

# BUC FAMILY

A Publication of the BUC Family, Children and Possibility Ministries

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## Why Bother with Black History?

Pr Les Ackie

A reluctance to engage with black history often stems from the fear that it will stir up racial tension. However, the fact that an issue is challenging should not prevent us from addressing it with tact and maturity, especially if it impacts our capacity to live authentically and live out our Christian faith.

So why highlight black history? W.E.B. Du Bois said, "Without a sense of history, we are like a tree without roots." History not only roots us in the past, it also influences who we are now. Social critic James Baldwin said, "History is not the past, it is the present. We carry our history with us. We are our history. We must not pretend otherwise." We must grasp this reality because our history impacts us whether we realise it or not. Numbers 14:18 refers to the iniquity of the fathers being passed on to their children to the third and fourth generation. Iniquity, in this context, refers to a predisposition to distorted thinking and negative behaviour.

Ellen White also refers to "hereditary and cultivated tendencies" (Desire of Ages, 182). Research has shown that we can pass on trauma through what we model and our DNA. According to psychologist Bessel Van De Kolk, "the body keeps the score." As a result of our experiences, we can pass on spiritual, psychological and emotional legacies, including legacies of trauma. Whatever affects people's psychological and emotional health may also adversely affect their capacity to see themselves as princes and princesses of the kingdom and their ability to live as kingdom people.

In her excellent book *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome*, Dr Joy De Gruy presents a compelling argument to support her belief that many descendants of the African diaspora are still suffering from the legacy of unprocessed trauma. She makes the case that it would be reasonable to assume that many enslaved Africans would have suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder. PTSD is a mental health condition in which an individual re-lives a traumatic event as if it is happening in real-time. Dr De Gruy's assertion is reasonable, bearing in mind the horrific and incessant abuses of slavery and the injustices that followed in its train.



We would be naïve to presume that such a generational trauma would have no lasting impact upon black individuals and families because slavery was as much an assault on the mind as it was on the body, and families because slavery was as much an assault on the mind as it was on the body.

Historian Carter G Woodson, who originated the concept of what would become Black History Month in the 1920s, wrote in his book, *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, “If you make a man think that he is justly an outcast, you do not have to order him to the back door. He will go without being told, and if there is no back door, his very nature will demand one . . . In fact, if there is no back door, he will cut one for his special benefit.” Such mindsets illustrate the impact that can result from generational trauma unless something intervenes to break the cycle. Dr De Gruy contends that generational trauma has left a legacy of self-hatred, anger, low expectations, and poor relational skills, often resulting in self-denigrating behaviours. She advocates that the way to break the cycle is to process the trauma through positive socialisation, especially of black youngsters, within positive nurturing relationships.

Traumatologists assert that trauma does not just disappear by itself. It must be processed. As Christians, we can offer a spiritual process that requires awareness of our inner pain, a willingness to embrace the pain, and a healing grace in which God holds us through the pain. What does not kill you does make you stronger, but only if you allow Him to wrap His loving purpose around it. It is significant and a miracle of faith that one of the primary factors in the resilience of enslaved Africans and those who had to deal with the aftermath of slavery was their faith in God and their understanding of the concept of redemptive suffering. Many held on to their belief in a God who suffers with His children.



The positive socialisation that Dr De Gruy advocates includes teaching an accurate account of black history because distorted history, along with scientific racism, has long been used as a tool of oppression to compound the traumatic legacy of slavery. Nigerian historian Chinua Achebe stated, “Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter.”

Scientific racism classified Africans as sub-human and characterised them as "lazy, crafty, slow, negligent, foolish, governed by impulse." Black civil rights lawyer Bryan Stevenson, founder of the Equal Justice Initiative in the USA, says that the false narrative that black people are inherently intellectually and morally inferior also characterises black people as predisposed to criminality. The penny dropped for him in court, sitting at his table waiting for a case to begin. The judge came in, looked at him and said, "Hey, you can't be in here without your lawyer. Go and wait outside until your lawyer arrives."



