

BUC FAMILY

A Publication of the BUC Family, Children and Possibility Ministries

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The BUC Needs You! Departmental Advisory Committees

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 to learn more or complete the form to express your interest by clicking this link. <https://forms.office.com/e/rsgZKPpJb4>



County Lines and the Threat to Children and Youth

Pr Patricia Douglas & 'Dawn'

Jesus instructs His Disciples in Matthew 19.14 - "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." What does this mean? The

Expanded Bible interprets it this way: "Let the little children come to me. Don't stop [hinder] them, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to people who are like these children [meaning humble and dependent]." Jesus recognises that children are vulnerable and in need of love and protection, as there are people who seek their harm, it should come as no surprise that some of Jesus' harshest words refer to such people (Luke 17.2).

County Lines stands as such a threat to the wellbeing of children and youth. The National Crime Agency (NCA) states: 'County Lines is where illegal drugs are transported from one area to another... usually by children or vulnerable people who are coerced into it by gangs. The 'County Line' is the mobile phone line used to take the orders of drugs.'¹ Children and young people are persuaded, or forced to 'store drugs and money or transport them to suburban areas, market towns and coastal towns (Home Office, 2018)² 'Teenagers are often' used 'to carry illegal substances by train as part of so-called county lines networks'³, with 'over 2000 lines operating across the UK'.⁴

Various strategies are used to entice children and youth: adverts on Instagram and Snapchat⁵ with messages 'by drug dealers asking "who wants to make £500 this weekend?"'⁶ Freebies 'vapes' 'bicycles, sweets, magazines' 'free sandwiches,' also 'through online gaming platforms'.⁷ Recruits are offered 'cash, mobile phones' 'clothes to take advantage of so-called "business opportunities"'.⁸ Gangs often target children 'with mental health or addiction problems' with a 'disproportionate impact on socially excluded young people and on the communities in which new drug supply networks develop'.⁹ These children are often 'exposed to physical, mental and sexual abuse, and in some instances will be trafficked to areas a long way from home as part of the network's drug dealing business'.¹⁰



It is a tragedy that any child should suffer abuse in this way, but the reality is that children within the Church and affiliates are also suffering, often imperceptibly.

Case Study: A Mother's reflection on how County Lines impacted her son and family:

This is 'a reflective account of my son's journey, who has additional needs and that of my family. A journey of pain distress and turmoil, I feel vulnerable, but I write this for the benefit of others, a young person, a parent, to open your eyes. Like any Mother you want to love and protect your children and that never stops. My son, a talented swimmer competed in the Yorkshire championships and was advancing to the next level. He was a keen footballer; remarkably intelligent securing 8 GCSE grade C and above without revision; life was good.

My family became part of the Adventist Church when my children were young, they enjoyed the spiritual and the social aspects of church. However, my son began to distance himself from Church in his early teens and the nightmare began at 17. He no longer wanted to swim, started missing college lectures and hanging around with a friend from primary school, also a swimmer, but had stopped before my son. My son was drawn into what he thought was exciting times, socialising with young people who were not known to myself and could be seen as, for want of a better word, undesirable characters. My son's background and upbringing was so different to his new associates, he was unable to see where all this was leading, but I certainly could.

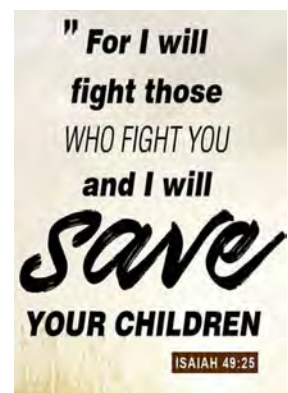


The 'missing' episodes started. My daughter would burst into the bedroom concerned for her brother, informing myself and her father that he was not in the house. I would run frantically in his room, only to find an empty bed and the window open. I searched the streets until the early hours. Night after night our

torment would continue. The sleepless nights were countless. I would go to church exhausted; my son's behaviour changed overnight. I eventually turned to external services for help, because as a family we felt helpless and it was at that point I was told they had a photo of my son on their walls as being at a potential risk of harm (towards him) as he was known to be part of a gang. The reality hit home. I was losing my son. I prayed so hard often with tears for his safety. Our whole family would fear when there was a knock at the door, thinking it was bad news. My faith gave me the strength to carry on, I put everything in God's hands.

