The Latest from Adventist Today

**Samuel Pipim Resigns:** One of the most energetic, controversial, and high-profile conservatives in the North American Division recently resigned from the Adventist ministry in Michigan, citing moral misbehavior in his relationship with a woman. Columnist Matthew Gamble ponders how the church should respond to the confession and resignation of Dr. Pipim, who for many years has been a larger-than-life presence in the church, as author, teacher, youth leader, and role model. Read more

**Looking More and More Like the Catholics?** Is Adventism beginning to resemble more and more its traditional arch-opponent,

**Fixing Adventists and Homosexuals:** Much research has gone into whether or not homosexuals can be reoriented to heterosexuality. The success rate in both Christian and non-Christian programs remains stubbornly low—about 4 percent. Likewise, calls for repentance and behavior change among Christians seem to evoke similarly low change quotients. What can we do? John McLarty has some suggestions. Read more

**The Peacemaking Remnant?** Douglas Morgan, author and professor of history at Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Maryland,
the Catholic Church, as the two world denominations duke it out in the global arena? Ervin Taylor believes the two denominations face almost identical problems, as they seek to fulfill the Gospel Commission in their own ways. Read more

**When Churches Off-shoot:** Some denominations seem blessed with colorful and even tragically violent offshoots—Mormonism, Islam, and Adventism among them. In his review of the book, *When Men Become Gods*, Ron Spencer suggests that cult leaders often use an appeal to "return to the fundamental teachings of the prophet" as levers to isolate and control their followers, leading them at times into the very jaws of death. Read more

**La Sierra Resignation Story Thickens:** Mystery continues to hover over the La Sierra University campus, as the University’s senate unanimously petitions the board not to accept letters of resignation submitted by three faculty members and a board member. The four men were recorded making candid remarks about the process and personalities involved in producing a report earlier this year related to charges that La Sierra was promoting evolution in its life sciences classes. Adventist Today is working hard to uncover and analyze the facts, as the prospect of lawsuits and other complications loom. Read more

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Just recently, Dr. Samuel Pipim,\(^1\) resigned as a pastor in the Michigan Conference. His resignation letter he opted to make public as well as confessing the sin publicly on one of the ministry websites that he founded.\(^2\) Dr. Pipim is known for his controversial writings with books like, Receiving the Word, which is a classic amongst methodologically conservative folks. Additionally, he is one of the founders of the Generation of Youth for Christ (GYC), a movement of young people which prides itself for calling Adventist young people back to godliness by focusing largely reforming people back to a 19\(^{th}\) Century Adventism.\(^3\) At a recent GYC, Dr. Pipim proceeded to raise concerns for such movements as GODencounters,\(^4\) something that I am very much invested in on a personal level.

Several years ago, I was invited by Dr. Pipim to come and present on the campus of the University of Michigan where Dr. Pipim had founded a group of Adventist college students to reach the public university campus. While I had heard about Dr. Pipim, I had never met him up until that point. A friend of mine was attending the University of Michigan and they were having an outreach aimed at reaching unbelievers with the gospel. Seeing as that is one of my passions, I was eager to go.

Upon arrival into the hall where the series was to be held for the weekend, I realized quickly that the methodologies being utilized were different than what I’d experienced on other public university campuses. There would be no use of percussion and caffeinated beverages of choice were certainly not provided by the host organization.

On Saturday evening, after my third presentation based on the life of Jesus and after the last guest departed, Dr. Pipim drove me back to my room. His young son was the only other person in the car. As we pulled up to the apartment complex, Dr. Pipim put the car in park and turned off the engine. We ended up having an incredible heart-to-heart while his son curled up for a snooze in the back of the minivan. We talked until 2am and had, what I recall to be, a very delightful conversation about God, Jesus, Theology, Hebrew and life in general. I found Dr. Pipim to be very encouraging to me (I was really struggling in Hebrew class at the time). We prayed for one another and went our separate ways.

Some time passed and the next time I saw Dr. Pipim was on the campus of Andrews University. He actually tracked me down and handed me an endorsed copy of his latest book. He was encouraged
to hear that his prayers were answered as I had passed Hebrew! I have not seen Dr. Pipim in person since.

Dr. Pipim and I run in completely different circles. He is from the Michigan Conference, and while I respect the likes of President Jay Gallimore, we couldn’t disagree more in our approach to ministry. Much of the content of Dr. Pipim’s books, articles and presentations, while they may sound convincing, are, in my opinion, flawed and at times, completely misrepresent the Jesus that I see in Scripture. Simply put, we don’t see eye-to-eye.

All that said, when I read Dr. Pipim’s resignation letter, I was deeply saddened. I became teary-eyed as I thought about the pain that he and his wife, his children, his family, the woman who he violated, those who look up to him, must be going through. As I sat there at my computer that day, I found some other links, one of which contained another public letter that Dr. Pipim posted on one of his ministry websites. In the letter Dr. Pipim made the comment that, “Undoubtedly, my resignation will be greeted with deep sorrow and hurt by those of you who have known me and worked closely with me. On the other hand, others who have always opposed what we stand for will have an additional reason to rejoice.” When I read that statement, I was cut to the heart. I won’t deny that some of Dr. Pipim’s public declarations have made me downright angry (I’ve had to repent from my reactions a time or two after hearing some of what he’s taught others). But would I rejoice over his moral failure? Absolutely not. But how devastating is it that he would even think that there would be those of us from different worldviews who would rejoice at his failure?! It reminds me of seeing the televised celebrations of the announcement of the death of Bin Laden. Did Jesus celebrate when Ben Laden died? With Jesus living in us, we should never celebrate another persons sin.

With the above mentioned, I do have to wonder what Dr. Pipim’s message will be in the future. It seems to me that he’ll be at a place where he has to admit that a focus on behavior and the law doesn’t equate godliness. Furthermore, it seems that he will have to proclaim the grace of Jesus Christ with deep passion, based on an firsthand experience.

Another aspect that I am eager to see what will unfold is how Dr. Pipim is treated by the church. He did a noble thing by not only resigning from his position, but also stating his actions publically. But where do we go from here? What do we as the church do to reestablish a man who has a deep passion for God and ministry? Do we simply pull his credentials and wish him the best of luck? Or do we rally at such a time as this. Let us not forget that the likes of King David and Samson were some messed up brothers, not to fail to mention the disciples and the Apostle Paul. God certainly used them, referring to one of them as a man after His own heart. It is my prayer that Dr. Pipim and his family will be encouraged and supported through this time. It seems to me, with the various counts of adultery committed within the fold of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, that it is due time that we pull our heads out of the sand, repent from our, at times, pride for claiming to be THE REMNANT CHURCH OF BIBLE PROPHECY, and establish healthy steps to assist people in a restorative process when sins like this occur.

Dr. Pipim, Jesus says, “I don’t condemn you.” By His grace, that is my statement towards you as well. And I remain optimistic that one of these days you and I can have another heart-to-heart in your minivan well into the wee hours of the morning. And hopefully this time, your son will be able to join in on the conversation too!
Grace be with you brother!

Matthew Gamble


3. Please note that while some of the content that I’ve heard presented at the GYC concerns me deeply, I am all for young people coming into a deeper faith experience with God and embracing what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ. I believe that many involved with the GYC, both on the leadership level and those who attend, are very sincere and I am thankful for the positive fruit that it is producing.


5. When I was attending Andrews University in Michigan I frequently spoke at events that either the conference was supporting as well at Conference supported academies. I found Elder Gallimore to be the type of person who I could easily approach and who was always willing to return my calls and talk candidly with me. That attribute, as I found with Dr. Pipim, goes along in my book.


Lester Merkin

Thank you Matthew for your excellent column item on the Pipim confession. I, too, have been very disturbed at his approach; but you are "spot on" to what our response should be--and what heaven's response already is.

??

I failed to see any hint on the gender of the person Dr. Pipim had his moral lapse.

OTOH, does is make any difference, if the person in question was a male?

Has Adventism any official list of sexual sins, ordered according to their sinfulnes?

If it has not, should it have?

Are there sexual sins which are unforgiveable, if committed by an ordained Adventist pastor? Unforgiveable in the context of employment and restitution to one's former office?

Pauli Heikkinen

Elaine Nelson

1 day ago Reply
Pauli,

There are "unwritten" priorities of sins, sexual being of the worst order, descending into "official" actions which are not sinful if enacted by church administration.

Timo Onjukka 1 day ago Reply

Perhaps, Elaine, then again...
seems we may have new, lower hierarchy of "worst" sin.
"Ism du jour" might be what is termed "evolutionism" (supposedly taught at certain research University) @ exclusion 6-literal-day "quasi-Usher" chronology (and its marginalization and failure to try reconcile the observable geologic or archeological record).

Notwithstanding, hopefully learning to receive grace teaches person to spill it equally abundant.
That we corporately and individually learn to do thus with all peoples, brothers, aliens, strangers, enemies is my prayer.

Elaine Nelson 1 day ago Reply

Hope is continuing to believe that official Adventism will eventually learn that all people are brothers, sisters and our friends, and not our enemies. Until then, some of us have better things to do than to wait.

