Are We Both Needed? How simple life would be if we could stop 'staggering between two opinions' and all become either traditionalists or progressives. Kent Rufo says both sides are needed for the church to move forward.

The Fourth Commandment - Edited Edition: Lawrence Downing discusses a second edition of the Ten Commandments which contains a version of the fourth commandment that differs from Exodus 20. Consider the implications and risks involved for the one who revises a passage understood to have been written by the very finger of God.

How Faith has Confused Lots of Theology: Herb Douglass says a lot of the controversy in the Righteousness by Faith debate is bound up in how we interpret the word 'faith.' To understand the doctrine, you have to understand the word—especially the ways it was understood during the Reformation.

What Holy Ghost? In an age of science and cynicism, are Christians losing sight of the Holy Spirit? Has legalism or the writings of Ellen White taken the place of this mysterious Guide? Preston Foster ponders life without the Spirit.

Annoying Vegans: Adventism’s solid association with vegetarianism and veganism begs the question of how should we relate with the wide range of eating habits among members and visitors of our churches? Should we post little signs at potlucks? Adam Hendron, a vegan even before he became an Adventist, offers some wise counsel.

Senate Chaplain Implores God to Help in Debt Crisis: Seventh-day Adventist chaplain, Barry C. Black, was at the forefront last weekend in seeking God's blessing on discussions to raise the nation's debt ceiling. His oratory sometimes raised the roof, too! Discover how intercessory prayer wove its way through the gridlock.
Lawsuit Filed on Behalf of Three Forced to Resign at La Sierra University: Not surprisingly, two La Sierra University administrators and one teacher, who were forced to resign, now say their terminations did not follow state and university policy.

Additional reading of articles from last week ...

- Adventism’s Health Legacy to the World
- God’s Knot
- Adventist Teacher Accused of Molestation
- Rock the Casbah: Rage and Rebellion Across the Islamic World (Subscription needed)
Are We Both Needed?

Submitted Aug 2, 2011
By Kent Rufo

Growing up in northwest Ohio has given me a unique perspective concerning religion. Most of the northwest Ohio area-churches are considered “conservative”, while the largest church in the city is oftentimes seen by the other area-churches as the “liberal” church. This dynamic has created tension (almost a “hatred”) between the churches of NW Ohio. The majority of the small churches see the large church as “compromising” while that same church accuses the small churches as “legalistic”. Throughout my childhood I had attended both styles of churches and have heard the accusations thrown around by both sides. To reiterate the over-quoted Rodney King: “can’t we all just get along?”

I normally think it is dangerous to build a “theology” on one word but I believe that there is one word that has been misunderstood and, thus, created big problems within Judaism, Islam and Christianity. (We also get great insights by looking at original words like the Hebrew word Elohim: a plural word translated “God” and the variety of words for “love”, both in Hebrew and Greek) The English word is “one”, which is translated from the Hebrew word echad. This word has especially created controversy in the Biblical text of Deuteronomy 6:4 which states, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one”. The problem is that the English (western) idea of the word is numerical, hence, “one” is something singular in itself. This seems to create problems between certain religions on defining a “monotheist”. Certain Jews and Muslims consider Christians “polytheists”, stating that we believe that there are three gods. But the Hebrew idea is that NOTHING is really singular in itself. Everything is a unit of smaller components. Our body is a unit of organs, which are a unit of cells, which are a unit of atoms, which are a unit of subatomic particles, etc. Hebrew thought has no problem with this concept of plurality within the “singular”. For example both Elohim (God) and panim (face) are singular in English translation, yet are technically plural in the original.

The first time that echad is used is in the fifth verse of Genesis 1 which states in the King James “And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day” (italics supplied). There are two things to note in this verse. First of all, the word “first” is used instead of “one”. This is a wrong translation. There is a Hebrew word for “first” (rishon). In every other day of Creation the ordinal form (second, third, fourth, etc.) is used. But here the ordinal form (first) is not used, rather the numerical form (one). Could it be that the author is not numbering the day, rather he is defining a “day” stating that it is both an evening and a morning? Together they are “one day”. (Even the word echad is not used, this could be the same concept understood in Genesis 2:7 where a living being, singular, is comprised of both dirt and breath.) Secondly, this verse, along with others, seem to point out that the word echad is often used with two “opposites”, or at least “different”, being put together to make something whole.
(Compare Genesis 2:24—“one flesh”; Genesis 41:26—“one dream”; Genesis 11:1—“one words”, which is correct from the original) Here the opposites are “evening” and “morning”. One is lit by the sun and the other by the moon (yet not created until the 4th day). One is to start work and the other to put work to bed. People often love one and despise the other. (i.e. “morning person”) Some animals begin their day in the morning, while others like bats and owls begin theirs in the evening. Actually, both morning’s and evening’s purposes are to “end” the opposite: morning ends the night, while evening ends the daytime. They are different, yet are both needed to comprise one day. They seem to serve “opposite” purposes, yet they work together to perform the same function: to produce one day.

So back to our dilemma of “opposite” churches that are under the one Seventh-day Adventist umbrella. We’ve got the “traditional” churches and the “progressive” churches (note the intentional non-use of “conservative” and “liberal” due to the negative connotations that follow those words). They seem to serve two opposite functions. One adheres to a stricter adherence to laws and “traditions” (which are not inherently bad), while the other seems to shirk tradition to reach another type of person. Contrary to the belief of each other’s group, both groups want to be the most Biblical they can be and both want to reach people with the gospel for Jesus Christ. Most of the people in both groups sincerely want to serve the Lord. (Obviously I am speaking only from my personal experience) Here is the sad thing, there is so much energy wasted in “trashing” the other group, which actually has a negative effect by driving a larger wedge between these children of God. But is there a possibility that God is using both groups to serve different functions to achieve His greater purpose: bringing as many people the gospel as possible? Didn’t He do this in the Scriptures? To many of the Jewish converts to Christianity, Paul was seen as a “liberal”. Peter was considered the “conservative” apostle, but needed to be rebuked by Paul in the book of Galatians because he was siding with the Jewish converts over the Gentile converts. Was it possible that the Lord was using both Peter, a Jew through and through, along with Paul, one who was willing to become all things for all people?

If this is the purpose of God to use these different groups to serve His ultimate purpose then could we actually be going against the will of the Lord when we attack each other? Instead, should we follow the counsel of Gamaliel in Acts 5 “So in the present case, I say to you, stay away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or action is of men, it will be overthrown; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or else you may even be found fighting against God.” (verses 38, 39) So maybe our conclusion should be working together in serving different purposes to reach as many people for the gospel’s sake.

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Guidelines for Productive & Courteous Comments:

- This is the writer’s court & play – no upstaging please
- Stay on topic – don’t wander off chasing butterflies
- Be brief – no more than 3 modest paragraphs – if longer, you are too windy
- We ask you to be considerate & courteous – the golden rule, remember
- Absolutely no denigrating of individuals – to err, earns banishment
- Make this a stimulating encounter & come back often
Elaine Nelson 5 days ago

In some cities like mine Adventists can live compatibility with a number of churches. They each seem to attract members that offer the type of preaching and services they prefer. Some are more traditional, while others are more liberal (the one I attend) and don't make a big issue of unique SDA doctrines but seek to speak to Christians and the problems faced in the world today. Isn't this the purpose of religion--to be applicable to contemporary times? Fighting over esoteric doctrines that have little or no relevance to our lives today is a waste of time to sit in church and hear doctrines repeated ad infinitum.

Can anyone demonstrate how understanding the IJ will be effective on our lives today?

Can anyone demonstrate how living as a strict sabbatarian will demonstrate love for our neighbor?

There is no attempt to prioritize doctrines as important to our daily lives, and which ones are "need to know."

Steve Billiter 3 days ago

There really is no such thing as a "liberal" per se, and a "conservative." Actually, either we are converted or we are not. And things do change. I freely admit some years ago that I was a tare in the church. We got home from church, cranked up the ballgame, popped open the beers, and proceeded to forget it was the Sabbath. Eventually I left Christ and the church for a number of years and praise the LORD I became re-converted a few years ago. I consider myself blessed.

Now Elaine, the IJ is critically important. If you sin and ask forgiveness, (I do) being circumspect to remain in Christ with an assurance of salvation--Christ is now in the Most Holy completing the IJ and atoning for your sins and mine as we plead His blood.

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.
Heb_2:17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.
Heb_3:1 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

When Jesus makes the pronouncement, Rev 22:11 "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.
Then the sanctuary shall be totally cleansed of the sins of the saints, the Investigative Judgment has been completed with everyone who has ever claimed the name of Christ their cases decided for life or death and Jesus returns after the 7 last plagues are poured out and He brings His rewards with Him. The IJ is critically important for everyone who plans to live forever.
Keeping all the commandments and having the faith of Jesus exhibits the highest form of love to God and our neighbors. By our Sabbathkeeping examples, many will be brought to Christ and eternal life.

Gailon Arthur Joy

“Can’t we all just get along?”…the answer is a resounding “NO”!

The premise is propagated that God utilizes believers and non-believers to “evangelize” and this is a contradiction that ignores the history and the roots of “traditionalist” a/k/a Tea Party Seventh-day Adventists and “progressives” that abrogate the Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist FAITH.

In the late 60’s and early 70’s we saw an infection within the ranks brought by Brimsmead and Ford that virtually rejected the core foundational prophesy known as the 2300 days and it’s implications, then went further to build a basis for “strange fire” best described as “cheap grace”. This was quickly followed by the most insidious infestation of “academics” leavened by educations in world academia that brought “scientific apostasy” into the Educational System of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the concept of academic “tolerance” was born. The “progressives” with their catholic philosophies had their foothold and propagated their heresy with virtual impunity.

With tolerance firmly entrenched and the adoption of the “wisdom of man” came an end to “traditions” such as “lay activities”, “evangelistic campaigns”, “Dorcas”, “ingathering”, “colporteurs”, “college of medical evangelism”, “Southern Missionary College” and a host of other traditions grounded in the history and the Mission of the Church and we became “tolerant arm-chair Adventists” that purchased our mission efforts and sent our children to church funded but “academically independent” schools, academies, colleges and universities. And we tried to “just get along” and Lord forbid that anyone challenge APOSTASY.

This creeping compromise has so infected us that three “progressives” that adopted strange fire and clearly abrogate the foundations and the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Faith have found it their duty to sue the brethren, yet another abrogation of Faith… And to invite the intervention of an accrediting agency that seems to be determined to eliminate the fundamentals of Seventh-day Adventists belief from the curriculum of a Seventh-day Adventist educational institution funded with a combination of tithe and gifts from the stockholders in the pews. THIS MUST NOT GO UNCHALLENGED!

No, we cannot “just get along” lest we watch the Creeping Compromise gain such a broad foothold in the company of those who “Keep the Commandments of God and have the FAITH of Jesus Christ” that we all “Reap the Whirlwind” of apostasy. We are a “church militant” and we are to take arms against apostasy in all it’s forms. This is no time for compromise!!!

It is time for Seventh-day Adventists to “stand up, stand up for Jesus and hold the banner high”!!!
Gailon Arthur Joy, a TEA-PARTY Seventh-day Adventist

AUReporter

Steve Billiter

Galion we have to get along to some degree or outsiders take issue with divisions in Adventism and will cause them to stay away to some degree. At the same time we must stand on truth without compromise.

Jesus teaches that tares are planted in the church by Satan. They profess Christ but are in fact unconverted. Jesus also said to let the tares ans the wheat grow together until the end of the harvest when He comes and the tares will be gathered in bundles to burn. In COL pp. 70-76 we also find good information about this parable.

Some who bring in apostasy like drums in the church are simply uneducated on these dangers, and later after prayer and study start to understand these musical differences that involve more than just drums--I'm one of them. Others, perhaps pastors and youth directors are quite simply either tares (unconverted) or uneducated or both. The other aspects of unbelief seem almost endless.

However, as we near the initiation of the Sunday Law beginning in America first, Satan works harder, the church grows and all sorts of liberalism and apostasy increases as well. Please notice this prophecy;

“Satan will work his miracles to deceive; he will set up his power as supreme. The church may appear as about to fall, but it does not fall. It remains, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out--the chaff separated from the precious wheat. This is a terrible ordeal, but nevertheless it must take place. None but those who have been overcoming by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony will be found with the loyal and true, without spot or stain of sin, without guile in their mouths. . . . The remnant that purify their souls by obeying the truth gather strength from the trying process, exhibiting the beauty of holiness amid the surrounding apostasy (Letter 55, 1886).”

{7BC 911.6}

Nowhere does Ellen White say to leave the church or to denounce the church. At the shaking, when the Sunday Law comes, many false professors will be shaken out--the ranks of true Adventists will be added to by the tremendous numbers coming in; the latter rain will fall in its intensity, the 3 angels messages will go forward with greater power and the work will be finished—the church itself will go through. The 7th Day Adventist Church is the only church that the LORD Jesus bestows His supreme affections on, so to denounce His church is to incur His disapproval. We must look higher than “drums in the church,” “spiritual formation” or any of the other errors and sins. Notice the prophets ending line telling us what we the true remnant will be doing, “The remnant that purify their souls by obeying the truth gather strength from the trying process, exhibiting the beauty of holiness amid the surrounding apostasy.”

"I tell you, my brethren, the Lord has an organized body through whom He will work. . . . When anyone is drawing apart from the organized body of God's commandment-keeping people, when he begins to weigh the church in his human scales and begins to pronounce judgment against
them, then you may know that God is not leading him. He is on the wrong track."--3SM 17, 18 (1893). {LDE 51.4}

Preston Foster

Kent,

There are, in fact, what I would call "conservatives" in the camp. We are people who believe that the Bible is the Word of God and that Adventism represents the best (though by no means perfect) interpretation of His Word.

We are willing to let the Bible interpret itself and let the chips fall where they may. We are not looking to undo the church, but to fortify it with truth. We see inherent dangers in aspects of the progressive approach in that the authority of both God and His Word are questioned (i.e., doubts about creation, as written, and doubts about Christ's second coming). Likewise, we see dangers in traditionalism as 1) the church was founded in the wake of a major misinterpretation of scripture (making the possibility of others at least plausible), and 2) traditions, in themselves, have no obligation to the truth and, by their nature, protect the status quo (which is fine, assuming everything is perfectly interpreted) regardless of the facts.

We clash with both sides, as they seek either to undo or calcify the organization. But, as Jack Nicholson said, "You want (us) on that wall. You need (us) on that wall!"

Timo Onjukka

Perhaps the real apostasy is intolerance, Gailon.

The "liberal" in the prodigal story is welcomed open-armed without qualifier, despite his (many) past deeds and (lack of proper) doctrine. He came to the party, and danced with his delighted father.

The elder had a quite different view, (as perhaps a staunch conservative might); "I've slaved for you all my life, and done all the right things etc...and YOU throw a PARTY for HIM, like heaven has never seen!"

He is angry at dad, and in murderous rage against his own brother (who, perhaps as one who arrogates truth likes to say, "does not deserve an SDA paycheck"-or apparently any decorum, civility or even common decency)-and he, too, is incredibly arrogant and sullen, about it. "You never even gave me a crippled GOAT" (i'll come back to this goat)

Jesus prayed "Help them get along...with the unity you and I have, Daddy"- (agreeing on identity, ie heart)

The head (doctrine) and the hand (deed) part of the summation of law and prophets and the royal command. I imagine he uttered "we'll have to work on that, Daddy, good thing we have a thousand years, to start gettin' these knuckle heads to the child-like simplicity of the true gospel, and clean up their walk, too"

Simplistic, perhaps. But one a child can understand, and get behind. An orphan, however, runs into
the desert, away from Daddy, and polishes apples and establishes a fig-leaf sartorial entrepreneurship still franchising today, all the while pointing out the others faults.

Who was Jesus referring to during his final utterance from the tree? He said "FATHER (acknowledges relationship, sonship)
FORGIVE (salvation)
THEM (no qualifier, ie ALL -who accept -and GIVE forgiveness)
for they KNOW NOT doctrine)
what they DO (deeds)

God grieved for both Cain, and Abel. The Father wanted both of His sons.
God toiled for Lucifer unknown ages...despite their broken doctrines, and their false deeds.
Sought them ONLY because they were his sons...

Yet, there is too-apparent a faction (schism widens, few moderates willing to be peace makers and bridge builders between the vitriol and outright hate) so proud within the church ready to summarily reject (based on deed and doctrine). Surely God waits, for cause. Perhaps this is it...can we dialog this position? A vehement denial of dialog, with attendant attestations and increasing certitude that my group is "right" and all others beyond salvation is detestable, equally for the universal dark ages church we so love to also vilify, as it is for those within the "progressive movement towards infinite truth" that our rag-tag team of peculiar people should be becoming. Not a church, static, lookin' in curved mirrors (or looking ahead in too-rosy liberal glasses), but a rag tag team, helping each other as brothers and sisters.

Anyone dare taunt God and stand in His place, dividing what God died for to unite in common inheritance?
Let no man come between...is serious admonishment in marriage.
It is even more serious in the context of what marriage is a metaphor of...
and yet, some do this very thing, with pride; "earning" a paycheck. ouch.
I suppose that, to God, some seem to say "we DO know, and we DO these things, in YOUR NAME"
I also suppose that appears as if we put ourselves outside of the forgiveness Jesus dying breath prayer.
God utters a frightening epitaph to those goats.

I pray for my church, every day, and i work to love the elder, as well the younger.
One group is a whole lot easier to love...

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Ella M Rydzewski

Timo,

Your post has a lot of depth to it; thank you for your biblical insight. I believe the test of life is how we treat each other as inferred in the Matt. 25 judgment scene. We cannot love God if we do...
not love (agape) each other. Our religious works and sacrifices wear Him out if we have not love. It is the same for our knowledge. Doctrine is important only as it shows God's character of love and fairness. A lot of religious people do not present it that way. We are not saved by knowledge any more than works or only those with "perfect" knowledge would be savable.

How do we treat people who disagree with us; how do we talk about them; do we distort their views?

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Gailon Arthur Joy
3 days ago

The problem, Timo, is that you have failed to note that the father did not go to the son in his vile state, but rather waited anxiously for the return of the son. The son's return is a part of repentance. The father did not build a pigery to attract the son, but rather prayed and waited patiently for the son to reach the bottom and achieve a willingness to return to his father's home. The father did not change to accommodate the son's return, but rather the son changed to achieve a relationship with the Father.

As long as individuals do not believe in the power and the authority of the Father, and spurn his message of hope for man, adopting instead the science of evolution, we can only pray for their return, but they must not pretend to be what they are not. We can pray, but they must answer.

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Timo Onjukka
3 days ago

Gailon, thank you for quickly pointing out my omission. "While he was yet FAR OFF" (and without waiting for confession), Daddy ran. I'll make my answer short, as there are a few hungry brethren down by that pigery that I'm having breakfast with today.

The elder sons rejection of daddy, then, is at least equally vile, and detestable as the younger's "swilling whiskey and sleeping with pigs". Perhaps more so; ought the one who claimed the name ("did you not know? You have always had me") be held to higher standard than the evolutionist, agnostic, sunday-keepin' hedonist homosexual younger (who might de facto be more honest than his elder)?

The elder did not believe in Daddy, unlike the younger, who clearly did.

Note the story leaves untold that Daddy undoubtedly also sought the elder, who refused to change, still believing self slave, and not son. Hence, his doctrines and deeds placed himself outside relationship and its attendant salvific power and authority. Daddy loved him, despite his arrogant self righteous pig-hatin' ways.

Who's YOUR Daddy? Is He running down the driveway for the lost ONE-might He be calling YOU?
(or perhaps, with lantern, searching the back 40 at night, seeking the pharisaic elders and brothers who refused to come to the party- ostensibly because they would rather hate than be loved, and who clearly know not about forgiveness and grace received or extended)
Are you running back to Daddy?
Seems you believe YOU have to go to HIM. And anyone who gets back to the estate without at least
equalling your good works and your correct doctrine is not worthy, according to my perception of your position.

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"
Some arrogate that they do...and my task is love these unlovable, too.
Keep lovin', Gailon. Thats how Jesus asked us to feed his kids.

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**Ella M Rydzewski**  
2 days ago  

Another thought here might be that the son went home only because he was in need. Maybe he didn't expect his father to open his arms to him. Maybe he was even afraid. But when the father did, that was the moment his heart changed. He couldn't believe that his father would welcome him back and celebrate. He was forgiven!