I never forget the day both my husband and I received the phone call which we dreaded, we were asked to go to the hospital as fast as we could as our son had been beaten up badly and this wasn't the first time, but it was the worst. He came back to church for one day after the incident, I was so relieved. However, it was just for a day, as his friends that he once had within the church in his words, 'ignored him'. He felt lost within the church and totally disconnected. A place which was once so familiar to him, became unfamiliar. He walked out the doors that very same day, my calls to him were lost and all I remember is a dark car outside church and him getting into it. I felt hopeless and disheartened. Would this ever end? The welcome we give in church is so important, as that could have been our turning point.

To cut a long story short, my son is doing really well today, he works full-time and makes music, sharing his life stories. I do not know the full extent of the life my son used to live as he remains silent about it. With regards to some of his so-called associates, I understand some served time in prison. I will always maintain that he was different from those associates. He knew what was right and wrong and managed to remove himself from many situations. He was educated, he managed to complete his BTEC Extended level 3 in sport and had a church foundation. He has completely severed that part of his life and although he isn't in church, I thank God that he is alive and pray that one day he will return. Looking back things could have been so different, we have been on such a journey. As parents, look for the signs, be vigilant - missing episodes, new associates/ friends, change in personality and language, change of style of certain clothing, distancing themselves from family, disconnection. Remember to make everyone feel welcome when they walk through the church doors regardless of whether they have been absent for a while. You never know what they are going through. Remember most of all God is our strength and our defence (Exodus 15:1-4).



Appeal

For families suffering in silence, we appeal to you to break the silence. The NEC Children's Ministries Department is here to provide you with support, we are committed to exposing County Lines and providing you with practical steps, in confronting this form of abuse. As stated by Dawn, know that God is with you. Please share your thoughts and experiences and look out for further articles. We thank Dawn, by God grace, for opening our eyes.

References

^{1, 10}National Crime Agency, 'County Lines' [Online]. Available at <https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/crime-threats/drug-trafficking/county-lines>

² NSPCC (2022) [Online]. Available at <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/county-lines>

^{3, 6, 8}ITV News, (2023) 'Drug dealers targeting boys as young as 13 to work in gangs'. March 1. [Online]. Available at <https://www.itv.com/news/central/2023-03-01/drug-dealers-targeting-boys-as-young-as-13-to-work-in-gangs>

⁴Crimestoppers, 'County Lines' [Online]. Available at <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/fearless/more-info/crime-types-explained/county-lines>

^{5, 7}Taylor, D. (2023) 'Professional adverts' for county lines ensnaring children on Instagram and Snapchat' The Guardian, Feb 28. [Online]. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/feb/28/county-lines-grooming-looks-like-professional-job-ads-on-social-media>

⁸Andell, Paul, 2019, 'Theory into practice: County Lines, violence and changes to drug markets'. Youth & Policy. [Online]. Available at, <https://www.youthandpolicy.org/articles/county-lines-violence-drug-markets/>

¹¹ITV News, (2023) 'Weapons, drugs and cash seized as 14 jailed in county lines drug operation' March 1. [Online]. Available at <https://www.itv.com/news/westcountry/2023-03-01/14-jailed-in-exeter-as-part-of-county-lines-drug-crackdown>

County lines gangs use children and vulnerable people to courier drugs and money. A young person who is involved in county lines activity might exhibit some of these signs:

 Persistently going missing from school or home, or being found out-of-area	 Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes or mobile phones	 excessive receipt of texts or phone calls	 Relationships with controlling, older individuals or gang association	 Leaving home or care without explanation
 Suspicion of self-harm, physical assault or unexplained injuries	 Parental concerns	 Significant decline in school performance	 Significant changes in emotional well-being	