It is important to appreciate that being a card-carrying member of the BNP is not necessary to have prejudiced views about people of colour. In his book *The Long Walk to Freedom*, Nelson Mandela recounts getting on a flight to Addis Ababa and the fear he experienced on seeing a black pilot and thinking to himself, “How could a black man fly an aeroplane?”

We all have implicit biases about other people; the only way to overcome them is to recognise them and then challenge them. Otherwise, we will perpetuate the distorted narratives that underpin them.



Healing the legacy of trauma requires that we become aware of how our past may be bleeding into our current attitudes and behaviours. The purpose of studying black history is not to elevate black history over any other ethnicity's history. History is not a competition of one-upmanship, "My history is better than your history." I agree with actor Morgan Freeman's assessment of Black History Month when he asked, "Why do you want to relegate my history to a month?" In an ideal world, black history would be part of a balanced curriculum and dialogue that is less concerned with perpetuating a Eurocentric bias and more concerned with teaching truth that is culturally relevant to practical living today. We need to teach black history because black history is an important facet of British and human history.

Studying black history is important because people do not experience Christianity in a vacuum. They experience it within the context of their culture, and the more they understand their culture, the more effectively they can contextualise their faith. Black history opens up an understanding of the Bible and illuminates the role black people in salvation history. In the process, we can give children and young people a broader spectrum of positive role models to inspire their aspirations.



It is important to study black history because, in the words of a great leader, "The farther backwards you can look, the farther forward you will see." Studying black history is not an end in itself. When Jesus said, "the truth shall set you free" (John 8:33), He was not referring to a mental assent to the truth but reception of Himself as the way, the truth and the life (John 4:6). Without a knowledge of the truth-Giver, intellectual truth will make us bitter not better. When God liberated Israel from Egypt, their physical freedom was not His priority. He commanded, "Let my people go, that they may serve me" (Exodus 5:16).

The correct teaching of black history can be an effective tool for promoting hope through adversity, highlighting the resiliency of the human spirit and the role God plays in inspiring hope for a better tomorrow that springs from the harsh lessons of the past. It is a hope that grows from understanding, truth, and the power of love. It is vitally essential for all of us to realise that nobody needs to be a prisoner of a traumatic history. The words of the Apostle assure us that we can transcend our history. Paul states, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14).





## Trick or Treat? - Halloween and Seventh-day Adventists

Gerhard Phandl, Ph.D. Associate Director, Biblical Research Institute

Although the Seventh-day Adventist Church has not taken an official position specifically against Halloween, the churches' opposition to the occult and the demonic precludes any support for this type of festival. Halloween and its customs have no roots in Scripture or in the Christian Church. They are firmly rooted in the occult, and in pagan practices. These connections, however, are today forgotten or made light of. Nevertheless, any practice derived from the occult is incompatible with the teachings of Scripture. (Leviticus 20:6)

Since many people no longer believe in the existence of a personal devil and his demons, they feel there is no harm in making fun of these "religious relics of the past." The children are taught that there are no such beings as witches and evil spirits and that it is fun to dress up as ghosts or goblins. The modern denial of the existence of Satan and demonic forces is clearly contrary to Scripture. From Genesis to Revelation the Bible affirms the existence of Satan and demonic spirit beings (Genesis 3:1; Job 1:6; Matthew 8:31; Revelation 12:9).

In the education of children it is important that we do not plant false ideas in their minds. The Bible says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). To teach them that there is no harm in imitating evil spirits is contrary to God's will.

God in the Old Testament warned Israel not to dabble in the occult. "There shall not be found among you ... one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls upon the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord" (Deuteronomy 18:10-12). Since the occult is today more active than ever, this counsel is still valid today. Participation in Halloween customs may seem innocent fun for children and adults, but it is one more way Satan can use to deceive people into thinking there is no harm in playing a little bit with the world of spirits and demons.