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**Steve Billiter**  
3 days ago  

Don't click on "edit" your post will vanish. Whatever AT did to this blog posting system sure messed it up.

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**Editor**  
2 days ago  

Steve, sorry for your posting problems. I have been unable to duplicate what is whisking your text out into cyberspace. Whatever you encountered does not appear to be a system malfunction, as you suggest, but I encourage you to keep us posted on difficulties encountered - CH

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**Jeff Boyd**  
3 days ago  

Given enough time, all movements and religions splinter; it's not merely a protestant phenomenon. There are different types of Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, etc. I'm told that not too far from our school there's a crossroads with a Mennonite church on three of the four adjacent corners. They represent significant cultural/lifestyle divergence: At one they still show up in buggies pulled by horses and at another they arrive in cars. This tension within Adventism is unavoidable, so it's good to talk about, be open about.

I submit that more important than style is substance (I hear the rebuttal: "My style is substance."). I mean, God doesn't like any of our music--hymns/praise, organs/acapella/bands, loud/quiet--if we're not pursuing justice. "I hate, I despise your religious festivals; your assemblies are a stench to me. Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!" (Amos 5:21, 23-24; all of the chapter speaks to this). These are the peace and justice activities at a major Mennonite gathering this summer -- http://peace.mennolink.org/resources/pittsburgh2011/index.html. What if we had similar offerings at the next GC?
Timo Onjukka

3 days ago

Steve, the change should not result in loss of post; the preview feature is valuable and well tested. Make sure your thread is not highlighted when you click edit. As back up, try copy your post into your browser before you "edit", then click "add comment" and paste/post. I've tried to replicate your problem, and my edit does not remove comment. I'll pass this on, as well to the webbies tomorrow...

Elaine Nelson

2 days ago

An article in my local paper (Sat. is church news) highlighted the various recent separations of the Lutherans, Episcopalians and another which I can't remember. It will, undoubtedly happen in Adventism as the church has grown and there are divisions currently that will become more irreconcilable. All churches have split as they age and ideas change. No human can always remain a child, and no religion can remain static for very long without change, and often the change is so disruptive that separation is the only viable choice.

Trevor Hammond

2 days ago

Many presume that because they arrogantly justify their loose living and trample on God’s precepts, that they are therefore better ‘believers’ than those they consider to be legalists. Their unashamed compromise with sin flaunts a rich abundance of foliage which they term love. In other words, their condoning of sinful acts and lifestyle, is considered progressive and falsely perceived as acts of ‘love’ towards sinful wayward reprobates. Don't get me wrong. Loving sinners is imperative and a critical ingredient of revealing Christ; but to condone sinful living and arrogantly declassify what sin is (stuff which put Jesus on the Cross), is just a shallow human moralist attempt at pleasing the crowd in order to score ‘brownie points’ and is too a form of legalism just the same. To pass off compromise with sin as a 'form of godliness' is no better than those who obey God for the wrong reasons.

I THINK BOTH GROUPS NEED GOD. Did the son who stayed in the Father’s house NEED the prodigal? Did the prodigal need the Pharisee who stayed at home? I say NO to both – but they needed the Father. I think when we shift the focus to our need for Christ then WE are drawn closer. Just like when two people climb up a step ladder from both sides, initially further apart but as they climb higher going up they get closer – closer to God and each other.

In God’s counsel to the Laodicean Church there is no bipartisan crowd that is admonished: the Pharisee and the Prodigal are both in an unacceptable condition just the same and both in dire need of God. Only in the context of the Father’s love and the changed hearts that He offers for both will the need for each other become apparent and reconcilable.

T

Timo Onjukka

2 days ago

Agreed there is an openly licentious liberal faction (albeit small) who seems to enjoy blowing smoke rings around the equally stuck ultra-conservative. No one here is supporting overt antinomianism, hence i do not see the salience of making that mention, Trevor.

Nor is it in anywise a compromise toward sin, anymore than we are all pre-compromised to sin, to the same degree, anyway (and lost as a result, absent salvation through our common brother, Jesus). Perhaps the greater "compromise to sin" is the failure of relationship and love.

I further suggest, in light of the Royal command, for one to say he does not need the other (ie prodigal and elder) is moving one self from relationship with God. the relational template is quite clear; your love toward your Gd (and yourself) is predicated on your love toward your brother (and enemy).

Asserting we do not need HIM means we cannot love God. Might I suggest a mutually exclusive zero-sum view indicates we are already divided, and lost. Both halves...

Ella M Rydzewski

Good post Trevor.
Elaine: You may be right, especially with such an ultra-conservative leadership that promotes church unity over the Gospel. Many creative and educated people may want to find another type of church setting that may be Adventist in major beliefs but more attune to our culture and service to others. One guarantee to not having unity is to go after it as the goal and/or force it.

My father grew up as a Mennonite. As I understand it, splits happen in Mennonite churches and have become accepted (though it can be painful to relationships). Without central governance that controls them, members can start their own churches. If done with respect and agape love, this does not have to be bad. But I would not want to see it happen to the SDA Church.

Ervin Taylor

With the exception of the "equally stuck" comment, I, for one, do not mind the charge of "blowing smoke rings around the equally stuck ultra-conservative." I would argue that blowing smoke at ultra-conservatives is an honorable exercise. What I don't understand is the "openly licentious" part. Would Mr. Onjukka please enlighten us with some specific example(s) of the purported "openly licentious" behavior of Adventist liberals?

Timo Onjukka

The suggestion is neither global regarding progressives, nor do I identify this in the thread. Perhaps it is too anecdotal as defense here, but I know some who enjoy baiting ultra-conservatives by conspicuous consumption of pork and prawns, pabst and port. Though I choose not partake such repast, I am not above the repartee...

I remember my own first rebellious "anti-adventist" act well. The last supper for me was a bacon and tomato sandwich,
a slice of pepperoni pizza, baptized with a coke.
I have since reconciled some enduring principles and rejected other too-staid dogma.

Elaine Nelson

Reminds me of a long-ago friend who, having left the strict atmosphere of an SDA home and very restricted SDA school, he tasted his first Coke, and felt that was the worst act of sin and rebellion he could muster at that time.
I do not recall when I first noticed the difference between the Ten Commandments found in Exodus 10 and the Ten Commandments recorded in Deuteronomy 5. The edit was a puzzle. As I thought about the change, a couple of ideas came floating by that I will share.

The Fourth Commandment, and the other nine, the text in Exodus states, were written by the finger of God and presented to Israel, through Moses, as the summation of God’s will for His people. It is to be expected a document with God as both author and scribe will be unalterable throughout the centuries. This was not the case. A second edition of the Ten Commandments contains a version of the fourth command that differs from Exodus 20.

12 Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the LORD your God has commanded you. 13 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 14 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns, so that your male and female servants may rest, as you do. 15 Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the LORD your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day. Deuteronomy 5 (NIV).

Consider the implications and risks involved for the one who revises a passage understood to have been written by the very finger of God. Why would anyone be so bold? How would the hearers allow this liberty? Unfortunately no evidence exists to answer these questions. We can, however, speculate. Be aware that speculation is just that, a less than satisfying and exegetically risky procedure. With this warning stated, I will venture into a speculative area and see where it leads.

Decades and generations had passed since Moses delivered the Ten Commandments to the Children of Israel. They had been only months on the trek that led from Egypt and looked forward to reaching the Promised Land. In the plains around Sinai the Lord spoke the Ten Commandments. One of the Ten is unique among all the others. In a brief statement and within the context of the creation of a new nation, the Lord calls His chosen people to remember that in the beginning the Lord spoke and by the power of that Word made heaven and earth within a specific time. In commemoration of that creative process, the newly created nation is to keep the Sabbath as an everlasting memory of God’s creative acts. God’s creative process and its conclusion, we see in this passage, provides the context from which Sabbath arises and provides its perpetuity. Now, a generation later, comes Deuteronomy.

According to the text in Deuteronomy Moses again gathered about him the Israelites and spoke the Ten Commandments. The generation that first heard the Commandments is gone. A new generation has formed. This people had spent the last four decades wandering about the wilderness. Without their Egyptian roots, isolated from societies other than their own, dependant on God’s generosity for
survival, and awaiting the fulfillment of a long-past promise that they will find a new home in a land long ago promised to Abraham. They camp now on the borders of that Promised Land.

The new nation had fought battles and won territory. They had defined their place in history and were ready to take their place among the nations. As the words of the Ten Commandments are spoken to this people Moses recites their past. As he prepared to address his people he may have realized what now gave identity to this new nation and assured them they were a special people was not creation of a world, but the creation of a people. Freedom is the cry. God had rescued them from slavery and had brought forth a political and religious power. They were by this great act of redemption made ready to venture forth to fulfill their destiny. Their recent Exodus experience was a more powerful and pertinent event than a fuzzy recollection of a far removed creation story. Moses understood his people and adapted the Fourth Commandment to make it more applicable to the immediate times.

If the above speculative exercise is close to accurate, and if it is not, how else does one account for the audacity that is evident on the part of the one who rewrote the Fourth Command? How else to explain the modification to what God had written? But if, and it’s a large ‘if,’ the edit was made in an attempt to make the fourth command speak to the people and to their experience there is a lesson to consider. Our views and understandings change. What once was important may be less so today. Should this occur, I suggest the example of the edited Fourth Commandment provides evidence that even the words written by the hand of God can be modified in response to a changed context. It would be fascinating to question Moses on his rationale for the edited Fourth.

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- **Be brief – no more than 3 modest paragraphs – if longer, you are too windy**
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- **Absolutely no denigrating of individuals – to err, earns banishment**
- **Make this a stimulating encounter & come back often**

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**Ron Corson**

Interesting attempt to recreate the command written in stone recorded in the Bible as an adaption by Moses rather then what God wrote, which is what the text of Deut 5 clearly says.

Deut 5:21-22
21 "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife. You shall not set your desire on your neighbor's house or land, his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."
22 These are the commandments the LORD proclaimed in a loud voice to your whole assembly there on the mountain from out of the fire, the cloud and the deep darkness; and he added nothing more. Then he wrote them on two stone tablets and gave them to me.
(NIV)

Deut 9:10
10 The LORD gave me two stone tablets inscribed by the finger of God. On them were all the commandments the LORD proclaimed to you on the mountain out of the fire, on the day of the assembly. (NIV)

The real question is why the preference for the Exodus 20 version and when did this preference begin, are we simply repeating the prejudice of some earlier writer who thought that the Exodus 20 version was superior or more accurate then the Deut 5 version which specifies that those were the very words inscribed by the finger of God.

Of course the answer is that it does not seem so universal when you take out the out of Egypt part, so much easier to just ignore that part of the Exodus 20 version and start a line or two later and make it seem that the 10 commandments have a more universal application then their original usage.

Exod 20:1-2
1 And God spoke all these words:
2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.
(NIV)

Elaine Nelson 6 days ago Reply

The two different accounts of the Ten Commandments also reflect the difference in the Creation stories. They clearly demonstrate more than one writer which is best explained by the JDEP hypothesis, not widely accepted by Adventists.

If the Bible records are equally valid, how should they be interpreted? Adventists have, almost universally, quoted the Ex. 20 version emphasizing creation as the central reason for observing sabbath; while the Deuteronomy version (there is also one in Ex. 34), says nothing whatsoever about creation but emphasizes that their delivery from slavery is the reason that sabbath is to be observed by the Israelites. Nothing is said about the surrounding nations observing it as it was only a special covenant made with the Israelites.

Only individuals studying the Bible discover this. Likewise, there are other Bible texts not usually included in Adventist Bible studies or official publications which is why each individual is responsible for his own beliefs rather than merely accepting what he has been told.
Elaine Nelson 6 days ago Reply

This is only one of many double accounts of stories in the Bible. The flood story has two completely different which have been combined to reflect impossibilities: were there two clean animals or seven entering the ark? Both can be found in the story. One account does not mention "clean," probably because the Levitical laws were unknown, but the later story shows that "clean" and "unclean," defined at Sinai, could not have been known at the time of Noah.

Doctorf Doctorf1 5 days ago Reply

No snakes entered the ark either. What was the issue with the Jews and snakes? Also if all species emerging from the ark were responsible for repopulation of the earths animals where did the snakes come from? Sounds like evolution was operational after the ark found its way onto Ararat.

Kevin Seidel 6 days ago Reply

It is even more confusing than you have shown. Exodus 20 records what God spoke, not what He wrote on the tablets. You need to go to Exodus 34 to find what was written on the tablets. The version in Exodus 34:21 is quite different from either Exodus 20:8-11 or Deuteronomy 5:12-15.

Elaine Nelson 6 days ago Reply

How rare are the three versions ever mentioned, or how my Adventists ever consult any other than the Ex. 20 account?

Kevin Riley 5 days ago Reply

The three versions of the 10 commandments are mentioned as rarely as the fact there are actually three tithes. Which is still more often than certain other obscure sections of the Bible.

Nic Samojluk 2 days ago Reply

Lawrence,

Your speculative explanation for the two versions of the Ten Commandments makes a lot of sense. There are other potential scenarios like the following:

A. Moses was rather senile when he wrote the second version of the Fourth Commandment.

B. The first version is what the Lord wrote the first time on the tablets of stone which Moses broke upon his return from the Holy Mountain, and the second version represents what God wrote on the replacement tablet Moses took with him on his second encounter with God.

C. A later editor replaced the original explanation for the relevance of the Fourth Commandment.
The different story of creation found in Genesis 1 & 2 is another example of unknown scribes recording tribal legends.

In yesterday's SS class we were completing a book on Sabbath and summarizing the contents. One member, in reply to a question, said that we were not discussing the theology of the sabbath, only our reflections and subjective meanings.

There would be no Sabbath without theology--which is the study of God. He gave the first sabbath to the Israelites at Sinai and because they had been former slaves it would constantly remind them of that condition and their new freedom granted them by God. Without that understanding, there is no sabbath.

Never discussed is that sabbath was given ONLY to the Israelites. To no other tribes or people did God give this command. It was not given at Creation, despite the SDA claims since its origin--all without support from the Bible. Neither is there a single record of anyone observing or mentioning sabbath prior to Sinai.

It was the Jew's special gift contained in the covenant God made with them; a covenant made with no others. After the resurrection, the new covenant was inaugurated that was with all people; no longer limited to the Jews. It had no mention whatsoever about a sabbath, or any holy day. For Adventists who have long claimed to be "People of the Book" they have assumed much that cannot be documented from the Bible.

I arrived in Jerusalem on a Friday evening. Orthodox Jews were set to leave the hotel, but had time to help us with luggage. The way they smiled while saying "Shabbat Sholom" was simply magnificent. There was an aura of love in that phrase that was unforgettable. As they went off duty, Palestinians took over hotel duties, of course.

We were warned to stay out of the automatic "Shabbat Elevator" that goes directly to the top, and stops at each floor on the way down. Naturally, I did just that...took 15 minute to reach my floor!

Greetings from Australia. The Fourth Commandment, what a hot potato!
Mrs. E.G. White's son was arrested for obeying the “six days work” by working on Sunday.

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<th>Elaine Nelson</th>
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| As I see it, the connection to the Fourth Commandment, which is part of it: "Because you were slaves in Egypt" allows them, after all the past years of working 24/7 to officially be given a day off--a wonderful gift to former enslaved peoples.

Today, when most first would nations enjoy a 5-day work week, and many have shorter hours than the U.S., there are two full "rest days" every week, unlike when the original command was given. As Hebrews speaks of a "place of rest: "Every day, as long as this 'today' lasts....Those that He swore would never reach the place of rest he had for them were those who had been disobedient... For one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His."

The challenge, still unanswered: Where is there a single NT text commanding new Christians that observance of any day is to be part of their new Christian life?

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<th>Kevin Riley</th>
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| Elaine

Many workers do not have a 5 day week in which 2 days are guaranteed to be free of work. One reason that the move to have Sunday declared a work-free day in Europe is gaining increasing support even from secular people is that increasingly employers are demanding that workers be available 7 days a week. In Australia, workers are finding that wanting to have Friday, Saturday or Sunday free for religious reasons is, while legally guaranteed, a good way of not making it into the final interview. Of course, many people who complain that they no longer are guaranteed a 9-5 Monday to Friday work week also insist that they want businesses open for longer hours (in some cases 24hrs) and 7 days a week for their convenience. We still have a 38 hr week as 'standard', but it is also accepted that up to 12 hours a week overtime, usually unpaid, is reasonable. Many professionals work 60 hr weeks as standard just to be sure they get promoted and remain employed.

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| Without doubt there are many places where one day/week free of work is difficult, if not impossible. However, it is a common well known practice in Adventism that certain jobs are considered "necessary," demanding there be 24/7 medical benefits available.
There is no allowance for individuals to make these decisions but they have been "accepted" for many years that medical work is always exempt; as is certain other "necessary" work that Adventists expect--IOW, as an article several years ago in AToday: "Thank God for the Gentiles" who will do the necessary work that Adventists refuse to do.

There should be personal conscience given to all members to judge whether their work requires them to work sabbaths, perhaps some, but not all. Who has made the decision that medical work is exempt, while most other occupations are not given that exemption? Pastors, and many church members see that needs are cared for, making Sabbath the hardest day in the week. How is a pastor more important than a fireman? A utility worker (if there's a power outage on Sabbath--they may be VERY important)?

We really know very little how sabbath was practiced by Jesus and his disciples. Where did they procure the necessary food? Where was their shelter? Did they live off the people, or were enough living for fishermen for all the disciples and Jesus to live 24/7? We do know that He was accused of working on Sabbath, and it was against the Law that God gave them at Sinai.

Not too long ago, some European calendars that I have seen, have Sunday as the 7th day of the week. Since the 7th day (no one knows when the Sinai week began but we do know that sabbaths were calculated by the moon, which is not in harmony with calendars--but the moon was the only "calendar" for marking off days. Muslims and most Christians who worship one day in seven are observing a 7th day. Orthodox Jews use the Jewish calendar, which is based on the moon, as they always have, to determine sabbath. We would not even know about sabbath except for the Jews, while ignoring the manner of keeping and the penalties for breaking it are largely ignored.

Finally, there is no Christian sabbath, only the Jewish sabbath which was given solely for them.

David

Elaine read you Bible, the Sabbath belong to God. He gave to mankind, Enjoyed is good for the body and the soul.
How Faith has Confused Lots of Theology

Submitted Aug 4, 2011
By Herb Douglass

I find it useful to list some of the problem issues that have divided the church for 2000 years — all because the Greek word *pistis* has been sadly misunderstood. Getting the meaning of ‘faith’ wrong has explosive consequences. Think of the wide variances in interpreting most every biblical doctrine:

- Sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man
- Predestination and human freedom
- Atonement — objective or subjective
- Image of God — what was lost and what can be restored in this life
- Nature of sin — substantive or relational
- Church — fellowship or institution
- Bible — a divine-human instrument of communication from God to man or a human record of a religious people.
- Sacraments — mystical elements or symbols of worship
- Church officer — hierarchical authority or service leaders
- Preaching — transmission of information or a personal encounter

From another viewpoint: think of the times we have heard someone say in a committee meeting: “We don’t have enough information, we must go ahead on faith!” Or he is a Baptist, he doesn’t belong to the Methodist faith.” Or the slogan heard through the 1960s and 1970s: “Keep the faith, baby!”

Everywhere we turn, it is important to know what faith is — if we really want certitude.

In my previous blog I concluded that NT faith involves the intellect, the will, and the commitment. But it is none of these in themselves. NT faith is simply the whole man saying Yes to God, knowing by objective evidence AND personal experience that there is nothing deceptive, unreal, or empty about what God has said or about one’s personal experience.

Faith is a real, authentic experience or it is nothing! Faith is the opposite of distrust. Eve and Adam trusted the serpent, not their Lord. They lacked genuine faith and look what happened. Distrust always leaves bitter medicine in its path, no matter how ‘honest’ a person thinks he or she is. Unless Jesus becomes one’s Lord, He surely cannot be one’s Savior. We can’t have one without the other! And we all know by experience — that this is reality!

When I read Martin Luther (and not how he is interpreted by later “Lutherans” such as Martin Chemnitz who for some interesting reason is referred to as the ‘second Luther’) I hear an echo of Paul: “Wherefore Christ apprehended by faith and dwelling in the heart is the true Christian righteousness for which God counts as righteous and gives us eternal life.” – *Galatians* trans. Watson, p. 135, also p. 169.

