NAD YEM as an addition to the policy book.

**TASK FORCE:** Simultaneously, the GC was putting together a task force to revisit premarital education materials in the church. This logically pushed us to working as a collaborative effort on this initiative as we had on the "*Peace and Healing*" resource (family abuse prevention materials).

<b>BUDGET:</b>	Review of Literature	\$ 4,000.00
	Research & Writing	7,000.00
	Video Production	70,000.00
	Translation of Materials	6,000.00
	Facilitator's Guide	4,000.00
	Companion Notebook	4,000.00
	Premarital Inventory	4,000.00
	Travel, Per diem, Misc.	<u>6,000.00</u>
		\$105,000.00

Presented at the June 4, 1999 CRC Board Meeting  
by Willie Oliver, NAD Director of Family Ministries  
Silver Spring, Maryland

**HF 15 05 Premarital Guidance**—1. *For couples requesting to be married*— Premarital guidance shall be provided to couples requesting to be married by Seventh-day Adventist ministers. Where possible, this pre-marriage preparation of the couples should consist of several counseling sessions conducted by the minister or by another qualified individual (AC 245-NG).

2. *Objectives of premarital guidance*— This process should be undertaken at a minimum of four to six months before the wedding with the following objectives:

1) To strengthen the couple's commitment to each other based on biblical principles undergirding Christian marriage, among which are agape love, lifelong covenant faithfulness, and mutual submission.

2) To prepare the couple for the transition to married life, providing opportunity for them to anticipate predictable changes and to reach agreement on their expectations of each other in marriage.

3) To enhance the couple's relational skills of communication, processing anger, problem-solving, resolving conflicts in mutually acceptable ways, and giving and receiving affection.

4) To assist the couple to evaluate their decision to marry by looking realistically at their reasons and readiness for marriage.

3. *Use of most effective methods*— Approaches found to be most effective in generating higher levels of marital satisfaction should be used. Effective approaches (1) provide objective assessment through use of testing instruments, (2) help the couple to understand themselves and each other through dialog on a wide spectrum of marital issues and (3) build relational skills.

4. *Materials and training*— For a suggested method of approach to premarital guidance, as well as material to share with couples for self-study in instances where personal pastoral guidance is not possible, resources are available from the Department of Family Ministries and the Ministerial Association. Conferences and local churches, in counsel with the Department of Family Ministries and the Ministerial Association at the next higher level of Church organization, should provide leadership development programs in premarital guidance for qualified lay leaders and for pastors not otherwise prepared in their ministerial training.

5. *Education of youth*. Ideally, preparation for marriage begins at home with parental modeling of healthy marital relationships during child rearing. Parent education programs can enhance the effectiveness of this parental responsibility. Efforts should be put forth to supplement home training by age-appropriate instruction in the Church school and Sabbath School programs.