Neurodiversity in the Church

Pr Les Ackie

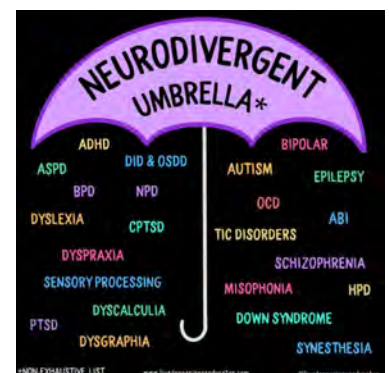
James 1:2 warns us against practicing our faith with partiality. However, we may do just that when we fail to acknowledge and address the needs of those who fall under the umbrella of neurodivergence. Neurodiversity recognises that our brains work differently. Just like our fingerprints, our brains are unique. For most people, their brains are similar enough that while they differ in skills, preferences, and styles, for the most part, they perceive the world in a similar way. Some people exhibit differences in functions like social understanding, sensory processing, attention, communication, memory, and many other cognitive functions.

These differences result from neurological conditions such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), dyspraxia and other categories of brain function. Neurodivergent people think differently to the majority of neurotypical people. Their unique perspectives and experiences may enable them to excel at creativity and innovation, have highly specialised skillsets and have the ability to hyper-focus. The neurodiverse paradigm seeks to maximise strengths rather than focussing on perceived weaknesses. Embracing neurodiversity is critical for an inclusive church and also presents us with huge opportunities. Neurodivergent people should be accommodated and celebrated. If their perspective is embraced this can be a considerable advantage within the church.

However, the differences neurodivergent people experience can present significant challenges for the individual, their families, and the church. Neurodivergent people experience a significantly higher levels of unemployment, social isolation, bullying, depression and suicidal ideation. Within the church, a general lack of awareness of the needs of neurodivergents may result in unintentional barriers for those who feel they don't fit in. This is because the way we 'do church' is generally organised by neurotypical people who experience the world the way they do.

How often do we have neurodivergent people, helping to decide how we shape what the church should look like and how it should function? Where are the disability perspectives in our worship services or small groups, Pathfinder curricula, Sabbath School, etc.? How do different perspectives impact our mission and values? It's essential to prioritise and listen to neurodivergent voices because whenever we have the same types of minds creating anything, it will always include some unintentional barriers just due to a lack of knowledge and lived experience.

Communication misunderstandings can occur when we interact with someone with autism who does not understand traditional social cues and may come across as aloof and disinterested. It is not unusual for neurodivergent people to be oblivious to offences that others perceive. In settings perceived as unaccepting of difference, some neurodivergent people will often mask their neurodivergence to gain acceptance. This masking or camouflaging behaviour often causes fatigue and the need to re-energise away from people. For example, an autistic person might avoid self-soothing behaviors that others may view as strange, force themselves to look people in the eyes, pretend to understand things they do not, practice fake smiling. They may simply avoid the anxiety of social situations.



From a church perspective, our attempts to make people feel welcome and included may be the very things that do the very opposite. Consider, for example, the spike in discomfort for the person with social anxiety who is forced to “Greet somebody in Jesus’ name” or how the person with OCD cringes inside when required to hold hands to pray. Imagine the fear in the heart of the dyslexic child put on the spot to read a Bible text in a Sabbath School class. Spare a thought for the person with sensory processing challenges who doesn’t like to be touched, being pounced upon by the greeter who hugs on sight. Think of the extreme introvert who is called out to “stand up, tell us your name and where you are from.” Research indicates that what people in new situations tend to fear most is speaking in public and being embarrassed. Yet, we often expose them to both.

It is not unusual for neurodivergent people to intentionally plan to arrive in time for the sermon and leave before the last hymn to avoid social interaction. Worse still, they may not come at all. So if we want neurodivergent people to feel at home in our communities of faith, what do we need to consider? And, before we conclude that the numbers are insufficient to warrant an overhaul of how we do church, we need to take into account that in the UK, an estimated one in seven people is neurodivergent - and that’s in addition to all the other varieties of disability. It is highly likely that we have many undiagnosed neurodivergents sitting in our pews.