Probably the most outstanding modern Lutheran scholar, Alister McGrath, helps us to see how the thinking of Desmond Ford and Geoffrey Paxton misunderstood Luther: “Luther’s concept of justification, his concept of the presence of Christ in the believer…[was] rejected or radically modified
by those who followed him.” Iustitia Dei, Volume II, p.32; see also p. 20.

The defining issue is whether we accept Paul’s concept and Luther’s understanding of justification being more than an event, but an actual experience. For early Luther, certainly John Wesley and Ellen White, justification/righteousness by faith is not a historical event entirely independent of human experience. Rather they accept biblical justification as a personal encounter with Jesus and they call that experience, faith.

One of the leading Lutheran scholars of the 19th Century, Albrecht Ritschl described Luther’s doctrine of justification exactly: “The early Luther devoted primary attention not to a doctrine of justification but to the personal religious experience and assurance of God’s reconciling love. Luther thus inquired into the actual modifications of self-consciousness occasioned by the divine word of justification.”


For Luther, justification is the God-given conscious experience of receiving Christ who turns an unbeliever into a believer by dwelling in them through the Holy Spirit. This existential justification is no mere legal acquittal but a deliverance from chronic unbelief. To put it another way, justification is an existential deliverance from unbelief to that of trust and willing obedience to known truth.

Biblical forgiveness is a powerful sense of pardon and acceptance and hope conveyed to the sinner by the Holy Spirit — all of which the forensic gospel theory ignores and essentially denies.

The Catholic doctrine of forgiveness is based on the concept of ontological/sacramental renewal that somehow empowers the sinner to perform works that merit a reward. Against this, Luther taught Christ’s inner presence empowers the sinner to ‘believe’ that ‘righteousness by faith’ is having, “Christ in you the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27). The indwelling Christ empowers the new Christian to think differently about sin, his/her relation to others, and his/her primary loyalty to God.

When some did their best to attack the Catholic doctrine of infused grace in avoiding works righteousness, they somehow confused sacramentally infused grace with the ‘indwelling Christ’ through the Holy Spirit. So they opted for a misunderstanding of justification by using legal terms rather than relational terms.

Melanchthon, not Luther, laid the groundwork for the forensic gospel by creating misleading law court imagery that allowed for the concept of justification by the ‘works’ of Christ as a source of justifying merit. In his later teaching after 1530, Melanchthon emphasized that once Jesus died the work of atonement was completed.

Melanchthon’s law court scenario and his exclusive use of legal imagery prepared the way for a mighty shift from faith in Christ Himself to faith in a doctrine about Christ for forgiveness — which became a bulwark of much in Protestant orthodoxy.

D. A. Carson and others, see this difference between Melanchthon and Luther very clearly: “In some measure, Melanchthon appears to stand under the influence of legal conceptions other than those of Scripture. In fact, his views on justification underwent a significant change in the period of 1530 to 1534. Melanchthon [narrowed] his conception of justification to a mere declaration in this period…for Melanchthon, justification no longer signifies the presence of a new creation. Unlike Melanchthon he
[Luther] understands that the reckoning of divine righteousness creates the human being anew. Imputation is not a mere declaration for Luther, but an effective divine word.” *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, Mohr Siebeck (2994), pp. 68-70.

To put this another way, Melanchthon with his fiat justification effectively derailed the reformation and in another way returned to Roman Catholicism in thinking forgiveness is based on Christ’s merits. So much depends on understanding the long-lasting legacy of Melanchthon and the damage people unknowingly ascribe to Luther.

In the translators preface to Gustaf Aulen’s book, *Christus Victor*, A. G. Herbert highly criticized Melanchthon for constructing his version of the gospel in that Christ’s obedience merits forgiveness for the sinner: “Melanchthon led the people back to Egypt. The Protestant Churches had not, after all, found the way of deliverance from Babylonian captivity. Protestant orthodoxy was as legalistic as medieval scholasticism and Christianity was as hopelessly in bondage as before.” (Translator’s Preface, xxv-xxvi)

I could go on. My main concern is the NT good news of righteousness by faith be understood for what the words really say: a person finds at-one-ment with God by responding to His grace with the mind and heart of faith. This faith experience changes the sinner into a loving, sharing, person, really dedicated to working with the Lord in overcoming all the weaknesses that had troubled him or her for too long.

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Glenn Hansen  
4 days ago  

Herb, For whatever reason, you appear to have an agenda to destroy the voice of Melanchthon. Why refer to secondary sources? I respect both D.A. Carson and Alister McGrath as secondary sources.

Melanchthon's extant writings in English, unless for some strange reason happen to be contradicted by everything else he wrote, do not contain some diabolocal creed contrary to Luther. Remember, he wrote some of his material with the Emperor's sword hanging over the very existence of Protestantism. Had Luther been alive after the Battle of Muhlberg, he might have met a martyr's death. Before writing Melanchthon off on the word of others, have a taste of what he actually wrote.
The following is taken from Melanchthon's disputation "We are Justified by Faith and Not By Love", written in 1531:

5. Therefore it is clear that faith alone justifies, that is, out of us unrighteous human creatures it makes human creatures who are acceptable to God, and it regenerates us.

15. Therefore, Paul says that we are not justified by the law but by the promise [Gal 3:18,24]

16. It is necessary, therefore, for the righteousness of the promise to be present before the righteousness of the law or reason.

17. The promise is received by faith. For that reason we are first justified by faith, by which we receive the promise of reconciliation by faith. Thereafter we keep the law.

Melanchthon:
"Justification means the remission of sins, reconciliation, or the acceptance of a person unto eternal life. To the Hebrews, "justification" is a forensic term, as if I were to say that the Roman people justified Scipio when he was accused by the tribunes, that is, they absolved him or pronounced him to be a righteous man [Melanchthon might have referred to Scipio when Deut 25:1 as a perfect illustration of the point he was making]. Therefore Paul took the term "justify" from the usage of the Hebrew word to indicate the remission of sins, reconciliation, or acceptance."

Commonplaces of Theology, 1543 edition, Locus 8: Grace and Justification

Melanchthon again:

"And because "to be justified" means that out of unjust men just men are made, or born again, it means also that they are pronounced or accounted just. For Scripture speaks in both ways. [The term "to be justified" is used in two ways: to denote, being converted or regenerated; again, being accounted righteous.] Accordingly we wish first to show this, that faith alone makes of an unjust, a just man, i.e., receives remission of sins."

Defense of the Augsburg Confession, Article IV: On Justification; paragraph 69

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Trevor Hammond
4 days ago

With the same breath regarding such a topic one can also asked: "How has Lots of Theology confused Faith" - which to me seems more apparent than the other way round (just my opinion of course).

T

Gailon Arthur Joy
3 days ago

Elder Douglas:
Is there both an objective "justification" (forensic) and a subjective (experienced) one? Could the objective be available to all from the beginning and the subjective be the response (saying yes) by the born-again adult Christian?

This is Luther in the Smalcald Articles of 1537:

1. *That Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, died for our sins, and was raised again for our justification*, Rom. 4:25.
2. *And He alone is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world, John 1:29; and God has laid upon Him the iniquities of us all*, Is. 53:6.
3. *Likewise: All have sinned and are justified without merit [freely, and without their own works or merits] by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, in His blood, Rom. 3:23f*
4. *Now, since it is necessary to believe this, and it cannot be otherwise acquired or apprehended by any work, law, or merit, it is clear and certain that this faith alone justifies us as St. Paul says, Rom. 3:28: For we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the Law. Likewise 3:26: That He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Christ.*
5. *Of this article nothing can be yielded or surrendered [nor can anything be granted or permitted contrary to the same], even though heaven and earth, and whatever will not abide, should sink to ruin. For there is none other name under heaven, given among men whereby we must be saved, says Peter, Acts 4:12. And with His stripes we are healed, Is. 53:5. And upon this article all things depend which we teach and practice in opposition to the Pope, the devil, and the [whole] world. Therefore, we must be sure concerning this doctrine, and not doubt; for otherwise all is lost, and the Pope and devil and all things gain the victory and suit over us."

This is Melanchthon in the Augsburg Confession of 1530:

- Also they teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor, and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who, by His death, has made satisfaction for our sins. This faith God imputes for righteousness in His sight. Rom. 3 and 4.

This is Luther, "Two Kinds of Righteousness," 1518:

- There are two kinds of Christian righteousness, just as man's sin is of two kinds. The first is
alien righteousness, that is the righteousness of another, instilled from without. This is the righteousness of Christ by which he justifies though faith, as it is written in I Cor. 1:30: “whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption.” In John 11:25-26, Christ himself states: “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me...shall never die.” Later he adds in John 14:6, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.” This righteousness, then, is given to men in baptism and whenever they are truly repentant. Therefore a man can with confidence boast in Christ and say: “Mine are Christ’s living, doing, and speaking, his suffering and dying, mine as much as if I had lived, done, spoken, suffered, and died as he did.” Just as a bridegroom possesses all that is his bride’s and she all that is his—for the two have all things in common because they are one flesh[Gen. 2:24]—so Christ and the church are one spirit [Eph. 5:29-32]. Thus the blessed God and Father of mercies has, according to Peter, granted to us very great and precious gifts in Christ [II Pet. 1:4]. Paul writes in II Cor. 1:3; “Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.” ... 

- The second kind of righteousness is our proper righteousness, not because we alone work it, but because we work with that first and alien righteousness. This is that manner of life spent profitably in good works, in the first place, in slaying the flesh and crucifying the desires with respect to the self, of which we read in Gal. 5:24, “And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” In the second place, this righteousness consists in love to one’s neighbor, and in the third place, in meekness and fear towards God. The Apostle is full of references to these, as is all the rest of Scripture. He briefly summarizes everything, however, in Titus 2:12, “In this world let us live soberly (pertaining to crucifying one’s own flesh), justly (referring to one’s neighbor), and devoutly (relating to God).” 
- [7] This righteousness is the product of the righteousness of the first type, actually its fruit and consequence, for we read in Gal. 5:22, “But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” For because the works mentioned are works of men, it is obvious that in this passage a spiritual man is called “spirit.” In John 3:6 we read, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” This righteousness goes on to complete the first for it ever strives to do away with the old Adam and to destroy the body of sin. Therefore it hates itself and loves its neighbor; it does not seek its own good, but that of another, and in this its whole way of living consists. For in that it hates itself and does not seek its own, it crucifies the flesh. Because it seeks the good of another, it works love. Thus in each sphere it does God’s will living soberly with self, justly with neighbor, devoutly toward God.

Chemnitz is the "Second Martin" because when Melanchthon turned to compromise with Rome on the Gospel and with Geneva on the Sacraments, Chemnitz ensured that Luther's foundation was properly built upon, and not sold away for a mess of pottage.

"This faith experience changes the sinner into a loving, sharing, person, really dedicated to working with the Lord in overcoming all the weaknesses that had troubled him or her for too long."

How is that different than the teaching of the Council of Trent that justification is a making righteous?

How does a Christian find peace when tormented by anxiety?
Further, Alister McGrath is not a Lutheran scholar. He is an Anglican.

"The Catholic doctrine of forgiveness is based on the concept of ontological/sacramental renewal that somehow empowers the sinner to perform works that merit a reward."

Please give a reference for this.

Bill Cork

Bill, If Melanchthon did move toward Geneva regarding the Sacraments, specifically the Lord's Supper, wasn't that a step in the right direction?

His move toward Rome regarding justification, can you be more specific? Where is his move toward Rome regarding justification documented?

Bill Cork

"Bill, If Melanchthon did move toward Geneva regarding the Sacraments, specifically the Lord's Supper, wasn't that a step in the right direction?"

Well, I guess it depends upon whether you are a Calvinist or a Lutheran in your sacramental theology. (I think it interesting that Adventists have never really spent time discussing the Eucharist. Some assume that Adventists are Zwinglians ... Ellen White in Desire of Ages is more of a Calvinist ... but Adventists have never formally taken a stand on these issues, and no Adventist theologian has ever written a book on the sacraments in general or the Lord's Supper by itself).

In terms of documentation of this point, Melanchthon issued an abridgement of the Augsburg Confession that Calvin was able to sign--called the "Variata." Hence, Lutheran churches today make clear they hold to the "Unaltered Augsburg Confession," or "Invariata."

Regarding your second, "His move toward Rome regarding justification, can you be more specific? Where is his move toward Rome regarding justification documented?"

He began to advocate "synergism," or the cooperation of faith and works, and to argue that it was...
OK to compromise with Rome on things that were "adiaphora," or not essential to salvation (church usages and ceremonies, etc.). Those who followed him were referred to as Philippists. These issues arose in the "adiaphoristic controversy" and the "synergistic controversy," which were among the German inter-Lutheran disputes which the Formula of Concord sought to settle.

See any historical introduction to the Book of Concord. For example, the article, "Controversies and the Formula of Concord" in *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions* (edited by Paul McCain, 2nd edition, 2006), pp 461ff. Melanchthon falls under severe criticism by confessional Lutherans; as McCain says here, "There are tragic ironies in the history of the development of the Formula of Concord. Greatest among these is the fact that Philip Melanchthon was most responsible for nearly destroying Lutheranism after the death of Luther. Melanchthon tended to compromise and embrace what clearly was contrary to the Lutheran Reformation."

Glenn Hansen

Bill,

Wasn't Melanchthon was most villified for his roll in drafting the Leipzig interim? Contextually, Lutheranism was facing annihilation by Charles V, flush with satisfaction, after the Protestant defeat at the Battle of Mühlberg. Imagine how Melanchthon must have felt when the Protestant armies were defeated by Charles. Certainly he was doing some soul searching to discover what might have led to such a fiasco. What he wrote then, in the context of his entire career, was done during a time of confusion and, sadly, weakness, to which we are all subject.

If I understand things correctly, after comparing the Leipzig Interim with the Augsburg Confession and Apology, Melanchthon was moving toward Herb, not away from him. That's why I don't understand why Herb seems intent on villifying Melanchthon.

The 1543 edition of the Commonplaces lists 26 points of disagreement between the Romanists and the Reformers. Several of the stress points concerned the dynamic of man's love for God in justification. Rome was quite clear that justification was not by faith alone.

One of their differences with the Reformers is plainly stated in the "Confutation to the Augsburg Confession," Article six. I don't see any "weakness" in Melanchton up to this point.

Note Article 4 of the Confutation:
"All catholics admit that our works of themselves have no merit but God's grace makes them worthy to earn eternal life. As St. John says, "They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy," Revelation 3:4. And St. Paul says to the Colossians,"Give thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to shre in the inheritance of the saints in light," Colossians 1:12.

Herb apparently is claiming that the "true" Luther occupied a position which is akin to the later Melanchthon, rather than Melanchthon at his best, say around the time of the Augsburg Confession, in 1530.
Bill & Glenn,

Good historical conversation.

Glenn, your last comment seems relevant. Herb seems to be actually pointing us to a "later" Melancthon that is more akin to his personal view on RBF than that which was "formerly" held by Luther that Melancthon was gradually departing from "for peace" with Rome after Luther's death.

On the doctrine of JBF "alone" Luther and Calvin were in agreement to it's meaning. On other areas they varied but not "on that essential doctrine."

regards to both,
pat

Herb, I'd question your sources--Ritschl, a liberal German protestant of the 19th century, and Gustaf Aulen, a liberal Swede of the 20th. Why do you think they might have had a preference for the "early Luther" (i.e., the pre-Reformation Luther)?

Here's a very good historical survey of the issue at hand, and a critique of the historians you are basing your interpretation on.

http://www.ctsfw.net/media/pdfs/clarkiustitiaimputatachristi.pdf

Great article by Clark from WTS you have provided.

You points about "Liberal/Progressive" Ritschl et.al. are good. I have noted on another site to Herb and others that it is interesting how Herb "the traditionalist SDA conservative" and "SDA progressives" have common ground in rejecting the "forensic justification" taught by Protestant Reformers Luther and Calvin.

Good Historical stuff!

regards,
pat

And let me recall a point I made on Herb's last article. Martin Chemnitz summed up the issue of the
Reformation in *Loci Theologici* (published posthumously in 1591).

"We do not ... dispute in this article as to whether contrition ought to be present in those who are to be justified, nor that some change in the mind and will, or renewal or new obedience, ought to follow. We have professed with a loud voice that all of these things do take place in a true conversion. Therefore the controversy is not whether these things should take place, are present, or follow.

"The point at issue is this: When the mind is terrified by the recognition of sin and a sense of the wrath of God, 1. What is that entity on account of which the sinner, condemned before God's judgment to eternal punishment, obtains remission of sins, is absolved from the sentence of condemnation, and is received into eternal life? 2. What is the instrument or means by which the promise of the Gospel, that is, the promise of grace, mercy, reconciliation, salvation, and eternal life, is received, laid hold upon, and applied? ..."

"The point at issue between us ... is that they teach that the sinner cannot and must not stand in sure confidence that he is in grace and that his sins have been remitted to him--even when in earnest repentance and true faith created in us by the Holy Spirit on the basis of the Word of God he lays hold on the promise of grace and at the same time upon the Mediator Himself, the Son of God who is our righteousness."

And that is most certainly Luther. That is the key for Luther. When he suffered *Anfechtung*, or anxiety, he clung to the word of promise. He believed the word of promise, and to it alone.

You see, that's what justification is about. It isn't an abstract formula. It isn't something carefully measured and nuanced and qualified.

It is simply that we believe that Christ's word is true when he says we are forgiven, regardless of what our fears and phobias might tell us. It is that we can joy and confidence and hope because he says so. And we take him at his word. We cling to him.

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**Glenn Hansen**

Bill, I join Pat in thanking you for the link to a most interesting and relevant article. Makes the point quite clearly that the best approach to Luther is through original sources rather than secondary or tertiary.

Good on you!

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**Pat Travis**

Amen Bill and Glenn...a ray of sunshine today that others have seen fit not to bow to baal. :>)

regards,
And let's not forget what Ellen White said about the imputation of the righteousness of Christ:

"The righteousness by which we are justified is imputed; the righteousness by which we are sanctified is imparted. The first is our title to heaven, the second is our fitness for heaven." --Review and Herald, June 4, 1895.

"There is great need that Christ should be preached as the only hope and salvation. When the doctrine of justification by faith was presented at the Rome meeting, it came to many as water comes to the thirsty traveler. The thought that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, not because of any merit on our part, but as a free gift from God, seemed a precious thought." {RH, September 3, 1889 par. 12}

"He lived on this earth a life of perfect obedience, that His righteousness might be imputed to us. To us is given the glorious assurance that though we have fallen through disobedience, we may, through the merits of the Son of God, hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant; . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." RH Jun 5 1901

"Every true Christian will be strong, not in the strength and merit of his good works, but in the righteousness of Christ, which through faith is imputed unto him.". {RH, December 3, 1889 par. 5}

"No one can keep God's commandments except in Christ's power. He bore in His body the sins of all mankind, and He imputes His righteousness to every believing child. {RH, May 7, 1901 par. 1}"

"We must accept Christ as a personal Saviour. Then the Sin-bearer takes away our sin and imputes to us His righteousness. We are cleansed in the blood of the Lamb." {RH, July 23, 1901 par. 20}

"It is the righteousness of Christ that makes the penitent sinner acceptable to God and works his justification. However sinful has been his life, if he believes in Jesus as his personal Saviour, he stands before God in the spotless robes of Christ's imputed righteousness." {ST, July 4, 1892 par. 4}

"Through the imputed righteousness of Christ, we are accounted guiltless. Christ has given to every human being the evidence that he alone is able to bear human grief, sorrow, and sin. Those who claim Christ as their substitute and surety, hanging their helpless souls upon Christ, can endure as seeing him who is invisible. The benediction, "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God," belongs to them. {ST, October 3, 1895 par. 6}"

She didn't think Christ's imputed righteousness "imaginary." It is very real. It is Christ's own righteousness. It is his own law-keeping and perfect obedience. And it is ours.
What would we do without Ellen to comment and settle all doctrinal questions?

**Pat Travis**

Bill,

>> It is his own law-keeping and perfect obedience. And it is ours.<<  
Yes, in the "words" of Calvin & Luther it is "RECKONED" as ours though not inherent.

Back in the early 70's a group of thirsty "gospelers" in Atlanta accumulated about 200 positive quotes of EGW concerning RBF. The problem Bill remains the countering "bad" comments such as being able to attain to a state Adam had before the fall.