Edwin A. Schwisow 1 day ago Reply

For those of us who watched the process of repentance and reinstatement of preacher/administrator Elder Henry Wright in the East some years back, it appears that the one-time "zero tolerance" for sexual indiscretions among Adventist ministers had come to an end. As I understood it, Neal Wilson in particular had urged that no minister caught in, or strongly suspected of adultery, be allowed ever again to carry credentials. But Elder Wilson's law was not invoked in the case of Elder Wright, and it would appear that strategically speaking, Elder Pipim has done the "Wright" thing. (I do not wish to be seen as cynical; I am simply commenting on the apparent change of attitude in the church that may affect the future of Elder Pimim's ministry, in light of his confession). Times change, and so does the church. How we penalize those caught in downfalls varies with the times, certainly, and may also be affected by one's cultural origin and the values and demands of one's natural constituency of friends and supporters. Such pressures DO exist and DO affect situations like this.

Editor 1 day ago Reply

On behalf of Atoday, apologies to all for the posting difficulties this weekend. It appears we have an unexpected error appear which is preventing instant appearance of each post. Clicking multiple times creates multiple posts. Please don't feel bad, it's our problem, not yours. This will be
corrected as soon as possible and thanks for your understanding.

Steve Billiter

I see no future nor any good in dragging this man through the mud. Its become a subject of debate and gossip in reality. Has any of you offered sympathy to Dr. Pipim and encouraged him at all? Have you prayed for him?

Please recall King Davids sins that may have been decidedly worse, and how he fully repented. Who among us is without sin? "So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her" (John 8:7).

God offers full forgiveness of any and all sins by meeting the conditions.

1Jn 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Quoted from the above article;
"It seems to me, with the various counts of adultery committed within the fold of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, that it is due time that we pull our heads out of the sand, repent from our, at times, pride for claiming to be THE REMNANT CHURCH OF BIBLE PROPHECY" (M.Gamble).

I have news for you Matthew; The 7th Day Adventist Church IS a prophetic movement. Have you done the studies? It is so clear! And nothing should be done with "pride." You seem to attach this sin with the truth of this prophetic movement and those who teach it; and that means me; and that means Dr.Pipim too.

To deny this truth is the same as denying the Investigative Judgment which is the foundation of the 7th Day Adventist Church as is Ellen White a part of the prophetic basis for Adventism.

The books of record in Heaven, in which the names and the deeds of men are registered, are to determine the decisions of the Judgment. Says the prophet Daniel, “The Judgment was set, and the books were opened.” The Revelator, describing the same scene, adds, “Another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” [Revelation 20:12.] {GC88 480.2}

The book of life contains the names of all who have ever entered the service of God. Jesus bade his disciples, “Rejoice, because your names are written in Heaven.” [Luke 10:20.] Paul speaks of his faithful fellow-workers, “whose names are in the book of life.” [Philippians 4:3.] Daniel, looking down to “a time of trouble, such as never was,” declares that God’s people shall be delivered, “everyone that shall be found written in the book.” [Daniel 12:1.] And the Revelator says that those only shall enter the city of God whose names “are written in the Lamb's book of life.” [Revelation 21:27.] {GC88 480.3}

“A book of remembrance” is written before God, in which are recorded the good deeds of “them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.” [Malachi 3:16.] Their words of faith, their
acts of love, are registered in Heaven. Nehemiah refers to this when he says, “Remember me, O my God, . . . and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God.” [Nehemiah 13:14.] In the book of God's remembrance every deed of righteousness is immortalized. There every temptation resisted, every evil overcome, every word of tender pity expressed, is faithfully chronicled. And every act of sacrifice, every suffering and sorrow endured for Christ's sake, is recorded. Says the psalmist. “Thou tellest my wanderings. Put thou my tears into thy bottle; are they not in thy book?” [Psalm 56:8.] {GC88 481.1}

There is a record also of the sins of men. “For God shall bring every work into Judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” [Ecclesiastes 12:14.] “Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of Judgment.” Said the Saviour, “By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” [Matthew 13:36, 37.] The secret purposes and motives appears in the unerring register; for God “will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.” [1 Corinthians 4:5.] “Behold, it is written before me, . . . your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the Lord.” [Isaiah 65:6, 7.] {GC88 481.2}

Every man's work passes in review before God, and is registered for faithfulness or unfaithfulness. Opposite each name in the books of Heaven is entered, with terrible exactness, every wrong word, every selfish act, every unfulfilled duty, and every secret sin, with every artful dissembling. Heaven-sent warnings or reproofs neglected, wasted moments, unimproved opportunities, the influence exerted for good or for evil, with its far-reaching results, all are chronicled by the recording angel. {GC88 481.3}

Ervin Taylor

14 hours ago Reply

Mr. Billiter suggests that “To deny this truth [that the Adventist Church is the “Remnant Church of Bible Prophecy”] is the same as denying the Investigative Judgment which is the foundation of the 7th Day Adventist Church . . .”

If the foundation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the “Investigative Judgment” doctrine, then this church is built on very unstable sand. Most of this “sand foundation” has already been badly eroded to the point that it really can’t support anything of any significant weight. We already know what happens to a house built on sand rather than a rock.

Elaine Nelson

14 hours ago Reply

If the IJ is the only support holding up the SDA church it is destined to fall, as it should have years ago.

The rock, Christ Jesus, is what the church should be built upon. Don't remember singing in cradle roll about the foolish man who built his house on the sand and "the walls came tumbling down"?
But the wise man built his house upon the rock and the walls stood strong and fast."

Is this an admission that the church is not built upon Christ? It should be feared that many Adventists are convinced that the IJ identifies it as the remnant of prophecy and thus, according to the SDA position, only those will be saved—to judge all those who are lost?

A church that is built on a unique biblical interpretation and must have a prophet, identifies both Mormons and Adventists.
North American Adventist and Roman Catholic Church Facing Similar Problems

Submitted Jun 19, 2011
By Erv Taylor

Under the headline, “Competing Conferences Show Division Among U.S. Catholics,” a news story appearing in the Detroit Free Press reported that, over the weekend of June 11-12, 2011, Catholic liberals met in Detroit, Michigan. At the same time, a few miles away, Catholic traditionalists held their own series of meetings. Unlike the liberals, the conservatives will be coming together with the support and blessing of the local Catholic archbishop who had warned local deacons and priests to stay away from the meeting of liberals. He was quoted as saying that any member of the clergy attending would be in danger of being defrocked.

The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life in 2008 reported that about a third of those raised Catholic in the U.S. have left the church. The exposure of the long term abuse of children by Catholic priests has had grave consequences for a number of Catholic parishes and dioceses, including many being either actually bankrupt or close to bankruptcy. In the eyes of many Catholic laymen, the credibility of the Catholic hierarchy in the U.S. has never been lower. A number of Catholic intellectuals are aware that many traditional teachings of the Catholic Church are a product of issues of importance to European Medieval Christianity and having little relevance to the modern world.

Catholic liberals and conservatives agree that their church has many problems. Both agree that at the heart of the problem is the question of what it means to be Catholic in the 21st Century. They agree on the nature of many of the problems. What they can’t agree on are the solutions.

The liberal Catholic meeting in downtown Detroit is being sponsored by the American Catholic Council, a coordinating organization of 30 Catholic reform groups from across the U.S. The Council is asking for more democratic decision-making in the Catholic Church, as well as allowing women into the priesthood and a married priesthood. They insist their church needs to change to survive as a viable institution in 21st Century America.

The conservatives are meeting with the sponsorship of the Archdiocese of Detroit in Detroit suburb. Their agenda includes a critique the American Catholic Council agenda and the presentation of the official, sanctioned views of the church. A conservative spokesperson involved in the organization of the meeting of traditional Catholics was quoted as saying, “the liberals want the Catholic Church to change. But truth doesn’t change.”

The Roman Catholic tradition is more than a thousand years old while the Adventist denomination has been in existence less than two centuries. On the surface, it might appear these two vastly different institutions would have no problem in common. While their histories are obviously not similar and a number of the specific issues that exist may indeed be vastly different, surprisingly many problems currently manifesting themselves in American Catholic circles is also increasingly plaguing the North American Adventist Church.

Divisions within Adventism rarely get much coverage from the secular press because Adventist
membership in North America is between one and two percent of that of American Catholicism and Adventism’s public image and name recognition is relatively low except around three or four of our major medical institutions. In addition, Adventism is widely confused with Mormonism and the Jehovah Witnesses Watchtower Society in the general public consciousness.

Within official Adventism, the problems are either ignored or covered over. As would be expected, the institutional Adventist press, led by the house journal of the Adventist General Conference, the Adventist Review, only publishes materials supporting the official understanding that all problems will be solved if we could return to the days when members did not question the God-ordained leadership and accepted without question the conventional Adventist understanding of the Bible as stipulated in the writings of Ellen G. White.

According to the new regime in place in Silver Spring, all that is needed is a reformation and revival which will return the church to what were supposed to be the “old landmarks.” In truth, these are traditions which were accepted without question before Prophetess of Health unmasked where Ellen White really obtained many of her health-related ideas. These were traditions which were accepted before The White Lie provided chapter and verse about where Ellen White and her “helpers” copied much material and then introduced with “I was shown…” in the prophetess’ inspired writings. Other traditions were accepted before the discovery in 1975 of an 1845 newspaper article describing events transpiring in the house of one Israel Dammon and what one young lady by the name of Ellen Harmon was doing and saying in that house were discovered and published. This was also before increasingly scientifically educated members discovered that the evidence provided by apologists such as George McCredy Price and his successors at the Geoscience Research Institute, in their attempts to salvage Adventism’s adherence to a fundamentalist young life creationism, were doing it with scientifically untenable arguments.