To thrive, neurodivergent people often need accommodations to be made in understanding, programming, resourcing, environment, and many other areas. For example, a calm sensory environment, a routine with the same start and end times, giving extra time to perform tasks, and direct instructions. A greater awareness of neurodivergence is vital for church leaders and everybody within the household of faith. The saying comes to mind, “Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.” As we educate ourselves, we will have a greater understanding and tolerance of differences in our congregations. It can reduce the tendency to make assumptions and judgements that can negatively impact our relationships. It can promote better understanding of why somebody is behaving or communicating in a particular way.

“The problem with trying to knock a square peg in to a round hole is that you damage the peg in the process”

An awareness of neurodivergence creates opportunities for us to make accommodations that promote inclusivity. Education can build bridges to empathy and support. It also equips the church to harness the untapped potential for ministry within the pool of unique talents and abilities of many neurodivergent members. Greater awareness involves recognising each other’s uniqueness in general and the variance within neurodivergence. If we have met one neurodivergent person, we have met ONE neurodivergent person.

As churches, we can make changes by starting small. We can take an intentional look at how to organise our churches from the perspective of neurodiversity. We can actively seek out the voices of those who experience church through neurodiverse lenses. So, for both neurotypical and neurodivergent people, learning can help promote clearer communication, reduce anxiety, build relationships and open up opportunities for service.

Our willingness to recognise and accommodate neurodivergence should be informed by an awareness that from God’s perspective, we all have different strengths and challenges, and yet, are totally acceptable to Him. He says, “My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” (Isa. 55:8). Yet He makes accommodations for us. He “knows our frame that we are dust (Ps. 103:14).” He provides grace for our deficiencies, and He provides a community of faith in which unity can thrive in diversity, so that His strength can be manifested in us.



Cyberbullying: What Can Be Done?

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

1. Keep the computer in a common area of the home. Do not allow it in your children's bedrooms. Monitor their online usage.
2. Learn how various social networking websites work. Ask your children if they will show you their profile pages.
3. Talk regularly and specifically with your children about online issues. Let them know they can come to you for help if anything is inappropriate, upsetting, or dangerous.
4. Build trust with your children. Set time limits, explain your reasons for them, and discuss rules for online safety and Internet use. Ask your children to contribute to establishing the rules; then they'll be more inclined to follow them.
5. Tell your children not to respond to any cyberbullying threats or comments online. However, do not delete any of the messages. Instead, print out all the messages, including the e-mail addresses or online screen names of the cyberbully. You will need the messages to verify and prove there is cyberbullying.
6. Don't overreact by blaming your children. If they are being bullied, be supportive and understanding. Find out how long the bullying has been going on and ensure that you'll work together to find a solution. Let your children know they are not to blame for being bullied.
7. Don't under-react by telling your children to "shrug it off" or just deal with the bullying. The emotional pain of being bullied is very real and can have long-lasting effects. Don't tease them about it or respond with a "kids will be kids" attitude.
8. Don't threaten to take away your children's computers if they come to you with a problem. This only forces kids to be more secretive.
9. Talk to your school's guidance counsellors so they can keep an eye out for bullying during the school day.
10. If there are threats of physical violence or the bullying continues to escalate, get law enforcement involved.



WHAT CAN CHILDREN DO?

1. Don't respond to any online or text messages sent by cyberbullies.
2. Don't be an accomplice by forwarding any of the messages to others kids.
3. Save and print out all the messages as proof and evidence of cyberbullying.
4. If you are being bullied, tell an adult immediately to get help solving the problem.

Grief and Bereavement Care Weekend

17th to 19th March 2023 NEC Possibility Ministries - Salford SDA Church



Friday Vespers Service (ZOOM) - 7pm
Paul Elleston
"Do not let your hearts be troubled"



Divine Service 10:30am
in Salford SDA Church
Karen Holford - *"The Fractured Fairytale"*



Sabbath Afternoon Workshops 3pm
in person @Salford SDA church
Karen Holford
"Lost before birth...the loneliest grief?"