So, my friend, it is indeed sola scriptura we must cling to.

regards,  
hubby

**Nathan Schilt**

Thank you, Herb, for provoking thought about faith. What Christian would not agree with your final paragraph - that "a person finds at-one-ment with God by responding to His grace with the mind and heart of faith?"

Why then would you be troubled that such people exhibit wide variances in interpreting most every Biblical doctrine? More importantly, how could one possibly conclude that agreement on the meaning of faith, or a correct understanding of faith, will lead to certitude or consensus in any objective, propositional sense, which is what I think you are seeking?

My Bible informs me that, while God may be changeless, humans experience His revelation as dichotomous, ironic, inconsistent, and arational, regularly moving them beyond their propositional and doctrinal comfort zones. Like broken crystals fallen from the divine chandelier, the light
reflected by humans is always refracted light - never the Truth. The job of each crystal is not to understand and re-form itself into a pre-fallen prism (the Truth), but to remain in the light so that it can receive and reflect as much light as possible as it turns and moves, bathed in the experience of God's grace. It thereby becomes a messenger for a Truth that is personal and beyond containment.

No Herb, this is not simply an individualistic, subjective process. The Bible teaches us that God's Spirit leads us into faith covenants and covenanting communities where His light, shining through the community of fallen, broken prisms, can create explosions of color and beauty. Praise God for explosive faith consequences that cannot be harnessed by doctrine or human experience, but are nevertheless grounded in the sacred text of His revelation!

Herb, I can't say what consequences attend one's understanding of the MEANING of faith. "The devils believe and tremble." So I have a hard time following your statement that "getting the meaning of 'faith' wrong has explosive consequences." But I do believe that getting the experience of faith right has explosive consequences. And isn't that a good thing?

Elaine Nelson

The major problem with Adventists who are trying to fulfill the Great Commission, is that they do not have a consensus on the meaning of the Gospel. Ask any group of Adventists to explain, succinctly, what the Gospel means and there will as many answers as individuals. Unless Adventism can clearly define the Gospel, how can they possibly present it to the world?

Most of the TV and other evangelists are giving such a disparate view that there is no wonder that there is such confusion.

Pat Travis

Elaine,

Neal Wilson thwarted any attempt to understand as "a church" the biblical and I suggest Reformation on JBF "alone" under his edict to cease the conversation. I refer to his article in Ministry, "Open Letter" 6/79 issue.

regards,
pat

Elaine Nelson

Pat, bad as Neal was, Ted may cap his term.

Trevor Hammond

Perhaps Mrs. Nelson should be asked to succinctly "clearly define the Gospel" for us - after all, her
remarks seem to imply that her astute knowledge of the Gospel exceeds that of Adventists.

Elaine Nelson
Chapter 3 verses 16-18 is the Gospel. Is there a better one?

Glenn Hansen
Sister White says:
Under the covenant of grace, the conditions of eternal life are precisely the same as those given to man in Eden. The believing sinner, through his divine substitute and surety, renders obedience to the law of God. Mercy granted to man is the reward of the merit of Christ, who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and "purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Provision made for the salvation of men through the imputed righteousness of Christ, does not do away with good works, release us from our obligation to keep the law, nor lessen in the least its holy claim. Christ came to exalt the law and make it honourable, to reveal its exceeding breadth and changeless character. The glory of the gospel of grace is the imputed righteousness of Christ, providing a way of salvation through obedience to the law of God by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. {Messenger, May 10, 1893 par. 2}

The part man has to act in the salvation of the soul is to believe on Jesus Christ as a perfect Redeemer, not for some other man, but for his own self. {FLB 115.2}

Christ imputes His perfection and righteousness to the believing sinner when he does not continue in sin, but turns from transgression to obedience of the commandments. {FLB 115.3}

While God can be just, and yet justify the sinner through the merits of Christ, no man can cover his soul with the garments of Christ's righteousness while practicing known sins, or neglecting known duties. {FLB 115.4}

Under the covenant of grace God requires from man just what he required in Eden,--perfect obedience. The believing sinner, through his divine Substitute and Surety, renders obedience to the law of God. Christ kept the law perfectly, and through him the believer shall not perish, but have everlasting life. He says, "I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." Mercy granted to man is the reward of the merit of Christ, "who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Through the plan of salvation, God can be just, and yet be the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. {ST, September 5, 1892 par. 7}

"We are saved through the merit of the blood of Christ, but Christ's righteousness does not cover the sin of transgressing God's law, without repentance. We must do all in our power to keep the commandments of God, and then he will impute unto us his righteousness, because we believe in Christ and seek to obey the divine law. This is the reason that Christ came to this world, that he might bring his righteousness to man, that man might lay hold of his strength, and make peace with
God. God accepts the efforts of man to keep the law, because Christ imputes his righteousness to him. We could not keep the law in our own strength. {ST, September 23, 1889 par. 7}

There are about 370 EGW statements which include impute or a cognate thereof such as imputation, imputed, imputes. Many of those statements include quotes from James admonishing the believers to keep the law, obey, work, and so forth. Relatively few of the statements are explanations of Romans 4, Galatians 3 or Genesis 15:6.

Although EGW speaks favorably of the Abrahamic covenant, one would be hard pressed to say, with a straight face, that her burden approximated that of the Reformers. She was, with all due respect, a legalist who found it nearly impossible to emphasize the imputed righteousness of Christ apart from the works of the law.

Note that she says the righteousness of Christ is imputed, not by faith alone but when a man turns from transgression to obedience to the commandments.

Can someone explain how a person is supposed to turn from transgression before the righteousness of Christ has been imputed to him? The HS is given to men as a consequence of justification. The HS empowers people to turn. How does one do it before the HS has been imparted?

laffal

Hansen,

Let's see if this fits the bill:

The question will come up, How is it? Is it by conditions that we receive salvation? Never by conditions do we come to Christ. And if we come to Christ, then what is the condition? The condition is that by living faith we lay hold wholly and entirely upon the merits of the blood of a crucified and risen Saviour. When we do that, then we work the works of righteousness. But when God is calling the sinner in our world, and inviting him, there is no condition there; he is drawn by the invitation of Christ and it is not, "Now you have got to respond in order to come to God." The sinner comes, and as he comes and views Christ elevated upon that cross of Calvary, which God impresses upon his mind, there is a love beyond anything that is imagined that he has taken hold of. And what then? As he beholds that love, why he says that he is a sinner. Well, then, what is sin? Why at once he has to come here to find out. There is no definition given in our world but that transgression is the transgression of the law; and therefore he finds out what sin is. And there is repentance toward God; and what then?—why, faith toward our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ that can speak pardon to the transgressor. {1888 537.2}

Christ is drawing everyone that is not past the boundary. He is drawing him to Himself today. No matter how great that sinner is, He is drawing him. If the sinner can get his arm fixed upon the cross of Calvary, then there is no conviction of sin. What is he there for? Because the law has been transgressed, and he begins to see that he is a sinner; and Christ died because the law was transgressed. And then he begins to look to the righteousness of Christ as the only thing that can cleanse the sinner from his sins and from his transgressions. {1888 537.3}
Now, we want to have an intelligent knowledge of this thing. We want to take hold of the righteousness of Jesus Christ by living faith, and know that we have not any. We may work to the very best of our ability, but we cannot make a single virtue in ourselves; it is the righteousness of Jesus Christ alone that can do it. Then, as we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, we have a power and a strength that is imparted unto us, and we will not want to sin; we cannot do it with the righteousness of Christ, and with ourselves in a position where we shall have Christ working with us and by us. We may make mistakes; we may make errors; but we shall hate these sins—the sins that caused the suffering of the Son of God in our behalf because we were transgressors of the law of God. {1888 538.1}

Peace

Glenn Hansen

14 hours ago

Laffal, I can play tit for tat with Sr. White all day long. Not helpful to me at all. What I'm looking for is a cohesive, consistent explication of Scripture which considers the primary passages dealing with the topic, in this case, the imputation of Christ's righteousness.

EGW prattled on and on with little serious explication of Scripture. One might say that she talked too much. Or as Des Ford said, She was not an exegete. I prefer a belief system based on a Thus saith the Lord, not Sr. White says.

laffal

13 hours ago

Hansen,

It was not a matter of tit for tat. You provided a lengthy quote from her, so I answered the question with one. Other then that, I don't have an issue with your stated request.

Peace

Pat Travis

13 hours ago

Laffal,

I thought of you today when reading Bill's posted article.
http://www.ctsfw.net/media/pdfs/clarkiustitiaimputatachristi.pdf

I feel "your view" is sometimes quite associated with theosis which is somewhat described in the article about page 39 onward. I will repeat that at least I respect you for not revising Luther's view but feeling it was inadequate for the present.

Herb seems to be conspicuously absent from the conversation.
regards,
pat

Laffal
13 hours ago Reply

Pat,

From my understanding, Herb's quite busy... many irons on the fire.

As for Luther's view being "inadequate", I'm not so sure I would have chosen that term. The fundamental premise is vitally important to understand. But I do believe that as time has marched on, the issues in which Luther had to contend with have in and of themselves have become more pronounced / developed in terms of their ability to distract / deceive. Therefore, I also believe that, as I have stated previously, that Luther's position on JBF needs to be developed more fully to meet the needs of today.

A retired SDA Pastor conveyed this idea in the last of June this year; if you combine the concepts of Calvinism and Armenianism (setting aside each position's faults) you will have the gospel fully developed. Much of the problem with the gospel of JBF is not so much with what we tend to agree upon as much as what we tend to fight for and deny.

Anyways, thanks.

Peace

Pat Travis
13 hours ago Reply

Laffal,

Neither Calvin nor Luther taught perfectionism. Both always depended on our righteousness before God adequate for the judgement was "reckoned" to us by JBF "alone."

This does not negate the oughts and evidences of Sanctification in a believer's life...they just don't justify meaning they remain inadequate.

regards,
pat

Laffal
13 hours ago Reply

Pat,

Again, the only difference I believe that can be identified between you and I is what would be the ultimate result of Justification / Sanctification by faith doing their perfect work in us. And the only
issue at hand on my side of the issue is whether or not we are willing to believe to that end?

There is no question as to the value / virtue / merit of Christ's righteousness in the judgment. You used the term "perfectionism" not me. My question to you is this, why is it a struggle for you to consider what the Holy Spirit accomplished in Christ 2,000 years ago, He is able to accomplish in us if we are willing / yielded? And I want to be clear, I'm not asking this question with merit / reckoning / declaring on righteous as a result. By no means am I anywhere near this point. But why must we continue to fail / fall in our walk with Christ? What is the victory that overcomes the world? What does it ultimately mean, greater is He that is in me, then he that is in the world?

I'm not trying to prove anything, I'm only trying to better understand what these all important truths of the Bible mean to me / us.

Peace

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**Glenn Hansen**

12 hours ago [Reply]

"Well, then, what is sin? Why at once he has to come here to find out. There is no definition given in our world but that transgression is the transgression of the law; and therefore he finds out what sin is." EGW

That statement, on its face, is false. It's not true. It's a falsehood uttered by EGW. Christ said that the HS will convict the world of sin because they believe not on [him]. John 16:8,9

The following passage makes it clear that sin is defined with regard to how we perceive/relate to Jesus Christ, not to the Decalogue:

22 "if I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.
23 "he who hates me hates my father also.
24 "if I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated me and my father as well.
25 "but they have done this to fulfill the word that is written in their law, ‘THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE.’

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**Pat Travis**

12 hours ago [Reply]

Laffal,

I have no problem with your "seeking" sinlessness...as long as the arrival is not necessary for the "final generation."

I suggest part of J&W (though not a Jones and Waggoner expert) falling away was the internalizing of justification through pantheistic leanings.
Christ 2000 yrs. ago was not "just like us" as He had no propensities to sin. I am all for our legitimate growth in holiness.

When you haven't quite arrived, as I suspect, remember "my hope is built on nothing else than Jesus' alien righteousness imputed to us.

regards,
pat

Bill Cork
11 hours ago

"A retired SDA Pastor conveyed this idea in the last of June this year; if you combine the concepts of Calvinism and Aremenianism (setting aside each positions faults) you will have the gospel fully developed. "

How do you combine limited atonement and an atonement open to all? How do you combine irresistible grace with grace that can be resisted? How do you combine perseverance of the saints with the possibility that one can ultimately reject God? How do you combine unconditional election with conditional election? How do you combine predestination and freewill?

But the question we must come back to is this: when you are fearful or anxious or tempted, what is the source of your hope and confidence?

laffal
9 hours ago

Pat,

The critical word is "necessary." I never have / will use that term. But as we have discussed previously, I am a "harvest principle:" advocate. The "final generation" will be those who, thru faith and love, surrendered / fully yielded themselves to God that the Spirit may reproduce the righteousness of Christ in them. Their faith will be fully set on Christ and Him crucified and His righteousness... period.

As for Jones & Waggoner, Waggoner had the issue with panenthism. Jones association with Kellogg became problematic in time. The greatest issue they had to deal with was the unchristlike spirit of their brethren. It's not easy withstanding opposition, even when you know you have the truth.

You know Pat, I'm not looking to arrive, I'm pressing forward to the mark of my high calling in Christ. As I yield to His leading and the working of His power, all things are possible thru Him. I do not believe, the "final generation" for example, will ever have the sense that they've gained the victory of sin / temptation fully, quite the opposite actually. All the while, our hope is built on nothing less then Jesus Christ and His righteousness imputed to us, but the impartation is necessary to experience the peace / power of that righteousness that is His alone.
Peace

Glenn Hansen  
9 hours ago  Reply

The 1543 edition of Melanchthon's Commonplaces of Theology lists 18 [not 26] points of contention between Melanchthon and the Romanists. Melanchthon rehearses an argument and then responds. Below are examples of the arguments of the adversaries [Melanchthon's response not cited]:

I The word "righteousness" means obedience according to all the commandments. Faith of which we are speaking is not properly the work of all the commandments: Therefore we are not justified by faith.

III "He who does not love remains in death." Therefore it is impossible to say that a person is righteous by faith alone.

V We are righteous by grace: Grace is the love which is poured into the heart: Therefore we are righteous by infused love.

XI Righteousness is in the will: Faith is not in the will: Therefore we are not justified by faith.

XIV Matthew 19:17," If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." Therefore it is possible to satisfy the law and our obedience merits eternal life.

XV "Forgive and it will be forgiven you, Matt.6:14: Therefore our forgiving spirit merits the remission of sins

XVII Her sins, which were many, have been forgiven her because she loved much," Luke 7:47: Therefore remission of sins takes place on account of love

XVIII Eternal life is called a reward: Therefore it is owed to us because of our works.
Lawsuit Filed on Behalf of Three Forced to Resign at La Sierra University

Submitted Jul 28, 2011
By Atoday News Team

"On July 28, 2011, the law firm of McCuneWright, LLP, based in Redlands, California, on behalf of Dr. Jeffry Kaatz, Dr. James Beach, and Dr. Gary Bradley, filed a lawsuit against all responsible parties as a result of actions taken against them in a June 10, 2011, meeting in which the La Sierra University Chair of the Board of Trustees forced these three long-time, dedicated employees to resign."

Read full news release here.

To view the lawsuit filed with the 'Superior Court of California County of Riverside' click here

Seanpit

From an article by The Press Enterprise dated July 28, 2011:

Richard McCune, the attorney for the three plaintiffs, said his clients are worried that the forced resignations are “not only hurting them personally but harming the university they have devoted their lives to.”

The ironic thing about this statement is that LSU is also named as a defendant in the lawsuit. If these men are so concerned about any harm that may come to LSU, why then are they suing LSU itself?

Sean Pitman
DetectingDesign.com

Seanpit

It seems also like Dr. Gary Bradley, one of the plaintiffs in this case, changed his mind about how to proceed:

Bradley, the biology adjunct, said in his e-mail that he was devastated by the turn of events that has led to his resignation, though he gave no explicit indication that he plans to fight the termination on legal grounds. “I’m not ready to quit…. I have many important projects underway here now and many other people will be inconvenienced by my sudden departure,” he wrote.

“If you are among those who welcome this transition, I request that you celebrate with dignity,” Bradley added. “If you are among those who find this transition upsetting, I ask that you not turn it into a war.”
From Inside Higher Ed, June 15, 2011

Elaine Nelson

It could be that he realized that it was a hasty decision.

Markham

Where is the sense of honor when those who are paid from the coffers of the SDA church teach as facts what the Scripture has determined is false? They should have resigned or been relieved of their positions long ago.

Elaine Nelson

Markham,

The same teachers at LLU medical school that teach as facts what medical science has discovered, not what the Bible tells us about the human body.

Why are only certain sciences denigrated when everyone here would seek reputable medical scientist if his life was on the line. It seems that in Adventism there is a "pick and choose" method of deciding which sciences are forbidden and which are perfectly approved.

The Bible writers knew as much about earth sciences as they did about the human body--which surely wasn't much.

David

Elaine could give examples of current the medical knowledge that contradicts the biblical principles of health?

Elaine Nelson

Simple. Read Leviticus and see how diseases were diagnosed and treated, starting with leprosy. Modern medicine knows it is caused by bacteria.

Women's menstrual periods isolated them for at least a week. Modern medicine knows it is not contagious; no need of isolation. Most skin conditions: boils, burns, baldness, were diagnosed as leprosy, which required that the blood of sacrifice be put on the lobe of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand and the big toe of the right foot. Then take a little of the oil that remains in the
hollow of his left hand, dip a finger of his right hand into the oil in the hollow of his left hand, and with the oil make seven sprinklings with his finger before Yahweh...and it continues.

Did the ancients then know about mental illness, or was it considered that a person was demon possessed? That the image of a snake could cure fatal illnesses?

Would you choose to be treated by those Bible principles or modern medicine? Were those "principles" or exact specifications for treatment? The "principles" depended only on the knowledge they had and it was certainly not applicable today.

David 1 week ago Reply

One by one, the leprosy mentioned in the bible is contagious and probably is not limited to the leprosy that we now. There are at list 8 skin conditions that are very contagious http://www.qualityhealth.com/skin-care-beauty-articles/8-highly-contagious-skin-conditions and a responsible physician in absence of the medication (antibiotics, creams, etc) will recommend isolation.

Elaine Nelson 1 week ago Reply

Practically every skin condition known was, at that time, diagnosed as leprosy. It must have been really endemic in that area of the Middle East. There are many, many conditions (ask a dermatologist) that are most difficult to diagnose BEFORE treatment is begun. I know a patient who had cutaneous lupus that resembled dozens of similar conditions, all with very different treatment.

Also, why should women be "unclean" for seven days each month and isolated, and twice as long following a female birth as a male?

Good medical science??

David 1 week ago Reply

In regards to the skin, by the context i can understand that some body with experience could recognize what could be contagious. Seen to me at least there was some knowledge of preventive medicine, therefore thus does not against the present medical knowledge.

In regard to the menstruation this was a health matter o ritual one? If read you Genesis, you will find out that this ritual was in place long before the ordinances of the of leviticus.

Elaine Nelson 1 week ago Reply

Agreed, many, if not most of the Levitical laws were a mixture: some ritual, some hoped to treat. They used the best knowledge they had at that time, which should not be used by thinking people
today.

Why not return to the alchemists who were trying to make gold from base metals? That was the knowledge then. It should not be our practice today to advance no further.

Trevor Hammond
1 week ago
Reply

Well at least the scriptures have the correct and adequate information regarding the treatment of acute and chronic 'lukewarmness'...and not forgetting the ONLY treatment of sin in all its forms.

T

Elaine Nelson
1 week ago
Reply

Has anyone dared to list all the sins in the Bible from which someone can be guilty?

??
3 days ago
Reply

I have made a list of sins/condemned behaviour told in Bible. In its printed form it was about 7 meters long.

I have shown it to some SDA friends. Their reaction was every time "What are you trying to prove?"

The gist was to realize, what was not included in that list.

Pauli

Trevor Hammond
1 week ago
Reply

Homosexuality is one - but the Govshop has legalised it in terms of gay sex and marriage. What's next Marijuana?

T

Elaine Nelson
1 week ago
Reply

According to some, homosexual ACTIONS, not the orientation is the most evil of all sins. Funny, how some can immediately come up with sins for which they are never tempted.

I have never been tempted to drink, so I can be so happy that that "sin" can be crossed off. Nor do I eat pork, so there's another. Should we have a game to see who has the least number of sins?
Elaine Nelson

From the Adventist Review Online:

"Church says La Sierra Employee’s Lawsuit is ‘Without Merit’
Outside counsel retained to defend school, leaders."