The specific issues are different but the spirit that animates conservative traditionalists and liberals in both faith traditions are very similar. Several years ago, the Los Angeles Times published letters received from traditional Catholics responding to an article entitled “Faithful, Yet Not Traditional Catholics.” One letter read: “For someone to reject the core beliefs of an organization yet claim to be part of that organization flies in the face of logic, reason and common sense…If people want to call themselves Catholics, they are obliged to accept the teachings and the authority of the church. If they want to leave the church, there is nothing to stop them. But if they leave, they’re no longer Catholics and should not identify themselves as such.” The second letter writer comments “The individuals described in the Times’ article defiantly invent a right to select whichever theological principles to accept or reject. To what are they being faithful? If they have the power to ignore certain doctrinal precepts of the church, then which ones should be followed? These breakaway Catholics argue that the church is not inclusive enough. This is merely code for the concept that the church will not change its doctrine to suit their ego-driven behavior. Without standards, the church is nothing more than a social fraternity…” If one substituted “Adventists” for “Catholics,” in these letters and changed not one other word, Adventist traditionalists would fully and completely resonate with all of the views expressed.

On the surface, Roman Catholic and Adventist clerical administrative authorities may appear to have few problems in common. On the contrary, many of their problems are very similar. An example: How to keep an educated membership in an open society from increasing their influence and raising so many questions about the validity of traditional theology and polity that the ability of the institutional church to influence opinions and continue to receive income from members will be
severely damaged. This is probably relatively simple to deal with in most Third World environments. In the First World, the strains created by this process can be easily seen.

Ron Corson 6 days ago Reply

"To what are they being faithful?"

That is what much of this boils down to. There is a deep misunderstanding in churches where they think their faith in their churches tradition is the same as faith in God. They are vastly different however. It is just easier to apply faith as faith in tradition rather then to acknowledge that faith in God is something harder to quantify and difficult to judge as people like to do to other people. So tradition takes the place of God and tradition cannot change else God would change. It is a kind of hubris which is almost funny if it was not the cause of so much pain for so many people.

Bill Cork 5 days ago Reply

In the Catholic context "conservative" and "traditionalists" are too different categories.

But you're right. There are some similarities. Both churches have clear historic identities. Both in the 1960s witnessed the rise of a liberal faction that thought it could change those outmoded ways of belief. The liberal factions in both churches are now largely made up of aging baby boomers who are frustrated and angry that more younger people don't share their "progressive" passions. Both have conferences that are attended by folks with grey hair who vent their frustration at leaders they view as "dinosaurs" and "fundamentalists." Both have clouds of former members that stand on the sides and tell how things would be so much better if the churches embraced their doubts.

Ervin Taylor 5 days ago Reply

I must say I am fascinated by Mr. Cork’s comment. On the surface, his observations do seem to be, in part, correct, and I would ask him if he would expand on them. There is obviously a generation gap in perceptions about the nature of the church. What are the specific reasons for this? I would ask if he and others might offer their views. How do younger church members—let’s say under 40—view the obvious problems in the church. Is this group monolithic or are their views divided along ethnic, cultural, educational, or socio-economic lines? Are theological or political issues inside the church ignored? Is it all about relationships?

Kevin Riley 5 days ago Reply

Most people under 40 aren't in the church, so what the church does is not their greatest priority. That is one thing that the RC and SDA church do share - they have lost large numbers of youth. I am not sure if it is the same in the US, but in Australia the majority of students in the respective school systems do not identify with the church. Most people I know under 40 who do attend church have little interest in the theological and doctrinal squabbles. The churches I am familiar
with do not usually attract the young people with a passionate commitment to traditional Adventism, but from what I have observed, they also have little interest beyond the 'identity' doctrines pushed by their leaders.

**Elaine Nelson**

From an LATimes article about Crystal Cathedral:

"Some of the church's early members, now in their 70s and 80s, still attend services, but their children aren't there, much less their grandchildren. The church's efforts to update its approach with new music — a gospel-influenced choir backed with guitar, bass and drums — has alienated some older worshipers without attracting many new ones."

Is it possible that this could also apply to many SDA churches?

**Kevin Riley**

I would say in some cases it does apply. The belief that changing music would solve the problem has proven not to be true. Perhaps because most churches refuse to face the deeper issues that remain no matter what they do with the music. In the 1960's there was a huge cultural change, and churches still don't seem to know what to do with it. Some 'went with the flow' and many are now almost empty and most attenders are elderly. Some stood against the flow, and many are now almost empty and most attenders are elderly. It is interesting that social histories indicate most people did not leave the churches in anger, they just found 'better' things to do. I think every generation since has been asking the churches to answer the question of why they are relevant, and not receiving a convincing answer, have moved on and don't give the churches much thought any more.

**Doctorf Doctorf1**

The young people of today raised in SDA homes simply don't buy much of traditional SDA beliefs. Young people that still call themselves Adventists do not appear to me to be caught up in doctrinal issues and largely ignore EGW writings. The view that EGW writings were "inspired" by God after the exposure of her rampant plagiarism is discredited. EGW has no more credibility than the "inspiration" of the peepstone writings of Joseph Smith. It is time for Adventism to rethink its theology as the economics of selling its 19th century world view is just not working out in North America.

**Elaine Nelson**

The entire meaning of "church" must undergo radical change if it is to have any impact on coming generations. The old heads, sitting in their offices, and traveling to great publicity that may draw crowds for long enough for photographs and then fly on to another "mission field" conceals the fact that churches in first world countries are dwindling every year.
The world has radically changed in the past 25 years. There are more interests to occupy our "down" time than ever before. Driving to sit in a pew for several hours and listen to amateur music (when the best of music is available wherever anyone is), often a poor sermon, and massive amounts of time for announcements, reading Scripture, etc., is not seen as worth one's time. One is no longer required to drive to a building to read the Bible, hear great music, and is not looking for something to fill a few otherwise "wasted hours."

Even many local sports teams can hardly fill seats. There are too many choices available: hiking, bike riding, spending time with family, that compete for "church time." There is no longer the expectations that on Saturday or Sunday, everyone will be in church. Adventism is experiencing this same laissez faire attitude. Yet, 150 years later, the same old model continues: Sat. morning SS classes, church song service, announcements and sermon. Only a very few gifted speakers can be expected to hold an audience for 52 weeks. Look in any church during and Saturday or Sunday morning to noon time to prove this. Regular attendance at church has never been a mark of a true Christian.

**George Tichy**

The new generation does not pay attention to the old authoritarian way the church was traditionally manipulated (and will be again under Ted Wilson). They are not emotionally attached to it. They will stay if they see coherence, logic, and honesty. Simple words from some "religious authority" (??) from the GC will not impress them. The "KGC" will not scare them.

The church either becomes a Bible-only based church, or the new generation will be lost. At least those who are not misinformed on the controversies about plagiarism, 1844, Desmond Ford, etc. will not accept the fact that the church keeps insisting in not changing course. They will lack interest, they will leave. For them, there is no reason to belong to a church that is dishonest with itself.

**Elaine Nelson**

For most of Christianity's history, the common people attended church as a tradition, and to seek confession and penance. Those needs are no longer felt.

If one seeks spiritual renewal, it is much easier to find it in hiking in the mountains or fields, reading a good book in a quiet place, and taking time to meditate in solitude. Did Jesus go to the synagogue for spiritual refreshment? No, he went alone to pray and meditate and seek strength. Synagogue was a place for dialogue and the Rabbis encouraged such activity. Where is that found in a church today?

Sitting and listening to a sermon does not encourage spirituality. This is a silent, solitary exercise and young people, especially, seek peer activity and if "church" were structured as physical activity: working in soup kitchen, Habitat for Humanity (nearly every community is involved on Saturdays and weekends), this would be the kind of "church" that would have far more appeal than
sitting still for several hours to a usually boring sermon.

Where is it written that church must be structured as it is currently? In a building that is only used a few hours weekly at great expense? The most ineffective use of time and money for which any building is constructed.

Trevor Hammond

I dedicate the words below to Walter Rea, Ron Numbers and their ilk...

“Brethren and sisters, let not your souls be disturbed by the efforts of those who so earnestly seek to arouse distrust and suspicion of Sister White.

These attacks have been repeated hundreds of times during the past forty years; but my labors have not ceased; the voice of warning, reproof, and encouragement has not been silenced. The evil reports framed concerning me have injured those who circulated them, but have not destroyed my work.

“Before some of these opposers had an existence, I was shown what would come, and from what source. In the day of God, those who have been seeking to prove me a deceiver must answer for their course . .

“Leave Sister White in the hands of God. If the work in which she is engaged be of God, it will prosper; otherwise it will come to naught. But remember that your own eternal interests are now at stake . .

“Many are in reality fighting his [Satan’s] battles while they profess to serve under the banner of Christ. These traitors in the camp may not be suspected, but they are doing their work to create unbelief, discord, and strife. Such are the most dangerous of foes. While they insinuate themselves into our favor, and gain our confidence and sympathy, they are busy suggesting doubts and creating suspicion.

They work in the same manner as did Satan in heaven when he deceived the angels by his artful representations.”—Review Supplement, August 28, 1883.
In Memory of Ellen G. White [Messenger of God]

Posted by Trevor Hammond

Doctorf Doctorf1  2 days ago Reply

Trevor,

Apply that rambling prose to Joseph Smith. The koolaid drinkers in the Mormon Church defend him as staunchly as you defend EGW. There is nothing wrong with looking at the history of these people and looking at their real lives as opposed to the massaged stories that come out of the official church.