While Ellen White never mentions Halloween, she has many warnings against dabbling in spiritualism: Spiritualists make the path to hell most attractive. Spirits of darkness are clothed by these deceptive teachers in pure robes of heaven, and they have power to deceive those not fortified with Bible truth. (Great Controversy, p.86). There are many who shrink with horror from the thought of consulting spirit mediums, but who are attracted by more pleasing forms of spiritism. (Evangelism, p.606).



Seventh-day Adventists recognize that spiritualism has many faces. Some of them may seem harmless and even fun. Nevertheless, they lead children and adults away from God's truth, and can become stepping stones to further entanglement with the occult. Therefore, we do not recommend participation in the celebrations and festivities in connection with Halloween.

To read the full article go to <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?>



## NEC Renewed Marriage Enrichment Weekend

Nordia Philpott - Wife of the NEC Communications Director

The Marriage Enrichment Weekend (8th to 10th September 2023) brought together couples from across the North England Conference. Hosted at the Leonardo Hotel in Leicestershire, attendees spent the weekend reflecting, laughing and learning with their spouses.

The Family Ministries Director, Pastor John Francis, led the event, assisted by his wife, Delivon. They shared several presentations over the weekend covering topics such as Effective Communication, Communication with Love, Crucial Conversation, Conflict Resolution and Money Talk. They were supported by Joanne and Glenville Daniels, who shared about how we can develop healthy attachments and learn to understand what has shaped us as people. Speaking with one attendee, they said, "I've learned a lot from the presentations. They've given us something to think about."

On Saturday evening, the couples were treated to a beautiful banquet. Everyone made an effort to dress up and come prepared for the evening. The food was delicious, the games were fun, and everyone thoroughly enjoyed it. On Sunday afternoon, many stayed behind to continue fellowshiping and to use the excellent hotel facilities (pool, sauna, jacuzzi and gym). There was a feeling that people didn't want to leave but continued to fellowship.



Reflecting on the weekend, Pastor Francis said, "We were blessed to have a time of fun, fellowship and renewal. The theme for our retreat focussed on essential keys to effective communication. We had 17 couples in attendance, at this our first physical weekend in the NEC since Covid 19. One couple remarked in their review that this saved our marriage.' Another shared how the communication sessions provided practical techniques to improve and enhance our interactions, enabling us to have difficult discussions without heated conversations leading to conflict.' Overall, the reviews were positive, and this was a relaxed, enjoyable time for all. I was most impressed by the couples' openness in the sessions and willingness to share. This came about as a result of us creating an open, safe place for them. My simple prayer is that all our couples who attended may continue to grow and strengthen their relationships, utilizing some of the tools we have given them, and claim the promise of our theme text, Isaiah 43:19 "Look, I am about to do something New; even now it is coming. Do you not see it? I will make a way in the wilderness, rivers in the desert."



Have you thought about coming to a Marriage Enrichment Weekend? Couples have spoken about their marriage being saved, restored and improved. Invest in your relationship and consider coming to the next event.

## The BUC Needs You! Departmental Advisory Committee

Are you looking to make a difference in the Seventh-day Adventist community? Do you believe that your professional experience and skills could improve or strengthen the way in which the British Union Conference (BUC) operates? If so, this is the opportunity for you!

As part of our new strategic plan, we at the BUC are seeking talented, interested and committed individuals to serve on our advisory committees for Family, Children's, Possibility Ministries and Safeguarding. These committees will provide expert advice and guidance to help our departments achieve our goals and serve our Union and the nation more effectively.

We are looking for individuals with significant experience in their respective fields. Whether you're a seasoned professional or a rising star in your industry, we welcome your unique perspective and insights. If you're passionate about strengthening marriage, family life education, emotional wellbeing, single adults, safeguarding children, domestic abuse, supporting people with disabilities or ministry to children, your expertise and insights will be invaluable to our committees.