Which was to be expected. Only a court of law will decide, not the church.

The church intends to "vigorously defend itself."

It's your tithe money at work.

Doctorf Doctorf1

Elaine,

This is one of the reasons I quit paying tithe a long time ago. I give it now directly to SDA and Catholic charities. Screw the pontifical GC.

Elaine Nelson

That's been my pattern for many yeas.

Markham

Now and then I notice that Elaine's comment follows what I have written. I never read her comments: if I decide to leave the SDA church I won't stick around spending untold hours being critical of the church I have left.

I'm in hopes that those who are suing lose their case. If the reports are correct they were not *forced* to resign, they chose to. Obviously, their resignations were the result of their deviations from the path of rectitude reportedly. They were given a choice and they made it.

Elaine Nelson

Markham, Be sure to never read anything with which you disagree. This way, life will be safe and not confusing. Only believe what you already have and you will stay where you always are.
Elaine,

I might be wrong, but your comments exudes resentment. I am not sure why, but that is what I sense. You are obviously passionate about your position and I can respect that; however, your demeanor obfuscates your position.

I probably should just let this slide especially since I total, 100%, unequivocally, disagree with your position. Unfortunately, I feel compelled to let you know that you are defeating yourself. I guess having said that I 100% disagree with your position I should now verbalize why:

1) An institution defines in their charter their express purpose for existing, the rules that govern that institution and how those rules might be amended. We have the right to disagree and even criticize the institution, but as long as the institution is operating within the limits of common law it is free to do so.

2) Churches, by our own laws, are not required to higher people from other faith or belief systems. Just like a computer Software Company does not have to hire a civil engineer as a programmer just because he wants the job. The Adventist Church should not be required to hire a Baptist Pastor to lead an Adventist Church.

3) Adventist University and Adventist Academies, in their bylaws, clearly defines the curriculum to be Biblically based down to the very point of what Adventists believe. This includes the creation verses evolution point.

4) These individuals, knowing what the Adventist beliefs are, accepted their positions knowing that those positions required them to uphold the Adventist belief system. They decided to step outside the well-defined confines of those beliefs. They were called on it and given the choice to walk the line or resign their positions. They decided to resign rather than compromise their beliefs. I, for one, respect that decision even though I believe we were created by God with His own hands.

5) Change can be force, or coerced, but it will not be true change. If you can enforce it long enough it might even become second nature, but it will not be a true conversion or change. If you want to change a belief system you have to build a strong argument against that belief system. If any doubt is left, then you cannot, reasonably, expect someone to drop their beliefs. I don’t believe you can force someone to accept your beliefs, or that you have to accept someone else’s beliefs just because they have them. It is a free country deal with it. My beliefs don’t infringe on yours, so why should yours infringe on mine?

There is more, but I suspect I am past the point of my response is more of an article rather than a comment.

I pray that you understand that the Church has a right to defend its beliefs even though someone disagrees with it. If it did not, then the church would not be able to function as the sanctuary that it should be.
There is no argument that the church does not have a right to defend its beliefs. That is absolutely true.

The problem: Under the aegis of the SDA church, there are established schools of higher education that have defined and sold themselves as universities. In the state of California, as in most states, any school holding itself out to be a university has certain laws that pertain to any school claiming to be a university. The WASC is the organization that certifies that an institution has met the qualifications to be a university.

When, and if, a university does not conform to those requirements, it has a period of time to do whatever is necessary to meet those requirements. One of those in the case of LSU is that the sciences teach science and not religion—it is not science. The SDA church, and its AAA wish the school to teach a six-day Creation in the science department, a prostitution of science, and expecting a science teacher to teach religion is "above his pay grade." He was hired to teach science, not religion. "Creationism" is not science.

This is the situation now in LSU: If the university accedes to the AAA demands, it may lose its WASC accreditation, and may not be called a university. If it loses accreditation, it will no longer be eligible to receive federal or state funding, such as student grants. If it loses funding, it will lose students, a Catch-22 situation.

The faculty who resigned, did so under haste and were no allowed council. They have filed charges against the G.C. for wrongful termination. The suit it being closely watched by many, and if you are a faithful tithe payer, it is your money that will cover attorney's costs for the church defense. It will not come cheap.

You state: "the church has a right to defend its beliefs." No one disagrees. However, you follow with "then the church would not be able to function as the sanctuary that it should be." If by that you mean the church will no longer be able to function, the SDA church will continue; but their educational institutions have a dual responsibility to both the church and its students. When they are in conflict, it results in the situation now seen.

Given the actual situation, what suggestion do you have for the church? There are two: close the school; or adjust the situation to allow it to continue with proper accreditation and assign religious teachers to teach a six-day Creation, and the science teachers to teach what they were hired to teach.
Elaine:

If WASC makes it THEIR INTENT to impose their or YOUR view of a "prostitution of science" (yes, I am challenging your definition and would point out that the "Theory of Evolution" is the abherent science and I will trust God's WORD over man's theory anytime, anyday), I assert such an effort is clearly a violation of the Freedom of Religion and an egregious violation of of the most fundamental "Right of Conscience" and must be challenged.

In fact, YOU must be challenged!!! You are clearly not a Seventh-day Adventist and I trust would have the ethical responsibility not to represent yourself as a Seventh-day Adventist. What would the Sabbath possibly mean or have any purpose to the radical evolutionist who clearly does not believe that "God rested on the Sabbath day and HALLOWED it"?

And what hope would a radical evolutionist have in Eternal Life or the Resurrection at the Second Advent?

Your view is the most "INTOLERANT" I have ever seen advocated by a regressive "progressive" liberal. Hypocrisy does not become a liberal!!!

Gailon Arthur Joy, a proud card carrying Tea Party Adventist

AUReporter

Vernon P. Wagner

All religions have their sacred texts that may be historical, metaphorical, inspirational, legendary, or purely fabricated, and each group will defend their version of 'truth' to the death whereas the search for 'truth' should be a process rather than a destination. As Rabbi Kunstler has said, "God is like a mirror. The mirror doesn't change, but all who look in it will see something different."

The Christian Bible has never been the infallible 'Word of God.' It's a collection of writings from the Council of Nicea that was convened under orders of Constantine to make up a book for Papal approval. They kept what they liked, and tossed the rest. Christians who would never accept a Pope's word as law, fully accept what Rome declared to be all we need to know. We have the 'Theory' of Evolution, and we have the 'Story' of Creation...two sides of the same coin.

Possible future events such as second advent, resurrection, and eternal life will occur without our input. They will not depend upon whether, or not we believe in a literal seven day week of ALL creation.

If the three faculty members were dismissed without legal process, they deserve recourse. A quote worth remembering: "All truth begins with blasphemy." --Nietzsche
You do not have sufficient permissions to post a comment.
LAWSUIT FILED BY THREE LA SIERRA UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEES WHO WERE FORCED TO RESIGN BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES CHAIR

CONTACT: Jack Boren
McCuneWright, LLP
Phone: 909.557.1250

For Immediate Release

Redlands, CA-(July 28, 2011)

On July 28, 2011, the law firm of McCuneWright, LLP, based in Redlands, California, on behalf of Dr. Jeffry Kaatz, Dr. James Beach, and Dr. Gary Bradley, filed a lawsuit against all responsible parties as a result of actions taken against them in a June 10, 2011, meeting in which the La Sierra University Chair of the Board of Trustees forced these three long-time, dedicated employees to resign. The lawsuit can be found at www.mccunewright.com. In summary, the lawsuit alleges that:

On June 10, 2011, the Chair of the La Sierra University Board of Trustees (a position held by virtue his employment as a high ranking executive with the Seventh-day Adventist Church) confronted and then effectively fired three of the most important leadership employees of La Sierra University. He took this action without the authority of any action by the La Sierra University Board of Trustees and without consultation with, or input from, the President of La Sierra University as required by the University Bylaws and Trustees Handbook.

The purported and pre-textual basis for the effective termination of these three employees was supposedly statements contained in an audio recording surreptitiously obtained at a private get-together of the employees at one of the fired employees’ homes. This informal get-together took place immediately following a highly emotionally charged meeting between high ranking Seventh-day Adventist Church executives and the faculty of La Sierra University, in which the Church executives defended the decision to assign La Sierra University a substandard academic accreditation based on the contention that the University was deviating from church doctrine.

This unfounded and untrue charge of deviation from church doctrine was causing great damage to the reputation of La Sierra University, the institution that these three employees had collectively served for more than 100 years, causing great
frustration and anger in for these employees, as well as most of La Sierra University’s faculty, administration, and staff.

In what the employees thought was private conversation; there was some emotional venting about how La Sierra University was being improperly and unfairly treated by certain church leaders. Unbeknownst to these three leadership employees, the fourth person at the home gathering, also a La Sierra University Board member recorded the private conversation. The recording of that private conversation was then passed on by another board member to an executive of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, who listened and then directed that a purported transcript of the private meeting be prepared before passing it on to other church leaders.

With the transcript of the private meeting in hand, executives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church met secretly and, without the requisite input from the administration and Board of Trustees of La Sierra University, decided to fire these three important University leaders. The tactic used to fire the employees was through a coerced resignation, accomplished by unexpectedly confronting the employees with the non-consensual recording of the private conversation that had occurred seven weeks earlier, misrepresenting the contents of such recording, refusing to allow the employees to listen to the recording or review the purported transcript, and then threatening to release the information contained on the tape if the employees did not immediately resign.

Despite requests by the employees, they were not given an opportunity to review the transcript that they had just learned was in existence; they were not given time to think so they could recall what was said in the meeting; and they were not given the opportunity to talk with family, colleagues, or attorneys before being forced to make this important decision. Without any warning, they were told to immediately resign for the good of the University, the Church, their colleagues and their own reputation, or the tapes would be released to the entire Board of Trustees and the employees would be terminated. The three employees signed the resignations under these coercive conditions based on the material misrepresentations of the Board Chair.

The actions taken by the executives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church organization, that subsequently went unchallenged by the La Sierra University Board of Trustees and administration, were in violation of the bylaws of La Sierra University, the Board Chairman’s duty of loyalty to La Sierra University, and numerous California laws.

It is alleged that these actions were not taken in isolation, but were in fact taken by the church executives as part of a larger battle for control over La Sierra University. By using the secret recordings of private conversations to fire these three important leaders of La Sierra University, the church organization would
send a strong and intimidating message to La Sierra University administration and its employees.

The actions taken by the defendants have greatly harmed the three employees and La Sierra University. For the employees, they have not only lost their high-ranking positions, their reputation has been unfairly and irreparably damaged with their colleagues and the Seventh-day Adventist and Inland Empire communities. For the University, it has lost the services of three of its most important and beloved leaders. The church executives have weakened and marginalized the administration of La Sierra University in the eyes of the faculty and staff, hindering their ability to lead. It has also diminished La Sierra University in numerous other ways, including fundraising and recruitment of students and faculty. More importantly, this action has raised serious concerns with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (a non-church affiliated organization responsible for accrediting institutions of higher education) that ultimately could have devastating consequences for La Sierra University.

The lawsuit seeks to remedy each of these gross violations of law for the three employees. In addition, because of the serious ongoing damage being committed to the three employees and the University, the lawsuit seeks an injunction to prevent the Board Chair from continuing to act in conflict with his duty of loyalty to La Sierra University.

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SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
OF AND FOR THE COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE

JEFFRY M. KAATZ, JAMES W. BEACH, and
GARY L. BRADLEY,

v.

RICARDO GRAHAM; PACIFIC UNION
CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTISTS, a not-for-profit corporation;
DANIEL R. JACKSON; LARRY BLACKMER;
NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION
CORPORATION OF SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTISTS, a not-for-profit corporation; and
LA SIERRA UNIVERSITY, a not-for-profit
corporation; and DOES 1-100,

Plaintiffs,

Defendants.

Case No.:

Judge Assigned:

Complaint Filed:

COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES AND
INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

1) Wrongful Termination in Violation of
   Public Policy
2) Breach of Employment Contract with
   Specified Term
3) Breach of Employment Contract with No
   Specified Term
4) Constructive Breach of Employment
   Contract
5) Breach of the Implied Covenant of Good
   Faith and Fair Dealing
6) Intentional Interference with Contractual
   Relations
7) Intentional Interference with Prospective
   Economic Advantage
8) Inducing Breach of Contract
9) Intentional Infliction of Emotional Distress
10) Violation of California Common-Law
    Right to Privacy
11) Violation of Business And Professions
    Code Section 17200 et seq. – Unlawful,
    Fraudulent, and
12) Unfair Business Act and Practices
13) Claim for Punitive Damages

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

Complaint for Money Damages and Injunctive Relief
Plaintiffs JEFFRY M. KAATZ; JAMES W. BEACH; and GARY L. BRADLEY, as individuals, herein alleges as follows:

I

INTRODUCTION

1. On June 10, 2011, Plaintiffs, three life-long employees of La Sierra University and senior members of the administration and faculty, were individually summoned by Defendant Ricardo Graham, Chair of the Board of Trustees of La Sierra University by virtue of his position as President of the Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, and informed that he was in possession of an audio recording of a conversation made in a private home at which Plaintiffs were present more than seven weeks prior.

2. This recording had been made by a member of the Board of Trustees of La Sierra University, without Plaintiffs’ knowledge or consent, in the private home of Dr. Beach, following a contentious faculty meeting at which Defendants Larry Blackmer and Daniel Jackson, respectively the Vice President for Education and President of Defendant North American Division Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists, had defended the recent decision of the accrediting organization run by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to issue a negative accreditation finding with respect to La Sierra University. Plaintiffs, who have each devoted their entire professional lives to the mission of La Sierra University, not surprisingly were very critical of Defendants Blackmer, Jackson, and Graham with regard to their actions affecting La Sierra University.

3. This surreptitious recording was subsequently delivered to Defendant Blackmer who directed that a purported transcript of the private conversation be prepared. Defendant Blackmer then distributed both the audio recording of the private conversation and the transcript to Defendants Jackson and Graham.

4. After inappropriately receiving, listening to, and distributing the non-consensual recording of Plaintiffs’ private conversation, Defendants Blackmer and Jackson, to whom Defendant Graham reports in his role as President of the Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists but who have no operational or legal authority over the governance of La Sierra University, plotted with Defendant Graham to use the recording as an excuse to terminate Plaintiffs’ employment by La Sierra
University, including Plaintiff Dr. Gary L. Bradley, Professor of Biology at La Sierra University, whom
they considered one of the most vocal critics of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s efforts to influence
the academic curriculum of La Sierra University.

5. In consultation with, and at the behest of Defendants Blackmer and Jackson, Defendant
Graham misrepresented the contents of the recording of their private conversation and threatened
Plaintiffs that if they did not immediately sign letter of resignations, they would be fired from their
positions and the audio recording would be made public, causing shame and great harm to Plaintiffs,
their colleagues, their families, and the University that each had faithfully served for their entire careers.

6. In taking such action without advising or consulting with the President of La Sierra
University and without the authority of any action taken by the Board of Trustees, Defendant Graham
not only made improper and unlawful use of non-consensual recording of a private conversation, but
violated the La Sierra University Bylaws, Trustees Handbook, and Faculty Handbook, exceeded his
authority as Chair of the Board of Trustees, and breached the fiduciary duty he owed to La Sierra
University by putting the interests of his own employer above the interests of the University.

7. In so doing, Defendants caused Plaintiffs to suffer the loss of their occupations, exposed
Plaintiffs to hatred, contempt, ridicule, and shame, and discouraged others in the Seventh-day Adventist
community from associating or dealing with them. Furthermore, Defendants’ actions have diminished
the reputation of La Sierra University in the Seventh-day Adventist and non-Seventh-day Adventist
community, and if left un-redressed, threaten the very existence of La Sierra University and its ability to
function as an accredited institution of higher education, which will result in loss of enrollment, private
funding, grants, morale, and faculty.

8. This complaint seeks full redress for the Plaintiffs as a result of Defendants unlawful
actions and seeks a permanent injunction reinstating Plaintiffs to their employment positions and
enjoining Defendant Graham from taking further unlawful acts that are substantially certain to cause
ongoing harm to Plaintiffs and La Sierra University.

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II

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

9. This Court has personal jurisdiction over the Defendants because Defendants have conducted and continue to conduct business in the State of California, and because Defendants have committed the acts and omissions complained of herein in the State of California.

10. Venue is proper in this Court because some of the Defendants, including Defendant La Sierra University resides in this County, and because a Defendant entered into a contract and the contract was to be performed within this county, pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure, section 395(a).

III

GENERAL ALLEGATIONS

11. This is a civil action primarily seeking from Defendants Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, North American Division Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists, La Sierra University, Daniel R. Jackson, and Larry Blackmer, and Defendant Ricardo Graham, both in his capacity as President of the Pacific Union Conference and in his capacity as Chair of the Board of Trustees of La Sierra University, economic, non-economic, and punitive damages as a result of Defendants' wrongful termination of Plaintiffs, which resulted in the destruction of the Plaintiffs' careers and reputations, and injunctive relief re-instating Plaintiffs in their prior positions and preventing Defendant Graham from further action exceeding his authority as Chair of the Board of Trustees that is in breach of his fiduciary duty to La Sierra University.

12. Furthermore, Plaintiffs also seek remedies for Defendants' actions of intentionally disclosing and/or using and endeavoring to disclose and/or use the contents of the nonconsensual recording of Plaintiffs' private conversations with full knowledge that the information was obtained through the unauthorized interception of oral communications between the Plaintiffs, including private and confidential communications, in addition to the aforementioned statutes, Plaintiffs also seek remedies for intentional interference with contractual relations; breach of actual and constructive employment contract; breach of fiduciary duties, and defamation.

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Plaintiffs

13. Plaintiff Jeffry M. Kaatz, D.M.A. (hereinafter “Dr. Kaatz”), was at all times relevant herein a resident of San Bernardino County, California, and had a contract of employment with Defendant La Sierra University. On June 10, 2011, Dr. Kaatz was constructively and actually terminated from his position as Vice President for University Advancement of La Sierra University.

14. Plaintiff James W. Beach, D.A. (hereinafter “Dr. Beach”), was, at all times relevant herein, a resident of Riverside County, California, and had a contract for employment with Defendant La Sierra University. On June 10, 2011, Plaintiff Dr. Beach was constructively and actually terminated from his position as Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences of La Sierra University.

15. Plaintiff Gary L. Bradley, Ph.D. (hereinafter “Dr. Bradley”), was, at all times relevant herein, a resident of Riverside County, California, and had a contract for employment with Defendant La Sierra University. On June 10, 2011, Dr. Bradley was constructively and actually terminated from his faculty position of Professor in the Biology Department at La Sierra University.

Defendants

16. Defendant North American Division Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists (hereinafter “North American Division”) is a not-for-profit corporation incorporated in the State of Maryland, with its principal place of business located in Silver Spring, Maryland. Defendant North American Division is one of 13 Divisions that together comprise the world-wide Seventh-Day Adventist Church. Defendant North American Division operates, directs, supervises, and otherwise controls the Seventh-day Adventist churches throughout the United States and is also responsible for the supervision, coordination, promotion and quality control of the Seventh-day Adventist educational system. Its employees functionally report to leadership of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. It is the employer of Defendants Larry Blackmer and Daniel R. Jackson, and has operational and practical control over employees of Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, including Defendant Ricardo Graham. All actions taken by Defendants Graham, Blackmer, and Jackson were in the course of scope of agency for Defendant North American Division and taken to benefit Defendant North American Division.
17. Defendant Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (hereinafter “Pacific Union Conference”) is a not-for-profit corporation incorporated in the State of California, with its principal place of business located in Westlake Village, California. It is one of nine unions that comprise Defendant North American Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Defendant Pacific Union Conference’s websites claim that “[t]he Pacific Union Conference owns and operates two schools of higher education, La Sierra University, in Riverside, California, and Pacific Union College, in Angwin, California.”

18. Defendant Ricardo Graham (hereinafter “Graham”) was, at all relevant times herein, a resident of Stockton, California, and President of Defendant Pacific Union Conference, and reported to Defendant North American Division. At all relevant times herein, Defendant Graham, by virtue of his position as President of Defendant Pacific Union Conference, was also Chair of the La Sierra University Board of Trustees and as such owed a fiduciary duty to La Sierra University to exercise discretionary authority and control respecting University policy in the best interest of La Sierra University according to the La Sierra University Bylaws. Defendant Graham personally demanded the immediate resignations of all three Plaintiffs from their positions at La Sierra University and, in so doing, constructively terminated Plaintiffs. Defendant Graham is being sued herein both in his capacity as President of Defendant Pacific Union Conference and in his capacity as Chair of the Board of Trustees of La Sierra University.