Doctorf Doctorf1  2 days ago Reply

Trevor,

Apply that rambling prose to Joseph Smith. The koolaid drinkers in the Mormon Church defend him as staunchly as you defend EGW. There is nothing wrong with looking at the history of these people and looking at their real lives as opposed to the massaged stories that come out of the official church.

Elaine Nelson  4 days ago Reply

“Leave Sister White in the hands of God."

If only that had been done, she would RIP. As it has been, she is resurrected, dismembered, interpreted, and quoted ad infinitum every day of the week around the world by her ardent fans.

George Tichy  4 days ago Reply

Elaine,

And once in a while she still writes a new book!!!...

Trevor Hammond  4 days ago Reply

I have been in many suspicious questionable unmentionable houses with some not so good people back in the day. So where’s my newspaper article to discredit me with some a biased inflated dodgy story from my past? Huh! Perhaps others may have some even juicier stories from their past? Well come on... Yeah, I thought so!

So, was the referenced newspaper article which mentions EGW, found in the sleazy gossip
column? Or did it make the ‘Farmers whatever’ headlines? Was EGW and James charged or arrested? Were they convicted for gathering illegally in the home of some professed Christians? No? What was that you said? No? Ok – good answer...

The insertion of this scathing ‘below the belt’ attack on EGW in this article is one good reason that many who hold true to our Fundamental Beliefs don’t buy into this type of pompous partisan progressive patronage which is has declared a total onslaught on a humble wonderful Christian woman who wrote books like Steps to Christ and The Desire of Ages. Accused and falsely represented by many of her detractors who use propaganda juiced up with rumour and twisted accusations, that is mixed with error and fallacy with all purpose and intent just to try and paint a bad picture (as usual) of this humble servant of the Lord, Ellen White. The tone of the paragraph is sinister and misleading. The ‘Pink Pather’ de-dant de-dant music would fit well with such investigative journalism (that is if malicious gossip can be called such).

So EGW was in a house visiting and sharing her message and visions to some of the Millerites et al and one dude gets arrested for what? PRAYING LOUD? PREACHING STUFF? That ain’t NEWS! Freedom of association, freedom of religion and the right to practice and propagate one’s religious beliefs should be the right of all citizens in a truly free society.

Here are some links which rebut Numbers and Rea’s and others tirade:
http://www.whiteestate.org/issues/whitelie.html
http://www.whiteestate.org/issues/israel_damman.html

T

George Tichy

4 days ago Reply

I didn't know that there were still people denying the facts...

Doctorf Doctorf1

2 days ago Reply

Trevor,

Read the Atkinson incident. You can find it and you will see from the transcripts and reports that no miracles occurred and the people attending the meeting appeared to be a bunch of unhinged individuals. No Ms Harmon and James White were not arrested because they got out of there before the authorities got to them. When you read the transcripts where multiple people testify, what is clear is that some very bizarre behavior was witnessed at the meeting. Deal honestly with our history and let the chips fall where they may.

Timo Onjukka

4 days ago Reply

I was asked this by good Catholic friend; Are you Adventists not aware you are more like us than distinct?
We have MARY, 
and you, ELLEN!

Human tendency to codify/re-interpret dogma and ritual 
(expeditiously fundamental, but ritual/dogma nonetheless) 
and utterly deny principles in practice (but pay homage in theory) 
is, apparently, mans own way.

Perhaps God has a different idea... 
beyond mine.

---

Edwin A. Schwisow
3 days ago Reply

The two denominations each represent themselves as God's sole legitimate church on earth, and it's inevitable that they will tend to parallel and resemble one another in organizational strategy and even demographics. They also tend to face the same challenges in a world increasingly uninterested in denominational labels.

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Fred Reinosa
2 days ago Reply

Interesting that so called " progressives " believe in " verbal inspiration ".

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Anita Douglas
1 day ago Reply

I have said for a long time that the SDA and the Catholic have more in common than they would like to admit. Someone posted that the Catholic friend said the Catholic has Mary and the SDA has Ellen. I came to that conclusion a long time ago. The name of EG White is mentioned more times in the SDA church than the name of Jesus. I believe this veneration of her borders on idolatry.

---

Editor
1 day ago Reply

On behalf of Atoday, apologies to all for the posting difficulties this weekend. It appears we have an unexpected error appear which is preventing instant appearance of each post. Clicking multiple times creates multiple posts. Please don't feel bad, it's our problem, not yours. This will be corrected as soon as possible and thanks for your understanding.

You do not have sufficient permissions to post a comment.
When Men Become Gods

Submitted Jun 24, 2011
By Ron Spencer

*When Men Become Gods*, the tragic, true story of the polygamist Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints’ contemporary prophet Warren Jeffs, may seem like arcane reading; yet, for those who have ever been part of, or seek to reach out to, Adventist offshoot communities, this book is instructive and recommended.

*When Men Become Gods* does not look at Adventist offshoots specifically, but at the analogous creation of the Fundamentalist Church of the Latter Day Saints, the offshoot of mainstream Mormonism centered on the border between Arizona and Utah (the twin towns of Colorado City, Arizona, and Hildale, Utah). As with most Adventist offshoots, the Fundamentalist Mormons claim to seek a pathway back to the earliest days of their own founding prophet’s uncontaminated belief system, which in the case of Mormon founder Joseph Smith, featured households with multiple wives.

Jeffs, the central figure of this book, took total command of this group after the death of his father about 11 years ago, and accelerated the process and urgency of forcing adolescent girls to marry older men as plural wives—a practice that destabilized the community and eventually led to Jeff’s appearing on the FBI’s most-wanted list and his incarceration and conviction on rape-related charges, in 2007.

The book illustrates the importance of even one person stepping forward and courageously confronting evil where it exists. Without the courage of one young wife, as told here, Jeffs would still be a free man, escalating his control and destroying thousands of lives, not only of women, but of the younger men who were denied marriage partners because of the perceived importance of first accommodating the harems of Fundamentalist patriarchs.

The analogy to Adventism is by no means far-fetched (though the central doctrine in play is different). The incidence of offshoot Adventist persuasions and communities is higher than many imagine, and in one small Northwest community, at least seven different so-called “independent ministries” coexist (and from time to time fight bitterly).

In another town, a former Adventist minister became impressed that he, himself, was God, and quite recently was arrested for cohabiting with his own adolescent daughter (and other women), as man and wife. In an expression of even more deadly deviance, a cult leader from an Adventist background a few years ago declared himself God and ordered his daughters to execute a presumed enemy of the ministry—an order they obeyed. Many offshoots are relatively harmless, but can
become disruptive and even lethal under the wrong leader. This book helps identify the warning signals and psychological processes that come into play when a particularly unstable leader takes the helm of such a group.

Saint Martin’s Press Griffin, 2009

Summary: *When Men Become Gods* is an instructive book for those concerned about the process whereby leaders of contemporary apocalyptic movements use a call to idyllic fundamentalism as a lever to force absolute, cultic compliance among the faithful. The Adventist reader will find the parallels between this book’s narrative and prominent Adventist offshoots instructive.

There are no comments.
Resignation of Four at La Sierra University - June 14

Submitted Jun 14, 2011

Special Report: General Conference and Adventist Today In Possession of La Sierra University Recording

Ervin Taylor

The General Conference of SDAs has received a copy of a recording of a presentation by General Conference and Union Conference officials to members of the LSU Faculty. Following that presentation, the conversation of four individuals, three of whom have resigned from their LSU administrative and faculty positions and the fourth, who resigned from the LSU Board of Trustees, was also recorded. Adventist Today has received what appears to be an accurate copy of that entire recording which is in the hands of General Conference officials. We understand that there are other copies in existence.

Adventist Today is currently having that recording transcribed into text to be able to evaluate in detail the statements of the GC and Union Conference officials and former LSU administrators, faculty, and board member to determine the substance of what could have required their resignations.

As soon as the transcription of the text is completed, Adventist Today will make a determination of how to report on the GC and Union conference officials’ statements.

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From La Sierra University campus-wide email distribution
Sunday, June 12, 2011

The president and the provost of La Sierra University regret to announce the resignations of four members of our university family.

On Friday, June 10, Board Chair Ricardo Graham requested the resignations of Dr. Jeff Kaatz from his position as Vice President for University Advancement, Dr. Jim Beach from his position as Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences, Dr. Gary Bradley from his part-time faculty position in the Biology Department, and Mr. Lenny Darnell from the Board of Trustees.

These resignations have been accepted and are effective immediately. Campus administration is unable, at this time, to offer any additional details regarding the decisions of these individuals. Further information will be made available as appropriate.

We invite you to keep our campus in your prayers as we move through this difficult time for the university.

——

Monday, June 13, 2011

Last night you received notification of the resignations of four campus leaders. Already we have heard reports of a great deal of speculation taking place on campus and on the internet.

Please understand these resignations have no connection to the biology controversy. There is also no connection with students.

La Sierra University’s President and Provost learned of the situation Friday afternoon. Since then, the administration continues to deal with the matter fully in accordance with internal University policies and our commitment as a Seventh-day Adventist University.

Further information will be made available as appropriate.

University administration requests that as you speak with students, you communicate the above information. Please note, too, that university policies are being carefully followed. The university is committed to ensuring that students have a successful final week and an outstanding graduation weekend.

We encourage each of you to keep our campus family and our students in your prayers.

