

# THE MARRIAGE COURSE NEWSLETTER

Monmouthshire

WINTER 2005/SPRING 2006

ISSUE 2



The Marriage Course Newsletter is a means of keeping Churches and other interested parties up to date with the growth and development of the Marriage Course both in the Monmouthshire area and worldwide.

The Marriage Course is an eight session course designed to help any married couple build a healthy marriage that lasts a lifetime. The course has been developed by Nicky and Sila Lee (shown above) at the Holy Trinity Brompton Church in London. Nicky and Sila are on the staff at HTB and have been married for 28 years. They have four children. The number of Marriage Courses running has more than doubled in a year. By the end of March 2005 there were 833 Marriage Courses registered around the world – at the end of March 2004 there were 396 registered courses. The Marriage Course is now running in 40 countries including USA, Russia, Canada, Zambia, New Zealand, Brazil, Poland and Barbados.

Former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey said *'The Marriage Course is absolutely wonderful. This is something that fits in perfectly with ALPHA and I think it will strengthen many churches throughout the world'*.

## WHAT IS LOVE?

Love may be described in many different ways and there are many different types of love– the love between husband and wife, between parent and child, between friends. In the marital context couples sometimes describe themselves as 'being in love' with their husband or wife. Often this 'being in love' is wrapped up with lots of feelings and emotions. When they no longer experience these feelings they can sometimes believe that their marriage is over or that there will no longer be any fulfilment to it. A Counsellor may quite often hear a husband or wife comment 'I love him/her but I'm no longer 'in love' with him/her'.

In looking at love as a choice rather than something imposed on us or something we feel, it frees us to decide. WE can decide 'to love' or 'not to love' our husband or wife. Love becomes a commitment rather than a set of emotions or feelings.

In the Bible the Apostle Paul described love as patient, kind, not jealous or boastful or proud or rude or demanding, it keeps no record of wrongs, never gives up, is always hopeful, never loses faith and endures through every circumstance (1 Corinthians 13: 4-7). Nowhere in Paul's description of love does Paul mention emotions!

We may like to ponder on this quote by Lisa McInnes-Smith:

*'Success in Marriage is more than finding the right person; it is a matter of being the right person'*.

During The Marriage Course Nicky Lee shares a conversation he had with a man after he had finished the course. The man said that he used to focus on his needs and his wife's failings but now he chooses to focus on his wife's needs and the areas he needs to improve, and his marriage has been transformed.

Whatever we may think, we do have a choice to look at our marriage in a different way, which includes choosing to love our husband or wife regardless of whether we 'feel' love towards them. We may desperately want to change certain aspects of our husband's or wife's behaviour, but change first happens with ourselves.

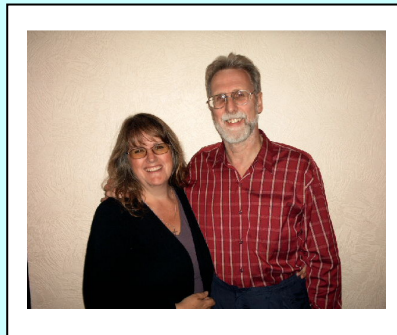
## IMPACTING MARRIAGES IN MONMOUTHSHIRE:

Several couples from the local area have shared how The Marriage Course has affected their marriages. Others have shared about their experience of the course. Here is what some of them have said:

**Bill and Tanya have been married for 24 years.**

**Bill:** *'It was good to get out of the domestic environment for an evening each week to share a meal in nice surroundings and to focus on our relationship. The video talks were well presented with plenty of humour. An important part of the course is the concept of "Love languages" and I thought I knew pretty well what Tanya's were, but I had a few surprises! Now we can work on meeting each other's needs in a more informed way'*

**Tanya:** *'It was a great opportunity to learn together in a fun way and have time to express our feelings about what is important to each of us.'*