19. Defendant Larry Blackmer (hereinafter “Blackmer”) was at all relevant times herein a resident of Burtonsville, Maryland, and the Vice President for Education of Defendant North American Division.

20. Defendant Daniel R. Jackson (“Jackson”) was at all relevant times herein a resident of the State of Maryland, and the President of Defendant North American Division.

21. Defendant La Sierra University is an institution of higher education and a not-for-profit corporation incorporated in the State of California, with its principal place of business located in Riverside, California. La Sierra University is affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventist church, and Defendant Pacific Union provides financial support to La Sierra University. It is one of fourteen
Seventh-day Adventist higher education institutions in the United States and has approximately 2,000 students.

22. La Sierra University is accredited by the Adventist Accrediting Association (hereinafter “AAA”) as well as the academic accreditor, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges’ Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities (hereinafter “WASC”). Defendant La Sierra University is a separate and distinct entity from Defendants North American Division and Pacific Union Conference subject to its own articles of incorporation and corporate bylaws.

23. At all relevant times herein, there were contracts of employment between each Plaintiff and Defendant La Sierra University.

24. The true names and capacities whether individual, corporate, associate, or otherwise of Defendants DOES 1 through and including 22, are LSU board members. Said board members’ names are known to Plaintiffs, but it is unknown which board members took illegal actions as alleged in the complaint, and therefore, sue said defendants under fictitious names. Plaintiffs will amend and/or cause an amendment to this complaint to show their true names and capacities when ascertained.

25. The true names and capacities whether individual, corporate, associate, or otherwise of Defendants DOES 23 through and including 50, are employees of La Sierra University. Said employees’ names may be known to Plaintiffs, but it is unknown which employees took illegal actions as alleged in the complaint, and therefore, sue said defendants under fictitious names. Plaintiffs will amend and/or cause an amendment to this complaint to show their true names and capacities when ascertained.

26. The true names and capacities whether individual, corporate, associate, or otherwise of Defendants DOES 51 through and including 70, are employees of Defendant North American Division unknown to Plaintiffs who, therefore, sue said defendants under fictitious names. Plaintiffs will amend and/or cause an amendment to this complaint to show their true names and capacities when ascertained.

27. The true names and capacities whether individual, corporate, associate, or otherwise of Defendants DOES 71 through and including 90, are employees of Defendant Pacific Union Conference unknown to Plaintiffs who, therefore, sue said defendants under fictitious names. Plaintiffs will amend and/or cause an amendment to this complaint to show their true names and capacities when ascertained.
28. The true names and capacities whether individual, corporate, associate, or otherwise of
Defendants DOES 91 through and including 100, are other persons or entities presently unknown to
Plaintiffs who, therefore, sue said defendants under fictitious names. Plaintiffs will amend and/or cause
an amendment to this complaint to show their true names and capacities when ascertained.

29. Plaintiffs are informed and believe and thereon allege that each of said Defendants is
responsible in some manner for the events and happenings as alleged herein and for the injuries and
damages, proximately caused or otherwise, hereinafter alleged. Plaintiffs are further informed and
believe and thereon allege that each Defendant was acting as part of an employment, agency, joint
venture, and/or fiduciary duty with every other Defendant, and as such each Defendant is legally
responsible for the actions taken by every other Defendant.

IV

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

Purpose and Mission of La Sierra University

30. La Sierra University is a not-for-profit corporation whose purposes and governance
structure are set forth in the La Sierra University Bylaws. Policies regarding the governance of La
Sierra University are also set forth and explained in the La Sierra University Faculty Handbook and the
La Sierra University Trustees Handbook.

31. La Sierra University Faculty Handbook defines the mission of La Sierra University to be:

"To seek truth, enlarging human understanding through scholarship;
To know God, ourselves, and the world through reflection, instruction, and
mentoring;
To serve others, contributing to the good of our local and global
communities."

Plaintiffs Employment with La Sierra University

32. Plaintiff Jeffry M. Kaatz has been employed by Defendant La Sierra University (and its
predecessor entity, La Sierra College of Loma Linda University) since 1983, when he was hired as an
Adjunct Professor. In 1988, he was promoted to Assistant Professor. He served as Chair of the
Department of Music from 1988-1992. In 1991, he was promoted to Associate Professor. In 1994, he
was awarded Tenure. He again served as Chair of the Music Department from 1994 through 1999. In
1996, was promoted to Professor and served as the Assistant Vice President for Academic
Administration.

33. On March 22, 2001, Dr. Kaatz was appointed Vice President for Advancement by La
Sierra University President Lawrence T. Geraty with the approval of the Board of Trustees.

34. Plaintiff James W. Beach has been employed by Defendant La Sierra University (and its
predecessor entity, La Sierra College of Loma Linda University) since July 1, 1979, when he was hired
as an Assistant Professor of Mathematics. In July 1982, Dr. Beach was promoted to Associate Professor
of Mathematics and appointed Chair of the Department of Mathematics and Computing. In July 1991,
Dr. Beach was given tenure. From 1994 through 2000, Dr. Beach served as Associate Dean of the
College of Arts and Sciences. In 2000, Dr. Beach was appointed Interim Dean of the College of Arts
and Sciences. From July 2002 through the June 2011, Dr. Beach served as the Dean of the College of
Arts and Sciences.

35. On February 10, 2011, the Board of Trustees appointed Dr. Beach to a third four-year
term as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences for the period of July 1, 2011, through June 30, 2015.

36. Plaintiff Gary L. Bradley has been employed by Defendant La Sierra University (and its
predecessor entity, La Sierra College of Loma Linda University) since 1972 when he was hired as an
Instructor in Biology. In 1974, he was promoted to Assistant Professor of Biology. In 1982, he was
promoted to Associate Professor of Biology. Dr. Bradley served as the Chief Health Professions
Advisor, College of Arts and Sciences of Loma Linda University from 1983-1984. He served as
Coordinator of the Honors Program for the College of Arts and Sciences of Loma Linda University from
1984-1986. In 1988, he was promoted to Professor of Biology with Tenure. Dr. Bradley served as the
Chair of the Biology Department from 1990-1996. From 1995-1996, Dr. Bradley also served as the
Director of the General Education program of La Sierra University. In 1996, Dr. Bradley was appointed
Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, a position held by Dr. Bradley until 1999. From 2000-2008,
Dr. Bradley served as Director of Research of the Honors Program of La Sierra University. In 2008, Dr.
Bradley formally retired, thereby relinquishing his tenured position. However, he continued to serve La
Sierra University by teaching as a Professor of Biology.
37. Plaintiffs have devoted their entire professional lives to serving La Sierra University and its mission.

The Termination of Plaintiffs’ Employment on June 10, 2011

38. On the morning June 10, 2011, Plaintiff Kaatz was contacted by telephone by President Wisbey and requested to come to the President’s office at 1:30 p.m. to meet with Defendant Graham. When Plaintiff Kaatz inquired as to the agenda for the meeting, President Wisbey responded that he did not know and asked Plaintiff Kaatz whether he knew what the agenda was going to be.

39. Plaintiff Kaatz reported to President Wisbey’s office where he was confronted by Defendant Graham and the General Counsel of La Sierra University.

40. Defendant Graham started the meeting with prayer, and then immediately informed Dr. Kaatz that Defendant Graham had possession of a transcript and audio recording of a gathering at a home. Defendant Graham then stated that Dr. Kaatz’s presence at the gathering required that he no longer serve as Vice President for Advancement of La Sierra University.

41. At that point in the meeting, President Wisbey interrupted and stated to Defendant Graham that Dr. Kaatz was a member of his senior executive team. President Wisbey stated that he had barely had the opportunity to cover what was in the transcript and suggested that Dr. Kaatz should be asked to step outside so that President Wisbey and Defendant Graham could have a discussion so that President Wisbey could better understand Dr. Kaatz’s involvement. Defendant Graham responded to President Wisbey that Wisbey already had the gist of what took place so Defendant Graham would just proceed with the meeting.

42. Defendant Graham then falsely and fraudulently stated to Dr. Kaatz that Dr. Kaatz had made comments on the recording that included derogatory comments about President Wisbey and used foul or vulgar language. Dr. Kaatz was told that his situation was similar to the texting scandal that forced Representative Anthony J. Weiner to step down from his seat in Congress.

43. Dr. Kaatz told them that he did not remember anything specifically that he said at the gathering that had occurred more than seven weeks previously, but that he would take responsibility for anything that he said.
44. Dr. Kaatz was not allowed to see or listen to the audio recording or to review the purported transcript of the audio recording.

45. In fact, subsequent review of the actual audio recording revealed that Dr. Kaatz had not been critical of President Wisbey, had not used the foul or vulgar language at the gathering that had been attributed to him, nor did the recording indicate that Dr. Kaatz had consumed alcohol.

46. Defendant Graham then presented Dr. Kaatz with a letter of resignation that had been prepared at Defendant Graham’s direction and told Dr. Kaatz that his position was at will and that if he refused to sign the letter of resignation, Defendant Graham would call a special meeting of the Board of Trustees the following week and have him fired.

47. Defendant Graham used ambush tactics, false statements, misrepresentations, and an extremely intimidating and stressful environment to coerce Dr. Kaatz into signing the prepared letter of resignation without affording Dr. Kaatz any time or opportunity to review the transcript of the recording, think about his options, discuss the matter with his family or colleagues, or consult an attorney. Instead, Defendant Graham told Dr. Kaatz that he must choose between “voluntarily” submitting his “resignation” or being fired and shamed by the dissemination of the information that would be made public and would cause great harm to Dr. Kaatz personally, his colleagues, his family, and the University that he had served faithfully served for his entire professional life.

48. Under such coercion and duress, Plaintiff Kaatz signed the letter of resignation prepared for him.

49. Defendant Graham then instructed Dr. Kaatz that he was not to discuss the contents of the meeting with Dr. Beach or Dr. Bradley until after he had met individually with each them.

50. Dr. Beach was waiting in the anteroom to the President’s office and was called in as Dr. Kaatz left.

51. Like with Dr. Kaatz, Defendant Graham informed Dr. Beach that he was in possession of an audio recording of a private conversation made within Dr. Beach’s home, and presented Dr. Beach with a letter of resignation that had been prepared at Defendant Graham’s direction and told Dr. Beach that his position was at will and that if he refused to sign the letter of resignation, Defendant Graham would call a special meeting of the Board of Trustees the following week and have him fired.
52. Under such coercion and duress, Plaintiff Beach signed the letter of resignation prepared for him.

53. Dr. Bradley next was called into the President’s office by Defendant Graham and informed that Defendant Graham was in possession of an audio recording of a conversation made in the home of Dr. Beach at which Dr. Bradley was present. Defendant Graham claimed that the recording contained material embarrassing to La Sierra University, including evidence that the gathering was a drinking party. Dr. Bradley was told that recorded conversation was so heinous that immediate action was required to stem the tide of embarrassment and harm to the University.

54. As with the meetings with Dr. Kaatz and Dr. Beach, Defendant Graham neither permitted Dr. Bradley to listen to the audio recording nor allowed him to read the purported transcript of the conversation.

55. Defendant Graham misrepresented to Dr. Bradley that in the recorded conversation he had slandered La Sierra University faculty members and administration. Defendant Graham also misrepresented to Dr. Bradley that the audio recording evidenced “bottles in the room being opened.”

56. Defendant Graham also misrepresented to Dr. Bradley that he had slandered a certain faculty member identified by name by Defendant Graham.

57. Dr. Bradley had very little independent memory of the specific conversation more than a month and half before.

58. Under such coercion and duress, and in reliance on the misrepresentations made by Defendant Graham, Plaintiff Bradley signed the letter of resignation prepared for him.

59. Defendant Graham’s actions on that day were unconscionable in that Defendant Graham was acting in his role as the President of Defendant Pacific Union Conference, at the behest of his superiors, Defendants Blackmer, Jackson, and North American Division.

60. Moreover, Defendant Graham took these actions without consulting the President of La Sierra University and without the authority of any action taken by the Board of Trustees.

61. As a Chair of the Board of Trustees, Defendant Graham had a duty of unqualified commitment to and support for La Sierra University and had a responsibility to La Sierra University to avoid external influence and refrain from advocacy based on his official position as the President of the
Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Defendant Graham took these actions in direct breach of his fiduciary duty to as Chair of the Board of Trustees of La Sierra University and with total disregard of the policy and procedures set forth in the La Sierra University Bylaws, Trustees Handbook, and Faculty Handbook.

62. In bypassing the safeguards of academic and administrative due process as the result of improper influences and motivations, Defendant Graham improperly acted as an administrative officer of the Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists rather than as the Chair of the Board of Trustees of La Sierra University, and such actions were adverse to those interests of La Sierra University and its students in favor of those interests of his superiors at the North American Division and the General Conference.

**Plaintiffs Rescinding of Coerced Resignations**

63. There was no imminent harm or any other exigent circumstances that would justify such tactics to force baseless “resignations,” particularly when the non-consensually recorded private conversation, upon which these terminations were purportedly based, had occurred months earlier. As a result, Plaintiffs’ resignations, and each of them, were obtained from duress, coercion, extortion, misrepresentations, and in breach of the administrative disciplinary process at the University and are thereby unenforceable and void.

64. On June 17, 2011, one week following the above described meetings and before La Sierra University administration or Board of Trustees had taken any action with regard to Plaintiffs’ coerced resignations, Plaintiffs informed Defendant Graham in writing that “Dr. Kaatz, Dr. Beach and Dr. Bradley all rescind and withdraw these illegally obtained ‘resignations’ and they hereby do not have any force and effect.”

**The Board of Trustees Purported “Acceptance” of Plaintiffs “Resignations”**

65. Based on information and belief, Plaintiffs allege that on June 19, 2011, a special meeting of the Board of Trustees was convened by Defendant Graham and the Board of Trustees purported took action to “accept” the previously rescinded resignations.

66. Plaintiffs have never been officially notified of the nature of the action taken by the Board of Trustees in the special meeting. However, subsequent to this meeting, Plaintiffs’ Kaatz and
Beach were informed by La Sierra University human resources officials that they were to vacate their administrative offices and La Sierra University discontinued Plaintiff Bradley’s compensation.

To properly understand both the context within which these actions were taken and the external forces being brought to bear upon La Sierra University that led inexorably to Plaintiffs’ termination, it is important to understand 1) the importance of accreditation to the La Sierra University as an institution of higher education; 2) the heated political climate surrounding a recent negative accreditation decision by the Seventh-day Adventist Church organization charged with accrediting Seventh-day Adventist educational institutions, and 3) the governance structure of La Sierra University.

**Accreditation of La Sierra University**

Crucial to the ability of La Sierra University to be able to function and achieve its mission is the accreditation of the University as an institution of higher education.

La Sierra University is accredited by two separate accrediting organizations: the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and the Adventist Accrediting Association.

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges ("WASC"), is recognized as one of six regional associations that accredit public and private schools, colleges, and universities in the United States. It was formed in 1962 to promote the welfare, interests, and development of education in the Western Region. The Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of WASC is responsible for the evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of colleges and universities offering the baccalaureate degree and above in California, Hawaii, Guam and the Pacific Basin.

The WASC accreditation process aids institutions in developing and sustaining effective educational programs. Accreditation is granted at the completion of a peer review process, and assures the educational community, the general public, and other organizations that an accredited institution has met high standards of quality and effectiveness.

The Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges, and Universities ("AAA") is an accrediting body commissioned by the Seventh-day Adventist Church to carry out the accrediting process for Adventist institutions of higher education around the world. It operates out of the General Conference Department of Education in Silver Spring, Maryland, USA, and
in cooperation with its regional Commissions on Accreditation. It is effectively controlled by the
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and Defendant North American Division.

73. The major function of AAA is to visit and consider accreditation or re-accreditation of all
Seventh-day Adventist higher education institutions.

74. Accreditation of an institution by AAA signifies that the institution has a purpose
appropriate to service the educational needs of those in its constituency and has the resources, programs,
and services sufficient to accomplish the institution’s goals.

75. The Adventist Accrediting Association claims to support the right of each institution to
pursue its educational mission under the guidance of a governing board elected by its constituency; the
right of the faculty to teach, carry out and publish research, and the right of students to learn and to
develop their God-given talents.

76. The AAA accreditation process involves an institutional visit by an AAA team that will
then issue a full report and recommendation with regard to accreditation to be considered and voted on
at the biennial AAA board meeting led at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
headquarters.

77. The membership of the AAA Board of Trustees includes the director and associate
directors of the General Conference Education Department; General Conference vice presidential
advisors for education; directors of education from each of the church’s 13 world divisions; one
representative each from a college/university board chair; a college/university president; an academic
vice president or dean; a registrar or admissions officer; a finance officer; an academic department chair
of education; a union conference education director; and a local conference education director. Also
included are three individuals with international Adventist educational experience; two education
specialists not employed by the church; and the General Conference officers – specifically the president,
secretary and treasurer.

WASC Accreditation in June 2010

78. On June 29, 2010, WASC informed President Wisbey that La Sierra University’s
accreditation had been reaffirmed for eight years.
79. However, WASC also notified President Wisbey that it would also be conducting a Special Visit in the spring of 2011 in order to determine whether policies and practices of La Sierra University “were in keeping with the generally accepted principles of higher education related to institutional autonomy, academic freedom, and the appropriate roles of the faculty, administration and governing board,” in the face of contentious public controversy and criticism from some segments of the Seventh-day Church regarding the University’s teaching of science.

The AAA Accreditation Team Site Visit in November 2010

80. On November 15-19, 2010, AAA sent a 10-member team (double the size of a typical AAA accrediting team) to conduct La Sierra University’s regular 10-year accreditation visit.

81. On February 1, 2011, the Final Draft of the AAA Visiting Team’s Report was issued. The report recommended to the AAA Board of Directors that La Sierra University receive the maximum reaccreditation term possible: five years, with an additional three years to match WASC’s accrediting term through 2018.

82. On April 4, 2011, the AAA Board of Directors rejected the recommendation of the visiting team and instead only extended La Sierra University’s AAA accreditation for a period of 18 months, with reaccreditation subject to an on-site review by an AAA panel in the second quarter 2012, and AAA board action in October 2012.

83. The AAA Board found that “La Sierra University has deviated from the philosophy and objectives of Seventh-day Adventist education” and approved the shortened accreditation term in order for the University “to act upon its commitments and implement changes and enhancements” to infuse religious beliefs into science classes and make other changes.

84. The decision of the AAA Board of Directors to reject the maximum accreditation as recommended in the Final Report of the AAA visiting team caused great concern an indignation among the faculty and administration of La Sierra University, many of whom felt that the AAA Board’s findings were incorrect, unfair, and undeserved.

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Defendants Blackmer and Jackson Address La Sierra University Faculty Regarding AAA

Accreditation

85. On April 20, 2011, a special meeting of the faculty of La Sierra University was convened for the purpose of allowing Defendant Blackmer and Defendant Jackson to address the faculty regarding the issue of the AAA Board’s accreditation action. Defendant Blackmer is a member of AAA’s Board of Directors.

86. At this meeting, the faculty members were provided the opportunity to question Defendants Blackmer and Jackson regarding the AAA Board’s vote to extend accreditation only through the end of 2012 rather than granting them the five year term of accreditation that had been recommended to the Board by AAA’s visiting team.

87. The AAA Board’s decision to overrule the visiting team’s recommendation was an issue of great concern to the faculty of La Sierra University and the specially convened faculty meeting was highly charged.

88. Not only were the ramifications of losing the Adventist accreditation grave to the ability of the University to function, but it was perceived that the reasonable autonomy and academic freedom of La Sierra University were being threatened by the leadership of General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists as well as other Seventh-day Adventist institutions. This loss of autonomy, in turn, threatened La Sierra University’s WASC accreditation.

89. Plaintiffs Kaatz, Beach, and Bradley each attended the special meeting and were very unhappy at what they believed was the unfair and undeserved treatment of La Sierra University by the AAA. They, along with many faculty, were not satisfied with the rationale provided by Defendants Blackmer and Jackson, and were heavily emotionally charged following that meeting.