Larry Becker
La Sierra University  |  Executive Director, University Relations
Fixing Adventists and Homosexuals

Submitted Jun 24, 2011
By John McLarty

Recently I saw part of an interview with a psychiatrist who was discussing Christian “reparative therapy” for homosexuals. Reparative therapy is an attempt to change people's sexual orientation from homosexual to heterosexual using various spiritual and psychological resources. The interviewer asked the psychiatrist how effective reparative therapy was. How many homosexuals get “fixed.” The psychiatrist said, “About four percent.” It's a measure of effectiveness fairly broadly reported by Christian and non-Christian investigators.

Christian tradition strongly favors heterosexual orientation. So it is natural for Christians to latch onto the promises of change held out by reparative therapy. We want people fixed. But given the abysmal success rate, is it righteous to urge people to engage in a process that is highly likely to fail? What is our responsibility to people who have employed every imaginable resource for change and found those resources insufficient? Is right to condemn them? How do we help deal with the despair their (predictable) failure is bound to induce? What responsibility do we bear for the domestic wreckage that results when homosexuals marry thinking they are “fixed” only to discover later, it ain't so.

Hope is valuable, but deliberately offering false hope is immoral. Telling people they can and must change when, in fact, that change is out of reach for 95 percent of people who attempt it is cruel. Maybe it would be more in harmony with God if we quit insisting people be something they cannot be.

Which gets me to thinking about the abysmal success rate of “reparative therapy” for Adventists. Revivalists and week-of-prayer speakers urge Adventists to change. We must “perfectly reproduce” Christ's character. We need to “finish the work.” We need to pray and read our Bibles more. We need to eat healthier food and smaller quantities. We need to be more generous, more self-controlled, more orthodox. Unfortunately, it appears the Adventist success rate for change is about the same as homosexuals. Just like reparative therapies for homosexuals, the Adventist change ministry draws on the classic spiritual resources of Bible and prayer and community, disciplining the mind and the work of the Holy Spirit. Still we fail 95 percent of the time, and have been failing for a very long time.

In 1893 Ellen White wrote, "It is a solemn statement that I make to the church, that not one in twenty whose names are registered upon the church books are prepared to close their earthly history, and would be as verily without God and without hope in the world as the common sinner" (GCDB, February 4, 1893 par. 9). To paraphrase: The church's success rate was less than five percent.

Perhaps one might argue this was late in the development of the church—by 1893 James White had been dead for 12 years. Surely things were better when the church was younger, purer, closer to its pioneer roots. Maybe. In 1867, EGW wrote, "Names are registered upon the church-books upon earth, but not in
the book of life. I saw that there is not one in twenty of the youth who knows what experimental religion is. They serve themselves, and yet profess to be servants of Christ; but unless the spell which is upon them be broken, they will soon realize that the portion of the transgressor is theirs" (1T504, repeated in MYP 384). To put it in contemporary English: in 1867 the Adventist effort to transform youth was successful in less than five percent of the cases. Our failure rate was 95 percent!

Arguing that we need to get serious about seeking the Holy Spirit or engaging in various practices, disciplines, and programs advocated by revivialists appears to me to be blind or cruel. Blind if we don't realize that Adventists have been seriously pursuing holiness for over a hundred and fifty years. Cruel, if knowing the failure rate, we continue to urge people to throw themselves wholeheartedly into a doomed endeavor.

Given our history of failure despite endless revivals and weeks-of-prayer, maybe it's time to quit insisting that people meet impossible standards. Maybe it's time to begin loving each other the way we are. Let's honor the five percent who can achieve the change. Let's love the 95 percent of us who can't. And by “love” I don't mean tolerate. I mean regard with affection and admiration. I mean welcome with open arms and open heart.

It is vital that we advocate ideals that are so lofty they remain out of reach. They give us something to reach for. But standards, the minimum acceptable levels of performance, must be well within the reach of at least 80 percent of our members.

It is time to quit beating our people with impossible standards. It's time to unabashedly embrace as fully worthy and honorable members, people who perform at the 80th percentile or maybe only at the 60th or 45th percentile. We do not lower our ideals to the performance level of our people, but our standards must be realistic. Our standards must be in touch with what people can accomplish with aid of the resources God has placed in his church.

To push it a bit further. If we see the church as God's creation, it seems unbelievable that God would design a system with a 95 percent failure rate. If we argue that the failure is not in God's planning but in the human implementation, we are back to the same problem. God has placed salvation in the care of a system that is so susceptible that it can be deranged by predictable human variation. If that is true, what was God thinking?

I think better of God than that. I don't think he looks at his church as a 95 percent failure. I believe he regards the ordinary people of God with affection. He is not wringing his hands in agitated frustration because hardly any one is getting it right. God is pleased with his people. Does he have plans for growth, for change in good directions? Sure. But these plans for growth and change do not drive him to the endless condemnation of ordinary people that is common among Adventists and other Christians. Rather when God looks at his people he sees his future companions, the company that will spend eternity with him on the throne.

God is going to enjoy this future with ordinary Adventists, the people who show up in church week after week to teach kids, sing, listen to sermons, fraternize. God is happy to see them. They're good enough for him.
L. Humberto Covarrubias

"...it's time to quit insisting that people meet impossible standards. Maybe it's time to begin loving each other the way we are. Let's honor the five percent who can achieve the change. Let's love the 95 percent of us who can't. And by “love” I don't mean tolerate. I mean regard with affection and admiration. I mean welcome with open arms and open heart."

Are you not having, like all the other ordinary pastors, the same approach that will only give 5% positive response for change?

Perhaps heeding EGW's "God Made Manifest" statement where she clarifies that the only way we will be set right and kept right will be through the knowledge of the manifested character of God.

So lets focus on God, not on ourselves, but on how He is, how He runs His universe, how does He behave, and, by unconscious identification with Him, we'll be restored to be like Him. "By beholding we are changed" -homosexual, heterosexual, adventist, self-centered, or otherwise.

Humberto

Elaine Nelson

How many of us have sat through innumerable altar calls, softly singing "Just as I Am"? Did no one believe that but were simply mouthing the words? We tell new converts that Jesus will take us just as we are, but once in the club, they find there are innumerable hoops to jump: eating right and no alcohol, coffee, tea and no meat. Remove all jewelry, no makeup, modesty in dress (women only), guard the edges of the Sabbath, and never, ever, work on Sabbath except: "necessary work for the good of mankind" (carefully interpreted).

With all the varied instructions it is a wonder that so many sign themselves up for such deprivation with what benefits? Oh yes, great rewards but ONLY if one becomes sinless before death or translation, whichever comes first.

What would the preachers have for topics if not the perfection required of Adventists? Why would any homosexual even want to continue in a church which regards him as defiled, sinful, and degraded? It should be criminal to point any such person to "reparative therapy" with such poor results; results that do not "cure" but make the victim have more self-hatred because of lack of "success."

How many pastors and denominational employees have sons and daughters and close relatives or friends who are gay? How should these children feel, knowing that their orientation is despised among their fellow church members, folks they may have known all their lives? To be rejected is to invite depression, even suicide, and this is the legacy the church has given them.

Jim Miller

In the 19th century the SDA movement began with our founders dismantling almost every part of the
Christian heritage to see which parts were Biblical. Then they put it back together, letting the Bible shape our teachings. That is what made us so unique. But it was not every part of our heritage, it was almost every part. They did not study Biblical sexuality. At the time they probably were not able to give sexuality a full and fair treatment. It is time we did with Biblical sexuality what they did with our other teachings.

Can we actually do it? Our denominational structures are probably too political to support a completely open discussion, but we desperately need one. We cannot resolve homosexuality without dealing with the full range of human sexuality and its Biblical treatments. And as an international church we must deal with other issues such as polygamy (Practicing the kind of spin some use on Leviticus 18:18 won't cut it. Let's do it right.).

If we do it there will be fireworks -- and attacks, vicious attacks. But I think it must be done.

Timo Onjukka 1 day ago Reply

Jim, you touch on core point. Considering first simple chronology of garden events, and realizing God instituted, sanctified and made holy the one-flesh covenant as the FIRST specific blessing given directly to man, we might actually avoid the divergence of sexuality and spirituality. The second blessing? That's the relational celebration (or honeymoon, Sabbath). I wonder if Adam knew what he was saying when he said "i will leave...and cleave ( my suggested inference; forever faithful, with one).

Seems we've taken both counterfeits, beginning with "deification" of sexuality, vis-a-vis the fertility cults (centuries before birth of Judaism, includes Sumerian Inanna, Baal, Molech, Ashtoreth, among others, many corroborated non-canonically as well). Just HAVING sex, one BECAME a god... even Jewish history includes temple prostitutes. And what exactly were they doing under said golden calf? Scripture speaks of God's displeasure that the Jews adopted these pagan practices over and over, down through the annals of history. True spirituality and sexuality diverged, when the ritual was practiced, as if it were the actual. Do not confuse metaphor with what it points to!

Queen Semiramis (Nimrods widow, post-Babel) brought in the other counterfeit by making up a fable of how she got pregnant and subsequently gave birth to a son who she claimed was the "promised seed", Tamuz. She claimed he was the result of "virgin birth, immaculate conception, beginning an intricate deception which has woven itself into our very culture and calendar and churches. Human sexuality then began to be "defiled", or turned into a curse (instead of what was Divine intentioned as first blessing; a "daily-palpable living breathing parable" or metaphor-plus much more, including man's procreative role-) Gods gift handily became a curse...and the spirituality aspect was still lost. Not lost is some credible suggestions that male castrations began to be first practiced at her behest.