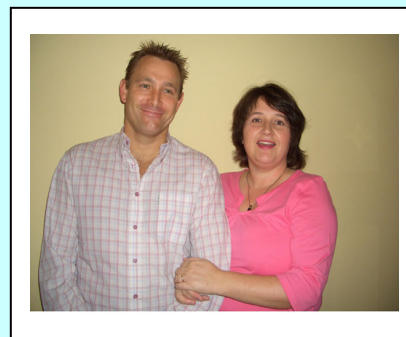


*'Now we can work on meeting each other's needs in a more informed way'*

**Bill and Nicola have been married for 8 years and together for 13 years.**

**They said:**

*'Nearly 2 years ago our marriage was at an all time low. We simply stopped communicating, apart from when we argued. The atmosphere in the house was unbearable for us and also for our little boy and we ultimately separated 3 months after the birth of our second child. We saw The Marriage Course advertised and thought we would give it a go; it was the last ditch attempt for us. During the course we did a lot of soul searching and slowly began to communicate again; most importantly it highlighted that we had not given our marriage enough time and attention as Bill had been too busy at work and Nicola had been preoccupied with the children. We also discovered what we needed from the other and realised that we had to consider each other more - we had been far too complacent. We really enjoyed the evenings, as well as learning about each other we liked the meals and the social aspect. Now we are truly at our happiest and so are our children. We still have our disagreements – but no more shouting matches because we have been taught how to resolve our differences without the need to shout. Also, we make sure we talk, have fun together and put our marriage first. We would recommend The Marriage Course - it can give something to everyone and can make every marriage better.'*



*'Now we are truly at our happiest and so are our children'*

**Chris and Carol have been married for 20 years and said:** *'The course allowed us to review our marriage and realise what is special about it. Some parts of the course were not easy but nevertheless essential to the whole process. Looking back the course made us realise we have to make time for marriage and consequently put other commitments second and value each other for what we are.'*

**Darwin and Rita have been married for 9 years.**

**Darwin:** *'The Marriage Course format, where each couple works together privately in an informal, relaxed setting using a structured manual, was extremely effective. We found this more beneficial than traditional group discussion formats, as each couple's circumstances are unique. This format encourages couples to discuss their particular issues, understand each other, and change where necessary. The course taught me the importance of affirming Rita and setting aside specific 'Marriage Time' in a busy schedule to enjoy each others company, to talk and resolve issues before they become problems.'*

**Rita:** *'The Marriage Course for me has equipped us to resolve issues more effectively, by understanding each other better and learning to listen and respond in a sensitive manner. I think we would both agree that The Marriage Course has enhanced our marriage and given us the tools to continue along this lifelong journey.'*



*'The Marriage Course has enhanced our marriage & given us the tools to continue this lifelong journey'*

**MOT COURSES** are set to get started in 2006/2007. These are courses for couples who have already been on The Marriage Course but feel they would benefit from a refresher. Sila Lee features in The Times newspaper in September 2004 in an article entitled: 'Marriages are like cars they need regular MOT tests'. More than 20 couples attended the first Canadian Marriage Course MOT event in January. The MOT event was run in response to demand from guests who had attended the course but wanted to learn more. The evening event followed The Marriage Course MOT material available from the Family Life Department at HTB including the ReFocus questionnaire which helps couples to reassess their marriages.

It is hoped that these MOT courses will also be available in Monmouthshire in the near future.

**LEADER'S COURSES** are to start in Monmouthshire in February 2006. Potential leaders will follow the normal 7 week Marriage Course sessions but will attend an additional week which will give them all the information they need to get The Marriage Course started in their local area. The Marriage Course should be led by a Christian couple who have the desire to see marriages strengthened and who feel compassion for those who are struggling. For more information on leading The Marriage Course please contact Suzy Wilson.

## WOULD YOU LIKE MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE MARRIAGE COURSE?

If you would like more details about The Marriage Course in Monmouthshire please fill in this form & send to:

**Suzy Wilson, 5 Hardwick Avenue, Chepstow, Monmouthshire NP16 5DJ.**

**Titles:.....First names:.....Surname(s):.....**

**Address:.....**

**Postcode:.....**

**Daytime Tel no:.....Evening Tel no:.....**

**Mobile no (If applicable).....**

**E-mail address:.....**

**Comments:.....**

### Confidentiality

**All details given on this form will be kept strictly confidential within the course leadership.**

TEAR OFF SLIP \_\_\_\_\_

The Marriage Course leaders in Chepstow are:

Mac & Suzy Wilson  
The Marriage Course leaders & advisers  
Tel: 01291 62 61 62  
Suzy Mobile: 07795 417003  
Email: [s.wilson@ipexconsulting.com](mailto:s.wilson@ipexconsulting.com)

Andy & Sally Morton  
The Marriage Course leaders  
Tel: 01633 400300  
Sally Mobile : 07778790761  
Email: [sallymorton@xalt.co.uk](mailto:sallymorton@xalt.co.uk)

Website: [www.themarriagecourse.org](http://www.themarriagecourse.org)

*The Marriage Course in Chepstow is supported by:*