90. The faculty meeting was also attended by La Sierra University Board of Trustees member Leonard Darnell who recorded the proceedings using an application on his smart phone.
The Gathering at the Home of Dr. Beach

91. Sometime following the conclusion of the special faculty meeting on April 20, 2011, Plaintiffs Dr. Kaatz, Dr. Bradley, and board member Darnell got together at the private home of Dr. Beach to watch a Los Angeles Lakers play-off game.

92. As the four men watched the basketball game in the privacy of Dr. Beach’s home, they also discussed the events that had transpired that day and the underlying issues surrounding the AAA’s accreditation decision. During this conversation, these four advocates for La Sierra University were critical of Defendants Blackmer, Jackson, and Graham regarding their handling of the issues surrounding AAA’s negative accreditation of La Sierra University and their attempts to impinge upon the academic integrity and academic freedom of the University.

93. Unbeknownst to Plaintiffs Kaatz, Beach, and Bradley, the application that Leonard Darnell had used to record the faculty meeting was still running on his smart phone, which he was carrying with him, and recorded the conversation engaged in by the four men.

94. At no time were Plaintiffs ever made aware that their private conversation was being recorded nor did they consent to such recording, nor would they have provided consent to taping and distribution of their private conversation.

95. It is unknown to Plaintiffs at what time Leonard Darnell first became aware that he had recorded the gathering at Dr. Beach’s home.

Distribution and Use of the Audio Recording of the Private Gathering

96. Based on information and belief, Plaintiffs allege that the computer file of the digital recording of the faculty meeting and private gathering at Dr. Beach’s home was given to Defendant Blackmer, at Defendant North American Division, by a member of the La Sierra University Board of Trustees. It appears that the Board member was unaware at the time that the digital recording contained anything other than the recording of the special faculty meeting.

97. Plaintiffs allege that upon his receipt of the audio file, Defendant Blackmer listened to the recording in its entirety and was the first person to realize that the recording included the private conversation that took place later that day at Dr. Beach’s home.
98. Plaintiffs allege that Defendant Blackmer, using the resources of Defendant North American Division, had a purported transcription of the recording related to the private conversation in Dr. Beach's home prepared and forwarded the audio recording and the transcript to Defendant Jackson.

99. Plaintiffs allege that in early June 2011, Defendant Jackson forwarded the recording and transcript of the private conversation to Defendant Graham, at Defendant Pacific Union Conference.

100. Plaintiffs allege that on or about June 5, 2011, Defendant Graham and Defendant Jackson discussed the contents of the audio recording.

101. Plaintiffs allege that on or about June 9, 2011, Defendants Blackmer, Jackson, and Graham, together with the General Counsel for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and General Counsel for La Sierra University, met for the purpose of determining what action would be taken against Plaintiffs Kaatz, Beach, and Bradley. Significantly, no member of the La Sierra University administration or faculty was present at this meeting, nor was anyone from the La Sierra University Board of Trustees, except for Defendant Graham.

102. Plaintiffs allege that it was at this June 9 meeting that the decision was made by Defendants Graham, Blackmer, and Jackson that Plaintiffs Kaatz, Beach, and Bradley were to be terminated as employees of La Sierra University.

103. Plaintiffs allege that on June 9, 2011, following this meeting, Defendant Graham contacted La Sierra University President Wisbey and instructed him to have Plaintiffs Kaatz, Beach, and Bradley summoned independently to the President's office the following day to meet with Defendant Graham.

104. Plaintiffs allege that at no time on or before June 9, 2011, was President Wisbey advised or consulted regarding the termination of Plaintiffs.

105. Plaintiffs allege that at no time on or before June 9, 2011, was a meeting of the Board of Trustees convened to discuss any actions to be taken with regard to Plaintiffs' employment at La Sierra University, nor was any action authorized by the Board of Directors.

**Governance of La Sierra University**

106. The La Sierra University Bylaws set forth in explicit detail the manner in which La Sierra University is to be governed.
107. Under Article 6.1 of the Bylaws, “the temporal activities, business, and affairs of the University shall be managed and all corporate powers shall be exercised by, or under the direction of, the Board of Trustees.”

108. The La Sierra University Trustee Handbook explains:

“The Board of Trustees . . . has ultimate authority for governance of the University. Authority and responsibility are vested in the board as a body and are expressed in those actions that represent the majority opinion of the board. The bylaws of the corporation define the function and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees.”

109. Pursuant to Section 6.9 of the bylaws, “The president of the University is accountable to the Board of Trustees for the operation of the University and for recommendations in policy and planning.”

110. According to the Trustee Handbook, the Board of Trustees has the final authority “upon recommendation by the president, appointment, reappointment, promotion, awarding of tenure, and discipline of all faculty, major administrative and academic personnel: vice presidents, university counsel, deans of schools, school department heads, and directors of support services.”

111. The distinction between “trusteeship” and “administration” is set for in the Trustee Handbook, which provides:

“It is also important to understand that the board is not an administrative body, and that care must be exercised to avoid board involvement in operational responsibilities. This fact is an especially difficult one for the Trustees to accept when their positions elsewhere are administrative. Such Trustees are accustomed to viewing matters as administrators rather than as Trustees. The Trustee’s responsibility is to establish policy, and to approve, modify, or reject the president’s recommendations, but to leave administration to the president and his/her staff.”

... “Personal involvements of board members in the implementation of board action and policies or in administrative decisions or responsibilities are generally inappropriate and should be avoided.”

112. Trustees owe the University a heightened fiduciary duty and duty of loyalty to the University. According to the Trustee Handbook:

“In many states the trustee is held to have properly exercised the rights and responsibilities of board membership by acting in good faith and for no personal gain . . . . However, University Trustees in California are held to a significantly higher standard of performance in that they must also serve in a fiduciary capacity.
"It is considered to be a breach of the fiduciary duty for a Trustee to delegate his/her authority in the six areas indicated above under the sidehead ‘Rights and Responsibilities [which includes ‘evaluating the service and effectiveness of the service of those employed to operate the enterprise.’] To delegate to another one’s authority in these six areas cannot and does not relieve the Trustee of responsibility for actions taken.”

113. The Guidelines for Trustees set forth in the Trustee handbook provide that:

**Trustees must**

Give Unqualified commitment to and support for La Sierra University and its mission.

**Trustees are responsible for**

... 

Defending the university from influences which interfere with its achieving its mission.

Safeguarding the principles of moral and academic freedom for the community of scholars.

...

114. Finally, the Trustees Handbook expressly charges the Board of Trustees with the responsibility of “safeguarding the principle of academic freedom within the University by a careful observation of academic due process.”

**Composition of the Board of Trustees**

115. Pursuant to the La Sierra University Bylaws, the Board of Trustees is 23 member body, all of whom must be Christian and at 22 of whom must be members of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

116. The composition of the Board of Trustees consists of the following:

- President of the Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (Chair of the Board)
- Secretary of the Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
- Treasurer of the Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
- Vice president of the Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
- Director of Education of the Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
- President of the Arizona Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
President of the Southeastern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
President of the Southern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
President of La Sierra University
14 other persons elected by the Constituent Membership

117. The potential for conflicts of interest to exist when so many of the board members
derived their seats on the Board of Trustees by virtue of the offices they hold with Seventh-day
Adventist Church was anticipated and addressed in the Trustees Handbook, which provides:

""Trustees whose membership on the board is derived from an office
held in the Seventh-day Adventist church must give their primary
loyalty to the needs of the University; their responsibility to the
institution from which their appointment is derived is one of
interpretation rather than advocacy."

WASC Action Following the Wrongful Terminations

118. On June 22-24, 2011, the WASC Commission considered the report of the WASC
Special Visit team that conducted an on-site review of La Sierra University on April 18-19. Based
thereon the Commission issue a formal Notice of Concern and scheduled another Special Visit in spring
2012 to review progress in the resolution of the issues raised in the Notice of Concern.

119. A formal Notice of Concern provides notice to an institution that it is in danger of being
found in noncompliance with one or more or WASC's Standards if current findings continue. If the
issues are not addressed, a sanction against the institution will be imposed.

120. By letter of July 5, 2011, WASC informed President Wisbey that the Special Visit team
and the WASC Commission had serious concerns about the "role and composition of the governing
board," stating:

"The Commission's review of La Sierra's bylaws revealed that they
establish a governing structure that, on its face, is inconsistent with WASC
expectations for an independent governing board . . . . There was also
concern over the general lack of clarity about the president's role,
provisions related to the nomination and composition of the governing
board, and the fact that the board chair and other members of the
governing board hold multiple positions in the Church and the University
and also serve as chair or members of more than one Church-related
educational institutions' governing board . . . . LSU needs to take steps to
ensure that the La Sierra community understands the respective roles and
responsibilities of the board, president, and faculty."

Complaint for Money Damages and Injunctive Relief
121. The WASC Commission letter also raised concerns regarding institutional autonomy of La Sierra University as an educational institution, stating:

“WASC Standards of Accreditation call for institutions affiliated with or supported by religious organizations to have ‘education as their primary purpose and [operate] as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.’ Institutions are expected to have a history free of ‘interference in substantive decisions or educational functions by . . . bodies outside of the institution’s own governance arrangement.’”

122. The WASC Commission then commented extensively on the actions taken against Plaintiffs, set forth herein, as exemplifying its concerns regarding the lack of institutional autonomy, stating:

“The recent forced resignations, which were obtained through the actions of the board chair, reinforce concerns about institutional autonomy because of the multiple roles that the board chair has in the University and in the Church. Based on the bylaws and the statements of the board and the statements of the board chair himself, it appears that he did not have independent authority as La Sierra’s board chair to take these actions and was not acting at the instruction of the board. The board chair reported that he consulted only with a few of the Church-designated trustees, members of the national Church leadership, and University counsel before asking for the resignations of the four individuals involved. The Commission thereby could infer from these facts that the board chair acted in his capacity as a Church leader, which would be a clear violation of WASC standard’s on institutional autonomy. Furthermore, these actions are inconsistent with both LSU’s processes to protect the rights of faculty members and its bylaws provisions on the removal of trustees.”

(Emphasis added.)

V
CAUSES OF ACTION
FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION
Wrongful Termination in Violation of Public Policy
(By All Plaintiffs Against Defendants La Sierra University, Ricardo Graham, and Does 1 through 100)

123. Plaintiffs hereby incorporate by reference and reallege all paragraphs previously alleged in this Complaint as if fully set forth herein.
124. Plaintiffs, and each of them, entered into an employment relationship with Defendant La Sierra University.

125. Defendants La Sierra University, Graham and DOES constructively discharged Plaintiffs, and each of them, by coercing their resignations with threats of public ridicule, shame, contempt, with the release of the non-consensual recordings of private conversations.

126. The sole reason proffered by Defendant Graham for the adverse employment action were the statements allegedly made by Plaintiffs in the privacy of the home of Dr. Beach, which had been recorded by Defendant La Sierra University Board of Trustees member Leonard Darnell and distributed without Plaintiffs’ knowledge or consent by Defendants Blackmer, Jackson, and Graham.

127. Such conduct by Defendants Graham and La Sierra University was in violation of public policy including, but not limited to California Penal Code § 632 (Eavesdropping on or recording confidential communications), 18 U.S.C. § 2511 (Interception and disclosure of oral communications), and Article I, section 1 of the California Constitution (Privacy Initiative).

128. As a direct and proximate result of the misconduct and unlawfulness of Defendants Graham and La Sierra University, and the resulting constructive discharge and adverse employment action, as set forth above, Plaintiffs sustained severe and serious injury to their persons, all to Plaintiffs’ damage in a sum to be shown according to proof.

129. Such conduct by Defendants Graham and La Sierra University was a substantial factor in causing harm to the Plaintiffs’ occupations, humiliation, embarrassment, and mental anguish, and exposed Plaintiffs to hatred, contempt, ridicule, shame, and discouraged others in the SDA community from associating or dealing with them.

130. The conduct of Defendants Graham and La Sierra University in terminating Plaintiff's employment without good, just, or legitimate cause and purportedly because of statements contained in an audio recording of a private conversation in the private home of Dr. Beach, without the knowledge or consent of Plaintiffs violated California public policy including, but not limited to, California Penal Code § 632 (Eavesdropping on or recording confidential communications), 18 U.S.C. § 2511 (Interception and disclosure of oral communications), and Article I, section 1 of the California Constitution (Privacy Initiative). Such actions were, therefore, done in conscious disregard of the
privacy rights of Plaintiffs, among other rights secured under California law. Plaintiffs are informed and
believes, and thereon allege, that their termination by Defendants Graham was done with an intent to
cause injury to Plaintiffs. As a consequence of the aforesaid oppressive, malicious and despicable
conduct, Plaintiff is entitled to an award of punitive damages against Defendant Graham in a sum to be
shown according to proof.

SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION

Breach of Employment Contract with Specified Term
(By Plaintiff Beach Against Defendants Ricardo Graham, La Sierra University, and DOES 1
through 100)

131. Plaintiff Beach hereby incorporates by reference and realleges all paragraphs previously
alleged in this Complaint as if fully set forth herein.

132. Plaintiff Beach entered into an employment contract with Defendant La Sierra University
that specified that Plaintiff Beach would remain employed with Defendant La Sierra University until
June 20, 2015.

133. At all times relevant herein, Plaintiff Beach adequately performed his job duties.

134. Defendants Graham and La Sierra University breached Plaintiff Beach’s employment
contract by constructively discharging Plaintiff Beach before the end of the term of the employment
contracts.

135. As a result, Plaintiff Beach was harmed by the constructive discharge in an amount to be
proved at the time of trial.

THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION

Breach of Employment Contract with No Specified Term
(By Plaintiffs Kaatz and Bradley Against Defendants Ricardo Graham, La Sierra University, and
Does 1 through 100)

136. Plaintiffs Kaatz and Bradley hereby incorporate by reference and reallege all paragraphs
previously alleged in this Complaint as if fully set forth herein.

137. Plaintiffs Kaatz and Bradley each entered into an employment contract with Defendant
La Sierra University that did not specify the term of employment.
138. Defendants Graham and La Sierra University were subject to obligations, both express
and implied, not to discharge Plaintiffs Kaatz and Bradley, except for just or good cause.

139. At all times relevant herein, Plaintiffs Kaatz and Bradley adequately performed their job
duties.

140. Defendants Graham and La Sierra University breached Plaintiff Beach’s employment
contract by constructively and actually discharging Plaintiffs without good cause, where such adverse
employment action was not based on fair and honest cause or reason, and was not taken in good faith.

141. As a result, Plaintiffs Kaatz and Bradley were harmed by the constructive discharge in an
amount to be proved at the time of trial.

FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION

Constructive Breach of Employment Contract

(By All Plaintiffs Against Defendants Ricardo Graham, La Sierra University, and Does 1 through
100)

142. Plaintiffs hereby incorporate by reference and reallege all paragraphs previously alleged
in this Complaint as if fully set forth herein.

143. Plaintiffs, and each of them, entered into an employment relationship with Defendant La
Sierra University.

144. Defendant La Sierra University promised, by words or conduct or both, to discharge
Plaintiffs only for good cause.

145. Plaintiffs, and each of them, at all times relevant herein, performed their job duties in a
satisfactory manner. Based on the length of each Plaintiff’s service, their substantial pay increases and
superior job evaluations, Defendants La Sierra University and Graham impliedly promised Plaintiffs that
as long as they performed their jobs satisfactorily, their employment would continue.

146. Defendants Graham and La Sierra University breached said employment agreement by
intentionally creating or knowingly permitting the use of the illegally obtained recording of Plaintiffs’
private conversations to harass, embarrass, coerce and shame Plaintiffs with the threat of termination
and going public with the illegally obtained recording to the University, the Seventh-day Adventist and
non-Seventh-day Adventist community, and the Church, if they refused to sign the letters of resignation.

Complaint for Money Damages and Injunctive Relief
Such a situation was so intolerable that a reasonable person in Plaintiffs’ position would have no reasonable alternative but to resign.

147. Plaintiffs, and each of them, signed letters of resignation under the coercion and duress of the threat of publication of the private conversations and termination.

148. Moreover, Plaintiffs formally and effectively rescinded such coerced resignations prior to Defendant La Sierra University taking any action in reliance thereon.

149. As a direct and proximate result of the misconduct and unlawfulness of Defendants Graham and La Sierra University, and the resulting constructive discharge and adverse employment action, as set forth above, Plaintiffs sustained severe and serious injury to their persons, all to Plaintiffs’ damage in a sum to be shown according to proof.

150. Such conduct by Defendants Graham and La Sierra University was a substantial factor in causing harm to the Plaintiffs’ occupations, humiliation, embarrassment, and mental anguish, and exposed Plaintiffs to hatred, contempt, ridicule, shame, and discouraged others in the SDA community from associating or dealing with them.

FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION

Breach of the Implied Covenant of Good Faith and Fair Dealing

(By All Plaintiffs Against Defendants Ricardo Graham, La Sierra University, and Does 1 through 100)

151. Plaintiffs hereby incorporate by reference and reallege all paragraphs previously alleged in this Complaint as if fully set forth herein.

152. Plaintiffs, and each of them, entered into an employment relationship with Defendant La Sierra University.

153. A covenant of good faith and fair dealing is implied in every employment contract.

154. Plaintiffs, and each of them, substantially performed their job duties.

155. Defendants Graham and La Sierra University deprived Plaintiffs of their occupations with La Sierra University when they constructively and wrongfully discharged Plaintiffs by attempting to force their resignations under duress and coercion.
156. As a direct and proximate result of the misconduct and unlawfulness of Defendants
Graham and La Sierra University, and the resulting constructive discharge and adverse employment
action, as set forth above, Plaintiffs sustained severe and serious injury to their persons, including the
loss of benefits under their employment contracts, all to Plaintiffs’ damage in a sum to be shown
according to proof.

157. Such conduct by Defendants Graham and La Sierra University was a substantial factor in
causing harm to the Plaintiffs’ occupations, humiliation, embarrassment, and mental anguish, and
exposed Plaintiffs to hatred, contempt, ridicule, shame, and discouraged others in the SDA community
from associating or dealing with them.

SIXTH CAUSE OF ACTION

Intentional Interference with Contractual Relations
(By All Plaintiffs Against Defendants Pacific Union Conference, North American Division,
Graham, Blackmer, and Jackson; and Does 1 through 100)

158. Plaintiffs hereby incorporate by reference and reallege all paragraphs previously alleged
in this Complaint as if fully set forth herein.

159. Plaintiffs, and each of them, had a valid and enforceable contract for employment with
Defendant La Sierra University.

160. Defendant Pacific Union Conference, North American Division, Blackmer, Jackson, and
Graham had knowledge of such employment contracts.

161. As set forth in the Factual Allegations, Defendants Pacific Union Conference, North
American Division, Blackmer, Jackson, and Graham intentionally disregarded the administrative
structure at Defendant La Sierra University and intentionally induced Defendant La Sierra University to
breach the contractual relationships with Plaintiffs without the prior knowledge of La Sierra University
Board of Trustees and administration, thereby acting to govern and control the University.

162. Defendants Pacific Union Conference, North American Division, Blackmer, Jackson, and
Graham wrongfully acted in exerting improper and unjustified influence over Defendant La Sierra
University and caused Defendant La Sierra University to actually breach the contractual relationship
with each Plaintiff.
163. As a direct and proximate result of the misconduct and unlawfulness of Defendants Pacific Union Conference, North American Division, Blackmer, Jackson, and Graham, and the resulting breach of Plaintiffs’ employment contracts, as set forth above, Plaintiffs sustained severe and serious injury to their persons, including the loss of benefits under their employment contracts, all to Plaintiffs’ damage in a sum to be shown according to proof.

164. Such conduct by Defendants Graham and La Sierra University was a substantial factor in causing harm to the Plaintiffs’ occupations, humiliation, embarrassment, and mental anguish, and exposed Plaintiffs to hatred, contempt, ridicule, shame, and discouraged others in the SDA community from associating or dealing with them.

SEVENTH CAUSE OF ACTION

Intentional Interference with Prospective Economic Advantage

(By All Plaintiffs Against Defendants Pacific Union Conference, North American Division, Graham, Blackmer, and Jackson; and Does 1 through 100)

165. Plaintiffs hereby incorporate by reference and reallege all paragraphs previously alleged in this Complaint as if fully set forth herein.

166. Plaintiffs, and each of them, had a valid and enforceable contract for employment with Defendant La Sierra University.