Generally speaking, we now have a seeming schizophrenic world view of sexuality, one that permits sexuality to permeate all areas of life (and marketing, particularly), but also has strong negative puritanical and moralistic laws prohibiting it. Open and flagrant coupled with forced repression, playing on the strongest drive in humanity. Seems like a perfect attack on God's children.

Our own church, perhaps by failure by default, promotes some of this by not discussing the historic and scriptural principles, instead focusing on a legalistic and fundamental narrow view specifically prohibited activities (same-sex contact, bestiality, "onanism" and adultery-with its own various definitions-) and de-facto adopting a "don't ask/don't tell, wait till you get married then its all good and
"holy and undefiled" mentality.

That God would FIRST give Adam the one-flesh covenant, and that this one topic is hands-down the number one issue that has caused more human pain than ever (satan attacked it FIRST because he perhaps knew what God intended to teach His children about Himself, if we would just connect the dots) suggests we SHOULD examine this with a different view than how we have.

Elaine Nelson

Well, why not start with the beautiful and very vivid portrayal of love in the Song of Solomon? It is a celebration of human sexuality, and something that EGW did not advocate. Rather, she warned wives to do nothing that would "excite the animal passions of their husbands." And like Paul, who said "it is better to marry than burn," the only celebration of sexual love is in the Song of Songs.

Anita Douglas

The whole debate on homosexuality will continue. I would like to know what is the purpose of the gospel. What does the word repent means. It is a change in behaviour. If a person is a pedophile, a maniac who is murdering people would we condone the behaviour. I think it is time for the church to take a stand. The gospel was never a popular message and will never be. God says WOE TO THOSE THAT CALL EVIL GOOD AND GOOD EVIL. It does not matter what people think or believe but what God says. As a member of the SDA church I would hope that church will take a stand. But it seems that for years the church has been playing games and not calling a spade a spade. Sexual love between two people of the same sex is not what God ordained. We can argue this until the cows come home. Two people of the same sex cannot procreate. This would be the end of society as we see. God told Adam and Eve to multiply. It is sad that people's value system is all messed up. God knew that the time would come when people would be PARADING THEIR SIN LIKE SODOM. I will continue to BELIEVE what the word of God says. Whatever was right in bible times WILL always be right no matter what age we live in. The female turtle has indentation in their back for the male turtle. The female animals God made have the area allocated for their male counterparts. Homosexuality is filthy. God knew why he made that particular area for its surely was not for sexual pleasure.

William Noel

John,

Amen and hallelujah! I totally agree that it is time to stop beating people up with impossible standards and started experiencing the real power of the Gospel. I beat myself up for a lot of years seeking the victory that people demanded but God never required as a prerequisite for salvation.

We could all take a lesson from Paul's temptation in 2 Corinthians 12 where Paul declares that he was given "a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of satan, to torment me." The result of that "thorn in the flesh" was that it prevented him from becoming conceited. God used that "thorn" to keep Paul ever-aware of his weakness and need to remain in a close relationship with Him. By doing that God turned a curse into
a blessing.

Paul's declaration is a paradox to those who want to condemn others because of some particular sin they see, or who strive to become perfect in this life. I can testify of God's power in my life in this regard because I have struggled with a particular challenge in my life for as long as I can remember. I cannot tell you how many times I have begged God to take it away from me, but He did not. As with Paul, his repeated answer was "my grace is sufficient for you." Realizing He was using it to make me aware of my weakness and need of Him presented me with a choice: abandon faith because He was not giving me the "victory" so many in the church declared was essential if I was to be saved, or embrace the grace He was offering and find peace in God's assurance of salvation. Choosing the latter option opened me to becoming a willing servant of the Holy Spirit with the result that I now have an empowered ministry that is building the church and bringing people into a saving relationship with God. Will God ever give me victory over that weakness? I have no idea and, to be honest, I no longer care if He does. Why? Because I've learned that what is an issue to some people is not an issue to God, that His power and love reach past my weakness and our relationship is teaching me things I might never have learned otherwise.

Elaine Nelson

We each have more than enough sins in our own lives to be concerned with "OPS" (other people's sins).

There is no need to worry about people's choice for marriage or whether they should marry. Everyone will not choose a same-sex partner, so no worry about future generations. Neither will some folks choose to marry, and so never procreate. That is not God's worry and shouldn't be ours.

Marriage is not solely for procreation, otherwise, all older couples past fertility should remain single. Parenthood should always be a choice and no one should either dictate another's mate or their choice to bear children or not.

What kind of world would there be if everyone chose other's people's mates or all the other personal choices that God, in giving us free will, has offered us? To say that God didn't design homosexuality is to forget that he didn't design for there to ever be babies born with both physical or mental deformities. God loves each and every one of his children and has never condemned their orientation, which the Bible never mentions.

Anita Douglas

Christians must not condemn but we must call sin for what it is why did Christ die so that we can do as we please. Marriage is not only for procreation I agree that is a fact but it was not designed for two men and two women. We can argue from now until eternity. Don't you know that the sexual sin that the bible calls an ABOMINATION is sodomy (homosexuality) Are you equating homosexuality with mental and physical deformities...LOL. The deformed person has no choice, but those who WANT this alternate lifestyle..CHOOSE it for themselves. My grandmother would say to you lady, what else are you saying besides nothing. If you are a member of the SDA church and this is your thinking, I am not surprised, since many SDA's are more concerned about not eating pork, drinking coke, and eating vegan foods BUT
when it comes to moral issues, they seem to have clouded vision. I love all people gays as well as straight. BUT I want to see them changed and glorify God in their bodies. " (The gospel is an everlasting gospel. Though all flesh is grass, the word of the Lord endures for ever. The gospel is the great means by which men are brought to FEAR God and GIVE GLORY to Him."(Matthew Henry's Commentary)

I hope we all know that our bodies is GOD'S TEMPLE. How we use it tell God so much about how we view him.

Elaine Nelson

It is only YOUR body for which you are responsible, and no one else. Keep that in mind. God will condemn those he chooses, we have not been given that job.

Do you condemn everyone you see smoking or drinking, or using coffee, or their choice of friends? Who gave you that authority? God said "Judge not, lest you be judged." That is also biblical.

Anita Douglas

(The gospel is an everlasting gospel. Though all flesh is grass, the word of the Lord endures for ever. The gospel is the great means by which men are brought to FEAR God and GIVE GLORY to Him."(Matthew Henry's Commentary)

Anita Douglas

I am not gay so I do not have to be defensive when it comes to this issue. Whatever God hate we must hate. What is your definition of sin.

"Do you condemn everyone you see smoking or drinking, or using coffee, or their choice of friends? Who gave you that authority? God said "Judge not, lest you be judged." That is also biblical. I DO NOT CONDEMN I JUST CALL IT FOR WHAT IT IS, IT DESTROYS A PERSON'S HEALTH.

Claremont Dave

In the absence of any reliable evidence that homosexuality is a choice in any way, Let God be responsible for what he has created. Our only task is to exhibit Christ's loving tolerance. The Christian
message of freedom should be broad enough for each of us to limit our criticism to our own mistakes.

Timo Onjukka

Although the premise of the article was not arguing the morality of "homosexualism" I'll comment on that with a question.
Is it possible that the admonishment to 'not go into "zanah"',
against fornication, against adultery, against homosexuality,
against "onanism" is not just about these specific behaviors at all, but about broader and deeper principle?

IS it possible God meant "do not use this gift I blessed and have given you as a means of selfishly receiving, but of only giving, and only to your spouse"? Is it possible that ANY behavior (even, or maybe ESPECIALLY within marriage) whereby we prediate our pleasure as something another must confer to us (and not a blessing we GIVE) have we gone into "zanah"? In Hebrew the word means literally "whoring". Exchanging limitless passion for six-seconds selfish glory seems a poor exchange rate... particularly if it also is "a sin against self" (as well against the "object" of our gratification, AND God's divine intent). Using this first gift in selfish way, in any iteration, whether homosexual or hetero seems to me to be more the point.

Romans is quite clear that jealousy and strife are classed with licentious sexuality...no distinction.
Secondly, what shall we do with the 10% or so segment of the population who is homosexual?

Jim Miller

In the next quarterly we will study about Conformity, Compromise and Crisis in Worship (lesson 8). It will include Elijah and the Prophets of Baal -- but no where will the lesson deal with the fact that Elijah, who as far as I know was not even a Levite, much less a priest, will rebuild an altar far from the one true place of worship -- Jerusalem, and there prepare a sacrifice which God will honor, in spite of the several things wrong with that sacrifice.
And throughout the Old Testament, we will see sexual situations which depart significantly from the Eden ideal, yet are apparently sanctioned and blessed by God.
And then we get to the New Testament where many of the rules and ideals will change. And we go on assuming that 1950's American values encompass the totality of acceptable Biblical sexuality. In the Bible God repeatedly works with what He has, even if it is far, far from ideal. Do we?

Editor

On behalf of Atoday, apologies to all for the posting difficulties this weekend. It appears we have an unexpected error appear which is preventing instant appearance of each post. Clicking multiple times creates multiple posts. Please don't feel bad, it's our problem, not yours. This will be corrected as soon as possible and thanks for your understanding.
Welcome to the Viewpoints Interview series on Peace, Justice and Righteousness. An interview series presented by Adventist Today (partnership between AToday and Adventist Activism.)