Sharon Platt-McDonald
"BUC Bereavement Care Ministry"
"C.O.M.F.O.R.T - Solace, Strength and Support for Times of Grief"

Sunday Morning Devotional (ZOOM) 10am
Julian Kastrati
"The Lord is close to the broken-hearted"

Sunday Workshops (ZOOM) 10:30am
Parallel Breakout Sessions

Andrew Rashford-Hewitt
"The Grieving Man" (men only)

Sharon Platt-McDonald
"Bereavement Care Befriender overview"

Dr Beatrice Kastrati
"To Heal a Broken Heart - Grief and Health"

TED BUC
NEC Area 2



Grief and Bereavement Care Vespers Service
Time: Mar 17, 2023 18:30 London
Meeting ID: 845 1539 6308
Passcode: Care



Grief and Bereavement Care Sunday Workshops
Time: Mar 19, 2023 10:00 London
Meeting ID: 812 7483 3941
Passcode: Care



YOU ARE NOT ALONE

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*"I am not living,
I am just surviving."
Together we can make
it happen.*

Often, it is not the initial experience that
creates the overwhelming pain,
but the lack of support.

Do not suffer alone
Do not suffer in silence
CCS is here to support you
Together we can win your struggle.



Facing Difficult times or issues, Need to talk?





The first step is the
hardest. Call the NEC
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We can arrange
for you to access
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SEC Children's Ministries Presents

HE IS RISEN

CHILDREN'S DAY OF FELLOWSHIP

Sabbath 1st April 2023

Newbold College
St. Marks Road, Binfield, Bracknell, RG42 4AN

Morning Programme: 10.00am-12.30pm
A re-enactment of the Easter Story by Agape Theatre Company

Lunch: 12.30-2.30pm
Please make your own lunch arrangements

Afternoon Programme: 2.30-5.30pm
Concert

Entry
Via Ticket Only (to be presented upon entry)
Ticket required for adults and children aged 2yrs+

For More Information
Email nbryan@secadventist.org.uk

 <https://he-is-risen.eventbrite.co.uk>





SEC FAMILY LIFE, COUNSELLING AND PRAYER DEPARTMENTS

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14 - 16 APRIL '23

SPEAKER
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WATLING STREET, HINCKLEY, LE10 3JA

 **REGISTRATION DEADLINE 28 FEB '23**



Children's Health Expo Training

Sunday 23rd April 2023
10 am to 4:30 pm



Valerie Dufour, MPH, RD
Inventor and developer of the Children's Health Expo in 2007

Director, Health Ministries Department, Swiss German Conference
Valérie is an accredited dietician and holds a Master's in Public Health from Andrews University, Michigan, USA. She has been serving from 2014 to 2021 as the Health Ministries Director of the EUD Division.

Zoom details: ID 84657680957
Passcode: 661922
Hosts Kenroy & Eileen McKenzie

South England Conference
MEN'S MINISTRIES presents

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MEN'S HEALTH
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RESTART // REBUILD // REFRESH

**ASNA FAMILY
 RESPITE WEEKEND
 2023**

12-15 May

'Building resilience in 2023'

VENUE
 The Thomas Centre, Covenham St Bartholomew, Louth, Lincolnshire, LN11 0PB

COST
 *Adults £150 (£100 ASNA members)
 CHILDREN: 4-18 yrs £50 per person (Free: Under 4 and all children with disabilities up to 18 yrs)

Booking form:
 Website: www.asna.info Email: info@asna.info @OfficialASNA
 ASNA is a Reg. Charity 1100447
 *PLEASE CONTACT ASNA TO DISCUSS FUNDING

SPECIAL NEEDS CAMP
 9th - 16th July 2023

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 or visit www.specialneedsamp.co.uk

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 TIME: 7:30PM - 9:30PM GMT

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The Family Ministry Department

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A joint TED/EUD training programme



For more information contact
[TED Family Ministries](#)