As a member of our advisory committees, you'll have the opportunity to give meaningful advice on the work of our departments, as we strive to execute our strategic plan (2023-26) in the BUC here in the UK and Ireland. You'll work closely with other industry experts, practitioners and interested individuals, as well as with the departmental director, to develop innovative tactics and solutions that address the most pressing issues facing our communities. Our Departmental Advisory Committees are unremunerated, and are open to all backgrounds, ages and levels of experience. The meetings will take place on Zoom at least twice per year.

If you're ready to join a dynamic and dedicated team, we want to hear from you. Contact Abigail Wright-Stephenson [awright-stephenson@adventist.uk](mailto:awright-stephenson@adventist.uk) to learn more or complete the form to express your interest by clicking this link. <https://forms.office.com/e/rsgZKPpJb4>



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Pastor Chenjorai  
Friday evening speaker

Pastor/Dr Les Ackie  
BUC Family Life Director  
Sabb AM Speaker

Elder Edwin Abacan  
Sabbath school leader

Pastor A. Rashford-Hewitt  
NEC men's sponsor

Pastor Dan Dachin  
Sunday morning speaker

For more information text Pastor A.R.H on 07931 732490. Bookings close Sun Oct 22nd

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Tube/Train - Balham

**Email**  
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**Website**  
balham.adventistchurch.org.uk

**YouTube**  
Balham SDA Church Media

Portsmouth SDA church PRESENTS

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**Family Celebrations**  
Rainer Wanitschek  
04 December 2023  
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Zoom ID: 995 5816 1739  
Passcode: family.

**Family Ministries Webinar**



# Flourish!

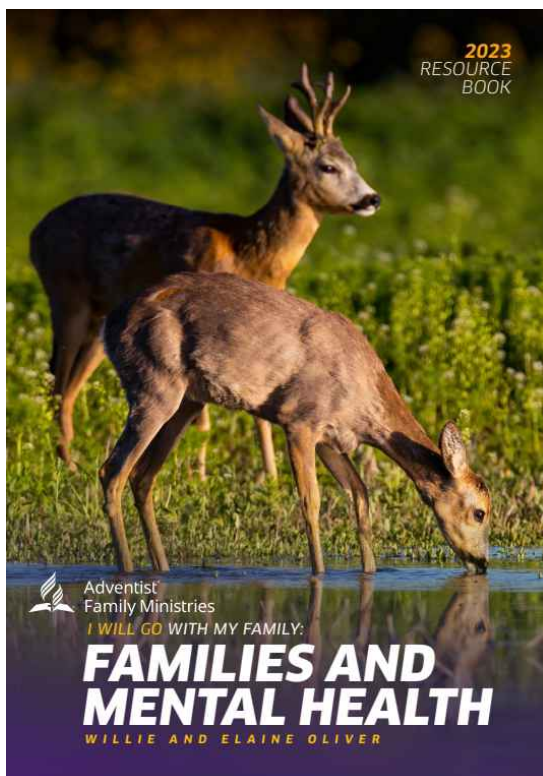
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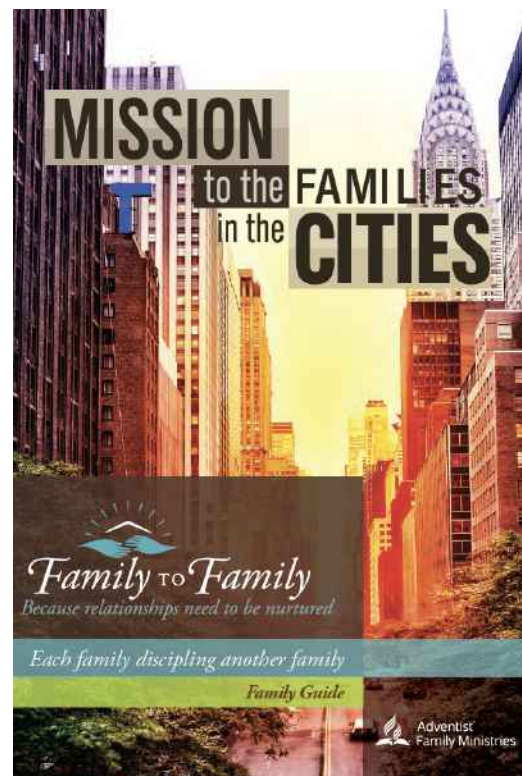
Click the link to learn more and download the resource  
[Flourish](#)