Douglas Morgan is professor of history at Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Maryland, where he has been a member of the faculty since 1994. Since 2002 he has led the Adventist Peace Fellowship (www.adventistpeace.org), which published The Peacemaking Remnant, a collection of essays and historical documents in 2005. He is author of Lewis C. Sheafe: Apostle to Black America (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2010) and Adventism and the American Republic (University of Tennessee Press, 2001). A graduate of Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska, Morgan earned a PhD in the history of Christianity at the University of Chicago in 1992.

Jeff Boyd: You recently participated in Walla Walla University’s Peace Weekend. Can you briefly tell me about this event and how it fits into the GC’s declaration on peace education?

Doug Morgan: Part of why this is very encouraging to me is that it was an instance of the denominational system working. This was based on this statement of 2002—A Seventh-day Adventists Call for Peace. They included urging schools to set aside a week to emphasize peacemaking, nonviolence, conflict resolution, and so forth. And this is what Pedrito Maynard-Reid--Assistant to the President for Diversity, Ombudsman, and theology faculty—[used to advocate for this weekend].

There was a showing of the film about Desmond Doss,¹ a panel specifically on the issues of military service and nonviolence, also a couple events related to the environment and an excellent presentation by Greg Dobbs, a historian there, on the history of how wars have been justified. They’re planning to do it again next year.

JB: And what was your role?

DM: They had a panel on the book Peacemaking Remnant, which I edited. I gave about a 40-minute talk, and then a panel gave responses. Then there was a discussion, questions raised from the floor.

JB: You were instrumental in founding Adventist Peace Fellowship with Ron Osborn and others. What motivated you to form this organization? What activities has APF pursued?

DM: Ron and I were working in close proximity at what was then Columbia Union College, now
Washington Adventist University, and we both had a long-standing interest in how peacemaking and social justice relate to our Christian faith, our Adventist faith.

I think it was the atmosphere following the [9/11] attacks and the war on terror and the build up to the war in Iraq that was a stimulus for us to take it a little further. It started off as a discussion group there at CUC and the surrounding community. We read John Howard Yoder’s *The Politics of Jesus*. I think in 2002 we decided to reach out to people who were on other campuses, the circles we were already familiar with.

As the mission crystallized, it seemed we could be kind of a hub to help Adventists be aware of what other Adventists are doing and saying, to stimulate interest in peace and peacemaking. But also to connect Adventist with what other people are doing. So we became part of the [Christian Peace Witness](http://www.christianpeacewitness.org) and the [National Religious Campaign Against Torture](http://www.nrcat.org).

I’ve been the principle editor of the [website](http://www.atoday.org). The website has a set of historic documents, and it has links to organizations and current campaigns that groups are involved with. The [Peace Messenger](http://www.peacemessenger.org) blog is the more dynamic presence, where we try to keep up with what is happening currently. Also, Johnny Ramirez put us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Peace-Messenger/191285694112584).

**JB: Turning to Adventist history: During the Civil War, the young Adventist church supported the position of the Union against secession and slavery, yet two church members were disfellowshipped for joining Union forces. Why did Ellen White and others forbid participation?**

**DM:** It was quite a process. There was a lively discussion in the pages of the *Review and Herald*. The early Seventh-day Adventists were coming out of a religious and social culture—the radical concept of living under God’s government. Our familiar denominational passages that we use in very distinct meanings, I’ve come to discover that they were common place, not exactly with the same meanings that eventually the Seventh-day Adventists put on them—passages like “Come out of her my people,” and “Come out of Babylon,” and the commitment to God’s law. And that meant that killing other human beings was contrary not only to the sixth commandment, but of the teachings of Jesus.

They wanted to be very clear that there was no sympathy with the Confederacy, and certainly none for slavery, in fact a very sharp outspoken opposition to slavery. They did not want to be perceived as not enthusiastic about the Union cause, so they were reluctant to come charging out early on and say, “Okay, we’re pacifists. We will not serve.” But eventually it came to the point where only those who were recognized by the government as part of a pacifist church who had objection to military service as a key principle would be able to take advantage of the exemption to military service.

It became necessary to make a public stand as being a church of people who could not in good conscience engage in military combat. As a small group feeling somewhat vulnerable, on the margins of society, they hadn’t wanted to draw attention to themselves as dissenters. In the material presented to the government military officials to get recognition as conscientious objectors, explicit parallels were made with the Quakers, that our convictions are similar to them in this regard. But having done that, if you’re not going to be serious about it, then you’re opening yourself up to some real scrutiny and questions. In other words, why were they so severe on a couple of folk who did
engage in combat in the war? It’s because I think they wanted to show that this is serious business, that we really believe this. In fact, James White and Uriah Smith swore affidavits that we’ve always believed the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus mean that we cannot bear arms. If your people turn around and do it, then they felt they had to show that they’re out of harmony with the stand we’ve come to as a church.

**JB: Forming a church during the Civil War must have been difficult.**

**DM:** Right, the denomination is coming into being as an organization right in the midst of this Civil War, having to hammer out a position. It wasn’t a major point of emphasis, but this orientation to pacifism was there, although the particulars were debated. There was a range of positions as to what you do when the government is going to try to impose military service on you. It was really a consensus that somehow we need to stand for the law of God, but exactly how to go about that was debated for a while.

**JB: During WWII, many Mennonite and Quaker conscientious objectors (COs) worked in Civilian Public Service camps rather than participate in military operations. What led more Adventists to participate in non-combatant roles rather than to work in these camps?**

**DM:** The distinction between Quakers as conscientious objectors and the Adventists as “conscientious cooperator” or non-combatants, that is something that came out of this period between the world wars and then WWII and beyond.

There was a debate within Adventism after WWI as to what our stance should be. There was wide-spread recognition that the turmoil in Europe is not over and that very likely there would be another war. What stance shall we take? There was a strong move in American Christianity, in part as kind of a revulsion against the ultra-religious nationalism that was engaged in once the U.S. got into WWI. After the war, a lot of people began to step back, and there was a strong peace movement in the churches.

Some Adventists felt that that we ought to go that direction and be more true to our heritage. But others felt that we should go as far as possible in showing our cooperation and support for the military endeavors of the nation. It was really more a matter of emphasis than an absolute conflict—one side emphasizing more the commitment to peace and the other side emphasizing more that we want as individuals to be commandment keepers, but beyond that we’re not going to make any critique as to war-making between the nations. The approach that won out and became the dominant one was to be “conscientious cooperators.” It was not an official term. It was still officially conscientious objection, but that we will serve in the military, we’ll proudly wear the uniform. We’re not anti-war protesters, but we do have our individual ethical scruples that we’d like to follow.

Some served in the Medical Cadet Corp that the church developed between the wars to help Adventists who were to be drafted to be both good non-combatant military personal but also faithful to their Adventist principles in the army. The concept is a genuine commitment of faith. The purpose of this was to help us to be a healing presence, at least in our own way bring positive influences of peacemaking in the broad sense of healing and wholeness in a difficult situation. People are suffering and they need help.

There was this differentiation between the Adventist approach and that which typified what became
known as the peace churches—Mennonite, Quaker, and so forth—in terms of them tending to go more for civilian work camp alternative service as opposed to non-combatant military service. Granted that differentiation, there’s a range in Adventism that became manifest again in the Vietnam era where you have some Adventists coming out and saying that on the basis of our faith we don’t feel that we can participate in the military. At the same time, I think that Mennonites also find that in their churches a pro-militaristic mentality along with individuals not violating our individual scruples. Both in Adventism and in the peace churches, there’s actually quite a spectrum.

**JB: Were any Adventists in the WWII Civilian Public Service Camps?**

**DM: I don’t know in the United States, but in Canada…Barry Bussey has been working on a project. He has a documentary film, which has not been finalized or released yet, on Canadian Adventist conscientious objectors.** Their situation was a bit different in terms of the range of options they faced. There, Adventists were pretty much together with the Mennonites, Quakers, and the Brethren.

**JB: What was the mental paradigm that shaped this Adventist response?**

**DM: Part of the Adventist heritage, and something that is there in the writings of Ellen White, is a really strong impulse to avoid conflict with the government. Although it’s clear from the early documents that strong scriptural pacifism was very important to the founders of Adventism, it was not nurtured as a central defining feature in the same way as with the Mennonites and the Quakers.**

The impulse to be viewed as good citizens not dissidents and at the same time the commitment to keeping the commandments of God were both there in Adventism, the commandment keeping as applied to not taking human life and that warfare is sinful. Both of those were there, but in this critical period between the wars that impulse to be responsible contributors and supporters of what the government is doing got greater emphasis; that became the overriding concern while the other was still there, but muted, especially when it came to any kind of critique of warfare between the nations.

**JB: Besides the change in our willingness to critique governments, what other changes have occurred over the past 150 years?**

**DM: In 19th century Adventism, there was much greater outspokenness of sin at a societal even national level. It doesn’t mean Adventists were ever what we would call Social Gospel in terms of that whole movement, but the differentiation somehow came in that when we get beyond WWI into the 20s and 30s and beyond, we somehow bracketed out sin in social order, that we’re not going to speak about that. The individual realm is where the locus of sin is going to be. Slavery would be the most obvious example, but then when we come to the era of the Spanish-American war, and the major transition point for the U.S. to project power in the world, then again we find Adventists very forthright in saying this is national apostasy.**

An example rounding that point out would be that when we come to the civil rights movement in the 50s and the 60s, now we find the church saying that a good Adventist will not be agitating on that issue, whereas a hundred years before, the church publications had just been very outspoken and brought the church’s apocalyptic message to bear on the slaveocracy as at least one writer, J. H. Waggoner referred to the nation.
Part of what has changed is that we have become more conscience of having some responsibility to the community, to be respectable citizens, to be making a positive contribution to the nation. All of that can be good, certainly has to be there if we’re going to make our faith socially relevant, to be loving our neighbors and so forth, but something that to a certain extent has come with that can lead us to be more in the role of blessing and supporting what our nation is doing, losing the prophetic-critical perspective that we once had.