EVERY
THURSDAY 8PM GMT

ADVENTIST SINGLES PRAYER MEETING

PRAYER MEETING FOR SINGLE ADVENTISTS
THURSDAYS 8PM UK TIME / 3PM EST
ROOM IS OPEN 24HRS A DAY TO PRAY
ZOOM ID: 846 3079 9939 PASSCODE: Pray



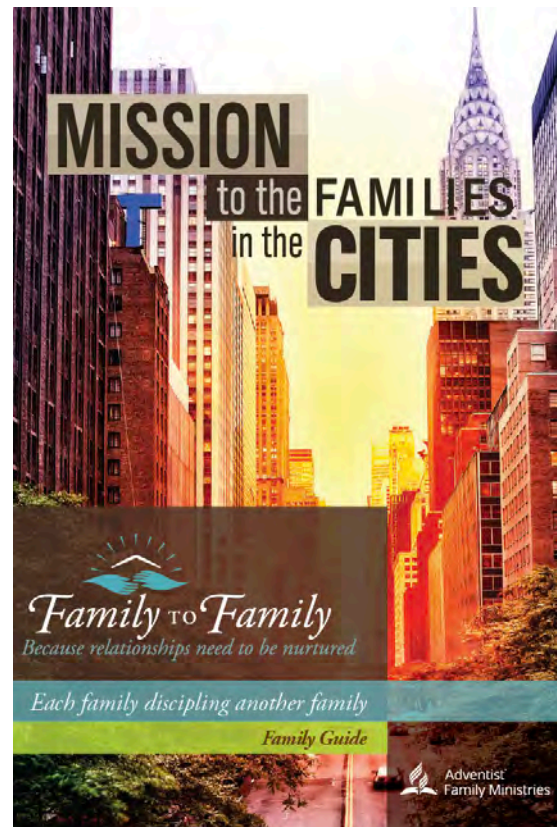
[Adventist Singles Prayer Meeting](#)

2023 Dates for Your Diary

- Global Youth & Children's Day: 18 March
- NEC Children's Ministries Training 26 March
- SEC Children's Day of Fellowship 1 April
- Possibility Ministries Day: 22 April
- World Day of Prayer for Children at Risk: 27 May
- Special Needs Camp: 9-16 July
- Children's Sabbath: 22 July
- End It Now - Abuse Awareness Sabbath: 26 August
- Family Togetherness Week: 2-9 September
- World Orphans & Vulnerable Children's Day: 18 November



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



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

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 \(Disability outreach\)](#)

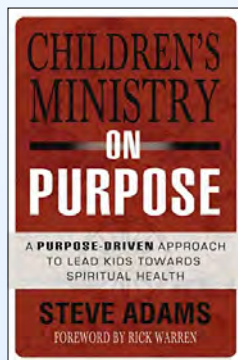
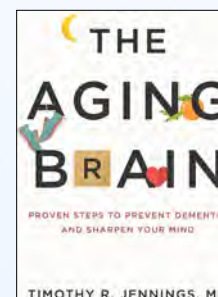
[Women's Aid](#)

Recommended Reading



Lamar Hardwick was thirty-six years old when he found out he was on the autism spectrum. It prompted a difficult re-evaluation of who he was as a person. As a pastor, it started him on a new path of considering the way disabled people are treated in the church. *Disability and the Church* is a practical and theological reconsideration of the church's responsibilities to the disabled community.

Dr Timothy Jennings asserts that while growing older is inevitable, many of the troubles we associate with aging - including dementia, disability, and an increased dependence on others - are not. The choices we make now can help us to maintain our vitality, a sharp mind, and our independence as we age. *The Aging Brain* is an easy-to-use guide to maintaining brain and body health throughout our lives.



In *Children's Ministry on Purpose*, Pr Steve Adams, a twenty-five year veteran of children's ministry in the local church, leads listeners on a journey of discovery. While there is no single key to a successful children's ministry, Pr Adams shows how to develop an intentional ministry process that moves children toward spiritual health while building a healthy ministry environment for those who

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