Click the link to download the Resource Book [Keys to Healthy Minds](#)



Click the link to download the Resource Book [Family and Mental Health](#)



Click here to download the Missions Resource [Mission to Families](#)

## 2024 Dates for Your Diary

- 10 Days of Prayer: 10-20 January
- Christian Home and Marriage Week: 10-17 February
  - ✦ Christian Marriage Day: Sabbath 10 February (emphasises marriage)
  - ✦ Christian Home Day: Sabbath 17 February (emphasises parenting)
- Mother's Day: 10 March
- Global Youth & Children's Day: 16 March
- Youth Week of Prayer: 16-23 March
- Possibility Ministries Day: 20 April
- BUC Men's Day of Prayer: 27 April
- World Day of Prayer for Children at Risk: 25 May
- Special Needs Camp: Date to be confirmed
- Father's Day: 16 June
- Children's Sabbath: 27 July
- Education Day 17 August
- End It Now - Abuse Awareness Sabbath: 24 August
- Family Togetherness Week: 1-7 September
  - ✦ Family Togetherness Day of Prayer 7 September
- Pathfinder's Day: 21 September
- Black History Month: 1-31 October
- Creation Sabbath: 26 October
- Week of Prayer: 2-9 November
- e-Week of Prayer for Youth and Young Adults: 9-15 November



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If you have something to say on family matters, children's spirituality, safeguarding, disability, relational themes, emotional wellbeing, men's issues, or would just like to let others know about what's happening in your church or community for families, why not put it in writing and submit it for publication? Email [awright-stephenson@adventist.uk](mailto:awright-stephenson@adventist.uk)

## Useful Links

[AdventSource](#)

[Adventist Possibility Ministries](#)

[Adventist Single Adult Ministries \(ASAM\)](#)

[Adventist Special Needs Association \(ASNA\)](#)

[BUC Family Ministries](#)

[BUC Safeguarding](#)

[Care for the Family](#)

[GC Children's Ministries](#)

[GC Family Ministries](#)

[In Discipleship](#)

[Prepare Enrich](#)

[TED Children's Ministries](#)

[TED Family Ministries](#)

[TED Possibility Ministries](#)

[Through the Roof \(Disability outreach\)](#)

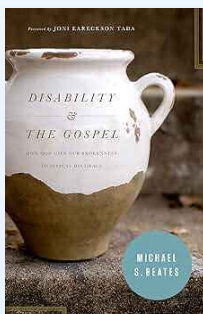
[Women's Aid](#)

## Recommended Reading



In *Biblical Grandparenting*, Josh Mulvihill explains culture's misleading messages about grandparenting, provides a biblical overview of the role of grandparents, and shares groundbreaking research that provides a vision to impact the next generation for Christ by giving them a firm spiritual foundation and a close personal relationship they will cherish forever.

In *Healing the Masculine Soul*, Gordon Dalbey identifies the fact that men have been torn between strength and sensitivity. He presents a comprehensive picture of God's design for the masculine soul and dares men to be as God created them to be-not as society demands. He writes, "Our task is not to curse our manhood, but to redeem it".



*Disability and the Church.* Working through key Bible passages on brokenness and disability while answering hard questions, Michael S. Beates offers helpful principles for believers and their churches. He shows us how to embrace our own brokenness and then to embrace those who are more physically and visibly broken, bringing hope and vision to those of us who need it most.

## BUC Family, Children, Possibility Ministries & Safeguarding



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