I think part of the motivation for military chaplaincy, for example, comes out of a very admirable effort to say that we’re not going to be these cranky separatists denouncing the rest of society, but we’re going to get involved and be a supportive and positive presence. We’re going to be willing to go beyond our own denominational lines. But there is that concomitant danger of losing the value we see in our early Adventist witness against evils that are being underwritten and perpetrated by our government and lose the capacity to raise a Christian witness against that.

**JB: What about the shift in Adventism regarding combat duty?**

**DM:** We should clarify that the favored position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is non-combatancy, so the church does not officially regard participation in military combat as the best choice.

I think the Civil War was the only time we disfellowshiped people for going into the military. The clear denominational default position in the early mid-20th century certainly into the WWI Korean War era was the non-combatant service. But we had not engaged in disowning Adventists who did serve in combat roles.

In the Vietnam era, the church decides to broaden out a little bit. There was a statement in 1969 and another one in 1972 saying essentially while we favor the non-combatant approach, we recognize that some Adventists’ conscientious conviction is pacifism, to not go with the military service at all, and also to recognize that some Adventists may conscientiously choose to engage in combat. By this time, Adventists have established enough of a track record in American society that we could feel in a position to take this more ambiguous position to say. Back in the Civil War, I don’t think you had that luxury.

In WWII or the Korean War, eye-brows would probably be raised if you didn’t go the non-combatant direction. People would question or wonder about it. But that’s not there so much. And then also the military chaplaincy comes in which is all about, not being judgmental certainly, ministering to people who have chosen to go into combat.

The denomination’s position really has not changed, but reality has indeed changed. When the troop presence in Iraq was at approximately its highest level somewhere around 2006/2007 there was an estimate given in a write-up by the Adventist News Service [of 7,500 SDA combatants]. I haven’t heard anything since then.

**JB: What changes would you like to see in the Adventist community?**

**DM:** Somehow if we could draw on the strengths of our 19th century forebears in speaking out
against societal evil, and forthright prophetic messages of the Bible applied to the times. If we could somehow combine that with the commitment to serve, bring to bear on society the values of compassion, mercy and service, humanitarian fervor, if we could somehow bring those together.

That’s the challenge because community service can degenerate into blessing the status quo: We’re just going to be good people to help things keep going as they are—be likeable and accepted; help those in need. But that again can be just a way of blessing the status quo and not addressing things imbedded into our national societal life that need to have more of a critical perspective brought to them from a people of faith.

1 The Conscientious Objector (http://www.desmonddoss.com/)
2 Testimonies, Vol 1., p. 361.
3 Mennonite statistics from WWII support this concept of diversity of opinion and practice. “For Mennonites as a whole, in the final 1947 numbers, out of a total of 9,809 draftees, 4,536 or 46.2 percent opted for conscientious objection; whereas 3,876 or 39.5 percent, accepted full military service and 1,397 or 14.2 percent chose noncombatant service” (Perry Bush, Two Kingdoms, Two Loyalties; 1998, pp. 97-98).
4 For Conscience Sake (http://legal.sdacc.org/cos/)
Christian broadcaster sued in child-sex case

Pastor affiliated with southern Illinois network accused of abusing teen in 2001

By Manya A. Brachear, Tribune reporter

8:03 PM CDT, June 20, 2011

An international Christian radio and television network based in West Frankfort in southern Illinois and the brother of the network's founder were named in a federal child-sex-abuse lawsuit filed in Chicago on Monday.

Three Angels Broadcasting Network, or 3ABN, and the Rev. Tommy Shelton, the brother of the network's founder Danny Shelton, were named in the complaint filed by plaintiff Alex Walker, of Mattoon.

Walker, now 25, alleges that Tommy Shelton sexually abused him when he worked as a production assistant at 3ABN in 2001. Walker's lawyer, Jeff Herman, of Miami, said Shelton commuted to 3ABN from his home in Kentucky for the purpose of abusing Walker, which Herman believes makes the civil suit a federal case.

The suit accuses 3ABN of negligence, claiming leaders were aware of the threat Shelton posed to children.

In statement released by 3ABN, the network said Shelton had no reason to come into contact with Walker, who was closely supervised by Walker's older brother.

"3ABN does not believe that the claims against it have any merit," the statement said. "We intend to vigorously defend the good name of our organization."

Walker said he originally met Shelton in 1997 during a two-month visit to Virginia, where Shelton served as a pastor. Shelton now faces criminal charges in Virginia's Fairfax County tied to Walker's and another man's abuse allegations.

According to the civil suit filed Monday, Shelton, a pastor ordained by the Church of God, was suspended by that denomination in 1985 apparently after sexual abuse allegations against him surfaced. He continued to work for Ezra Church of God until the early 1990s.

Shortly after leaving, he started working a variety of jobs for 3ABN, the suit says, eventually moving to Virginia.
After Walker's brother married Shelton's daughter, he said, he visited the couple and Shelton in Virginia in 1997. Walker said Shelton abused him on bike rides behind the church where he worked during a two-month time period.

In 2001, Walker said his brother got him a part-time job in the production department of 3ABN in West Frankfort, where Shelton then worked. The abuse continued for a year, according to the suit.

In 2008, Walker went to law enforcement in Virginia, where there is no statute of limitations on sexual abuse allegations. Herman said they would report the allegations in Illinois to federal authorities.

The 3ABN network is affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. A Seventh-day Adventist group called Save-3ABN has created a website demanding transparency and accountability from the network. It has posted numerous letters and documents that indicate the network was aware of allegations against Shelton decades ago.

In response, the network has sued the group for defamation of character and trademark infringement.

"It's against our faith to lie," said Bob Pickle, one of the defendants in that lawsuit. "It's against our faith to molest children. The idea of no accountability has the potential for making my faith look bad."

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Church commissions independent report on JPG

23 Jun, 2011
By Rodney Brady

The Church has commissioned an independent report to review investment arrangements with the Johnson Property Group.

On May 26 the Australian Financial Review published a story claiming that the Seventh-day Adventist Church had “poured” money into a developer and that Johnson Property Group’s (JPG) survival depended on the ongoing support of the church. The article was inaccurate and misleading and a number of members have asked for further detail.

In an effort to provide transparency and confidence for church members, the South Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has requested Grant Thornton, an external auditing company, to prepare a report reviewing the key issues related to investments made with the Johnson Property Group (JPG).

“We recognise people’s concerns and interest regarding the Church’s investment and relationship with Keith Johnson and JPG. We believe an independent report will provide the transparency some members are requesting and can address any misconceptions in people’s minds about our investment program”, says Rod Brady, Chief Financial Officer for the South Pacific Division. “It should be noted by everyone that the process of company administration in which JPG is involved is complex. The Division has received legal and other professional advice recommending caution in relation to releasing information to avoid disrupting this administration process. We need to heed that advice, as difficult as that might be. The Church’s leadership team wants to provide as much clarity around these investments as possible”.

It is significant that the commissioning of the independent review and report for the SPD, due to be released at the end of August, coincided with the Deed of Company Arrangement executed on June 16. That deed now allows JPG to continue operating under the oversight of the administrator.

If you would like a copy of the report you are welcome to send your request with your postal address to The
Chief Financial Officer, South Pacific Division of the SDA Church, Locked Bag 2014, WAHROONGA 2076.

Responding to your concerns...

While there are commercial and confidentiality constraints on what can be stated publicly at this time we want to assure church members of the following:

1. The church has not “poured” money into or bankrolled the Johnson Property Group as claimed by the Australian Financial Review. At all times Church leaders have acted to ensure our investments are secure and provide the best possible return for the future.

2. The conservative and standard investment policies of the South Pacific Division have been adhered to.

3. The Church estate land at North Cooranbong and Wahroonga is not encumbered by a mortgage and is not at risk of being lost. JPG has invested its own time and funds to accomplish rezoning and other work done on the North Cooranbong land.

4. The church’s governing Board deems that adequate security for the contracts and Joint Venture agreements are in place and, at this time, no loss is expected from the administration process.

Investing for a Sustainable Future

The church in the South Pacific Division operates a number of investment funds with different investment objectives. It has always had a conservative investment policy that puts the protection of capital as the highest priority and this has served well during the extreme turmoil of the Global Financial Crisis (GFC). Investments are overseen by a Board and there has been no departure from the approved and standard investment policy. The church is listed as a secured creditor in the administration process for JPG. However, the details of what comprises that claim cannot be made public at this time due to the restrictions previously mentioned.

The Johnson Property Group has invested its own time and money as risk capital to successfully achieve rezoning outcomes on two of the Division’s key estates – Wahroonga and North Cooranbong. This outcome has been of enormous benefit to the church both in terms of adding value and being able to continue utilising the land for the use of the Church. A major expansion of Sydney Adventist Hospital has been made possible by this rezoning.

Due to the Global Financial Crisis banks have nearly completely frozen all lending to land developers and as a result many land developers have ceased business. Johnson Property Group is currently in the process of arranging other external finance in this difficult credit market with the aim of commencing development at North Cooranbong later in 2011.