167. Defendants Pacific Union Conference, North American Division, Blackmer, Jackson, and Graham had knowledge of such employment contracts.

168. As set forth in the Factual Allegations, Defendants Pacific Union Conference, North American Division, Blackmer, Jackson, and Graham intentionally disregarded the administrative structure at Defendant La Sierra University and intentionally induced Defendant La Sierra University to breach the contractual relationships with Plaintiffs without the prior knowledge of La Sierra University Board of Trustees and administration, thereby acting to govern and control the University.

169. Defendants Pacific Union Conference, North American Division, Blackmer, Jackson, and Graham wrongfully acted in exerting improper and unjustified influence over Defendant La Sierra University and, in so doing, interfered with the business relationship between Plaintiffs and Defendants La Sierra University.
170. As a direct and proximate result of the misconduct and unlawfulness of Defendants Pacific Union Conference, North American Division, Blackmer, Jackson, and Graham, and the resulting breach of Plaintiffs' employment contracts, as set forth above, Plaintiffs sustained severe and serious injury to their persons, including the loss of benefits under their employment contracts, all to Plaintiffs' damage in a sum to be shown according to proof.

171. Such conduct by Defendants Graham and La Sierra University was a substantial factor in causing harm to the Plaintiffs' occupations, humiliation, embarrassment, and mental anguish, and exposed Plaintiffs to hatred, contempt, ridicule, shame, and discouraged others in the SDA community from associating or dealing with them.

EIGHTH CAUSE OF ACTION

Inducing Breach of Contract

(By All Plaintiffs Against Defendants Pacific Union Conference, North American Division, Graham, Blackmer, and Jackson; and Does 1 through 100)

172. Plaintiffs hereby incorporate by reference and reallege all paragraphs previously alleged in this Complaint as if fully set forth herein.

173. Plaintiffs, and each of them, had a valid and enforceable contract for employment with Defendant La Sierra University.

174. Defendants Pacific Union Conference, North American Division, Blackmer, Jackson, and Graham had knowledge of such employment contracts, but on or about June 9, 2011, met with La Sierra University President Wisbey, and encouraged and persuaded him that it would be to the University's advantage to breach its employment contracts with Plaintiffs, and each of them, to further the interests of Defendants Pacific Union Conference and North American Division.

175. As a direct and proximate result of the misconduct and unlawfulness of Defendants Pacific Union Conference, North American Division, Blackmer, Jackson, and Graham, and the resulting breach of Plaintiffs' employment contracts, as set forth above, Plaintiffs sustained severe and serious injury to their persons, including the loss of benefits under their employment contracts, all to Plaintiffs' damage in a sum to be shown according to proof.
176. Such conduct by Defendants Graham and La Sierra University was a substantial factor in causing harm to the Plaintiffs’ occupations, humiliation, embarrassment, and mental anguish, and exposed Plaintiffs to hatred, contempt, ridicule, shame, and discouraged others in the SDA community from associating or dealing with them.

NINTH CAUSE OF ACTION

Intentional Infliction of Emotional Distress

(By All Plaintiffs Against All Defendants and Does 1 through 100)

177. Plaintiffs hereby incorporate by reference and reallege all paragraphs previously alleged in this Complaint as if fully set forth herein.

178. Defendants’ conduct, and each of them, in obtaining, distributing and publishing Plaintiffs’ private conversation, to which Plaintiffs never consented, was outrageous. The use of said illegally-obtained information to wrongfully terminate Plaintiffs, and each of them, was also outrageous. Further, the threat to publish the illegally-obtained recordings if Plaintiffs did not resign was also outrageous.

179. Defendants outrageous and intentional conduct was directed at Plaintiffs.

180. Defendants, and each of them, intended to cause Plaintiffs emotional distress, and/or acted with reckless disregard of the probability that Plaintiffs would suffer emotional distress, with the use and dissemination of the illegally-obtained recordings and transcript.

181. As a result of such acts, Plaintiffs suffered severe emotional distress, including the humiliation, embarrassment, and mental anguish, associated with the loss of one’s life work, all to Plaintiffs’ damage in a sum to be shown according to proof.

182. Defendants’ conduct was a substantial factor in causing Plaintiffs’ emotional distress.

TENTH CAUSE OF ACTION

Violation of California Common-Law Right to Privacy

(By All Plaintiffs Against All Defendants and Does 1 through 100)

183. Plaintiffs hereby incorporate by reference and reallege all paragraphs previously alleged in this Complaint as if fully set forth herein.
184. Defendants, and each of them, intruded on Plaintiffs’ privacy by intentionally
intercepting and/or recording and/or wrongfully disclosing the contents of the private communication
between Plaintiffs by means of recording in violation of federal and state statutes as set forth herein.

185. Defendants, and each of them, intentionally intruded on Plaintiffs’ right to privacy and
solitude and/or confidential and private affairs by intentionally recording and/or wrongfully disclosing
these contents of the oral communications between Plaintiffs and/or otherwise using the same to their
unfair advantage, by means of recording devices, in violation of federal and state laws as set forth
herein.

186. Defendants’ intentional intrusion upon the Plaintiffs’ seclusion and/or private affairs were
offensive and objectionable to a reasonable person of ordinary sensibilities in that it exposed Plaintiffs’
private and confidential affairs to Defendants and other unauthorized persons, and resulted in the
wrongful terminations of Plaintiffs. Furthermore, such intrusions were into a place and/or thing which
was private and entitled to be private in that it involved an invasion of Plaintiffs’ confidential,
privileged, and private communications without consent of any and/or all parties to such
communications.

187. Plaintiffs were damaged and are entitled to relief, including actual and/or statutory
damages, injunctive relief and attorney fees for the Defendants’ violations in the amount to be shown at
trial.

ELEVENTH CAUSE OF ACTION

Violation of Business And Professions Code Section 17200 et seq. – Unlawful, Fraudulent, and
Unfair Business Act and Practices
(Against All Defendants)

188. Plaintiffs hereby incorporate by reference and reallege all paragraphs previously alleged
in this Complaint as if fully set forth herein.

189. Defendants, and each of them, violated California Business and Professions Code
§ 17200 when they engaged in unlawful, unfair or fraudulent business acts, practices and/or tactics of
illegally obtaining a recording of Plaintiffs’ private conversations, without any of the Plaintiffs’
knowledge or consent, and gaining an unfair advantage by using such information to intimidate, coerce,
and extort Plaintiffs into forcefully resigning from their contracted positions with Defendant La Sierra University, and by disclosing and disseminating misleading information and preventing a proper investigation into the circumstances surrounding the validity and legality of the use of the private conversation. Such acts by Defendants, and each of them, resulted in the forced resignations of Plaintiffs and interfered with Plaintiffs’ prospective economic advantage of future employment with Defendant La Sierra University.

190. In addition to the above, the conduct as alleged throughout the complaint constitute violations of each of the causes of action alleged in this complaint that not only result in liability under each of the causes of action, they also provide the basis for a finding of liability under California Business and Professions Code section 17200 et seq. Furthermore, such conduct is unfair under the UCL, pursuant to the declared legislative policies regarding California Penal Code § 632 (Eavesdropping on or recording confidential communications), 18 U.S.C. § 2511 (Interception and disclosure of oral communications), and Article I, section 1 of the California Constitution (Privacy Initiative).

191. The Plaintiffs, and each of them, were damaged and are entitled to relief, including actual and/or statutory damages, injunctive relief and attorney fees for the Defendants’ violations in the amount to be proven at the time of trial.

TWELFTH CAUSE OF ACTION

Breach of Fiduciary Duties

(Against Defendant Ricardo Graham, and DOES 1 through 100)

192. Plaintiffs hereby incorporate by reference and reallege all paragraphs previously alleged in this Complaint as if fully set forth herein.

193. Plaintiffs are informed and believe that Defendant Graham failed to discharge his obligations in accordance with documents and instruments governing La Sierra University by causing the wrongful termination of Plaintiffs without following the proper disciplinary procedures, and without the authority of the Board of Trustees as set forth in the governing documents and instruments. Plaintiffs are informed and believe that Defendant Graham allowed his conflict of interest to influence his decisions and actions and to disregard his fiduciary duty to La Sierra University.
194. Plaintiffs are informed and believe that Defendant Graham has been the president of the
Pacific Union since November 15, 2007. Prior to that, Defendant Graham served as president of the
Northern California Conference since February 2001 and as executive secretary of that the Pacific Union
Conference in February 2006, and was executive secretary of the Northern California Conference since
February 2001. At all times relevant herein, Defendant Graham was chairman of the La Sierra
University board of trustees.

195. At all times relevant herein, the governing documents and instruments required the Board
Chair to act, with respect to the University, with the care, skill, prudence, and diligence that a prudent
person acting in a like capacity and familiar with such matters would use in managing an enterprise of
like character and with like aims, and to “[g]ive unqualified commitment to and support for La Sierra
University and its mission,” “[d]efend[] the university from influences which interfere with its achieving
its mission,” and “[s]afeguard[] the principles of moral and academic freedom for the community of
scholars.”

196. At all times relevant herein, Defendant Graham breached his duty of loyalty to the
University when he knew or should have known that he bypassed documents and instruments governing
discipline and investigation and went over the President’s head to carry out the initiatives of his own
employers, and wrongfully terminated all three Plaintiffs.

197. Defendant Graham owed to the University, its faculty, and its students, a duty to
discharge their obligations loyally and in accordance with documents and instruments governing the
plans.

198. Plaintiffs Kaatz and Beach have standing to assert this claim of breach of fiduciary duty
against the Chair of the La Sierra University Board of Trustees as each were Constituent Members of La
Sierra University, pursuant to the L Sierra University Bylaws and the Trustees Handbook, prior to their
wrongful discharge from their administrative positions.

199. As a legal result, the University, faculty, and students suffered and continue to suffer a
loss of three valued professors; diminished reputation of the University in the Adventist and non-
Adventist community which will cause a loss of enrollment, private funding, grants, loss of moral and
loss of faculty. Therefore, the Defendant Graham should be enjoined from further breaches of his
fiduciary duty to La Sierra University when acting in his role as Chair of the Board of Trustees to prevent further harm to the University.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs demand judgment against and relief from Defendants as follows:

a. An Order enjoining Defendant Graham from acting in violation of his fiduciary duty to La Sierra University in his role as Chair of the Board of Trustees;

b. Economic and non-economic damages;

c. Punitive damages against all liable Defendants in their individual capacity;

d. Injunctive and other appropriate equitable relief;

e. Reasonable attorneys' fees and expenses;

f. Taxable costs;

g. Interest as provided by law; and

h. Such other and further relief as the Court deems appropriate.

DATED: July 28, 2011

MCCUNE WRIGHT LLP

By: Richard D. McCune
Attorneys for Plaintiffs

Complaint for Money Damages and Injunctive Relief
What Holy Ghost?

Submitted Jul 29, 2011
By Preston Foster

It is clear to me that a major problem within Adventism is our (individual) unfamiliarity with the Holy Spirit. It is not because the Holy Spirit is not yet available to us. It is that, far too often, we systematically resist Him.

As our knowledge, education, exposures, and access to information increase, we demand more empirical proof of everything, including God. Accepting (spiritual) things by faith has become a last, rather than a first resort (1 Corinthians 2:14). Explaining the inexplicable as requiring faith is seen as both an intellectual cop-out and as evidence of a vapid theology.

At least some claimed to have seen Jesus. The thought of being led by an unseen Spirit is, for many, asking too much.

This makes the idea of “walking in the Spirit” very hard to embrace.

It is not only the intellectual progressives who resist the notion of depending on an amorphous Spirit for guidance. Many traditionalists, who define their religion by the law (first), embrace the law as their guide -- and as a substitute for being led by the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). Some substitute the writings of EGW as the “lesser light” that will reveal what the “greater light” (the Bible) is saying to us. The point, mind you, is not to bash Mrs. White. I have no problem with her writings. I have a problem with the way her writings are used and abused by others. The problem is that too many depend, first, on Mrs. White to interpret the Bible, and not on the Holy Spirit -- as Christ intended.

So, when we, of either tribe, are admonished to walk in the Spirit, it sounds vague, unpredictable, and unstructured -- a good thought that needs an anchor. In some respects, we mirror the disciples of Ephesus, who, when asked of Paul if they had received the Holy Ghost answered, in essence, “What Holy Ghost?” (Acts 19:2).

An active relationship with the Holy Spirit is not a luxury. Being led by the Spirit is how we are to live and discern the will of God (John 16:13). Being led by the Spirit is the way of the new covenant, replacing the law as our guide (Galatians 5:15-18). It is, also, what infuses our influence with power to lead others to Christ (Acts 2:38-41).

Our need to win a debate or our desire to protect “our position” may drown out the voice of the Holy Spirit, whispering to each of us. To receive the Spirit, we must let go of our pride (the strong side of insecurity). That pride may manifest itself in an intellectual resistance to intangible proof, an over-dependence on the law, or in the substitution of a latter-day prophet for the voice of the Spirit. If we are willing to humble ourselves, we can receive power -- from the most powerful force in the earth today (Acts 1:8).
Elaine Nelson

With the Holy Spirit being called "vague, unpredictable, and unstructured" why can there be certainty of the Holy Spirit's directive? Is there another spirit, and how is one to know the difference?

The word "Holy Spirit" is thrown around so frequently that it has become a meaningless word. Who defines it? How can one be certain that what they assume was a direction or choice led by the Spirit?

Does the Holy Spirit ever engage someone in conversation? Does it add additional revelation not found in the Bible?

What does it mean to "humble ourselves" and then we can receive power? The Holy Ghost descended on a mixed bag of humanity from all nations on Pentecost, so no one can assume that it will go where it wishes. If someone is sufficiently grounded in the truth, what can the Holy Spirit possibly add?

Trevor Hammond

Dear Brother Preston my friend

I am just curious to know what meter you’ve used to measure the lack of familiarity with the Holy Spirit in the individual lives of Adventists. Is it the ‘by their fruits ye shall know them’ or the ‘litmus’ test of Laodicea; or is it some other specialist tool?

In other words how does one know who has received the Holy Spirit? Some Christians believe that ‘speaking in tongues’ or engaging in some form of charismatic exercise is an indicator of ‘receiving’ the Holy Spirit. What is your qualifier to determine this?

Your opening line says: “It is clear to me that a major problem within Adventism is our (individual) unfamiliarity with the Holy Spirit. It is not because the Holy Spirit is not yet available to us.”

Or is it perhaps based on something like this: “Acts 2:38 And Peter said to them, “Repent and be
baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Blessings
T

laffal
1 week ago Reply

Trevor,

I would say that there are a couple of metrics to determine that "unfamiliarity with the Holy Spirit in Adventism."

1) Revelation 3:20: Christ Himself says He stands at the door and knocks awaiting to be let in. The context of the 7 churches of Revelation 2 & 3 is "I know thy works." Christ is evaluating the 7 churches according to their works. So, If we understand that the SDA Church is Laodicea in Bible prophecy, then how would you explain Christ's declaration that He's outside of not only our works, but also we severely deceived about our spiritual condition... "thou sayest, but thou knowest not"?

2) The lapse of time has wrought no change in Christ's parting promise to send the Holy Spirit as His representative. It is not because of any restriction on the part of God that the riches of His grace do not flow earthward to men. If the fulfillment of the promise is not seen as it might be, it is because the promise is not appreciated as it should be. If all were willing, all would be filled with the Spirit. Wherever the need of the Holy Spirit is a matter little thought of, there is seen spiritual drought, spiritual darkness, spiritual declension and death. Whenever minor matters occupy the attention, the divine power which is necessary for the growth and prosperity of the church, and which would bring all other blessings in its train, is lacking, though offered in infinite plenitude. {AA 50.1}

laffal
1 week ago Reply

Elaine,

You ask: "Why can there be certainty of the Holy Spirit's directive? Is there another spirit, and how is one to know the difference?"

Your question is not only valid, but appropriate. It has become my understanding that the identity of the 3rd person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, is very important to us because... there is another spirit. An unholy spirit.

And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds. (2 Corinthians 11:14-15 ESV)

How can we know the difference, and the directive? The Bible! According to the Bible it is the Holy
Spirit who moved / inspired / breathed upon those who wrote the scriptures. (2 Peter 1:19-21)

The key to a proper understanding of the HS's leading is humility. We have to be willing to be led first of all. Then we have to be willing to consider the truth that He has brought to us specifically from Christ. (John 16:13-15) The lack of humility is problematic for humans.

In fact, people who think they know so much don't know anything at all. (1 Corinthians 8:2 CEV)

There is no such thing as being "sufficiently grounded in the truth" without the HS. Nobody can know, much less experience the truth without the HS. To come to the conclusion that one can be "sufficiently grounded in the truth" is the evidence of being led by that other spirit.

But God has given us his Spirit. That's why we don't think the same way that the people of this world think. That's also why we can recognize the blessings that God has given us. Every word we speak was taught to us by God's Spirit, not by human wisdom. And this same Spirit helps us teach spiritual things to spiritual people. That's why only someone who has God's Spirit can understand spiritual blessings. Anyone who doesn't have God's Spirit thinks these blessings are foolish. People who are guided by the Spirit can make all kinds of judgments, but they cannot be judged by others. (1 Corinthians 2:12-15 CEV)

Elaine,

I used those words ("vague, unpredictable, and unstructured") not to describe the Holy Spirit, Himself, but to describe the response of those who are unfamiliar with interaction with Him when told that they should "let the Spirit" lead them.

The Holy Spirit, in my understanding, is a definite part of the Godhead -- The Trinity, per 1 John 5: 7-8.

How The Holy Spirit manifests Himself to individuals is beyond my ability to describe, as it is a spiritual matter, not limited to what I know. I know, that in my life, He has manifested Himself in many ways, including a clear and timely understanding of a portion of His Word (in readings, through a sermon, etc.), through godly advice of others, and through doors opening and closing, to name a few.

In my mind, no cannot possible "know enough" about scripture do disable the Holy Spirit from increasing our understanding of God's Word.
Brother Trevor,

My observations have been that we, as individuals discount the power of the Holy Spirit, largely based on unfamiliarity with Him. Some examples:

- When, at a church board meeting, I suggested that we have an all night prayer service and ask the Lord for His guidance, I was jeered down and told "If we do that, our side might lose."
- When one suggests that we be led by the Spirit, the reply is, Yeah, but what should I DO?"
- When I share that, "I don't know, I am letting the Spirit lead," I am met with wary stares and responses of frustration and demands for more specificity.

My qualifier for determining if one has received the Spirit is "by their fruits" Matthew 7:16, and, also, examining the fruits to see if they are fruits of the Spirit, Galatians 5:22-23.

I do believe that we systematically resist the Holy Spirit in the ways I described in the article.

Blessings
times / people say it's of God. It's up to each individual to seek God's guidance awaiting the movement of the Holy Spirit... hence the need of humility. Oft times I have found it to be a matter of those evoking the Holy Spirit tend to be anything but humble... that could be another clue / indicator of who's leading who.

Elaine Nelson
laffal,

That same method has been used to squelch all questions: "Sister White says."
End of discussion.

laffal
Elaine,

Be it as it may, it does not dismiss the fact that by structure and design, every member has the "right" and "responsibility" to question that which is not agreed upon. But that does not mean that the right thing will always be done either.

Ervin Taylor
In response to Elaine's comment: I am happy to report that in many quarters for many decades the statement "Sister White says" no longer squelches all questions. Now it just raises more questions ranging from "What was the actual source of her opinion on . . . " to "So what?"

All religious communities, even the Adventist one, evolve.

Elaine Nelson
Some take longer in their evolving—notably those in the hinterlands.

Preston Foster
Regarding the claim that "the Holy Spirit spoke to me . . . " by anyone, either it is true or not (in every case). Indeed, the claim is abused, to justify a position on a given issue. But in the end, it is true or not. What I have observed is that the claim is not dismissed or heeded, but simply doubted.

I believe the claim is doubted not just because of the credibility (and motives) of the person making the claim, but also because we doubt the fact that the Holy Spirit is an active participant in the lives of those who have invited Him be so. Should we learn to test the Spirit and discern His presence and involvement? Again, the claim is either true or not. It is seems worth knowing the truth.
Elaine Nelson  
1 week ago  Reply

What is the difference between the Holy Ghost and the "man upstairs."

I have heard many say that when things were at their worst, the "man upstairs" was really looking out for me." My daughter had multiple misfortunes, both personal and financial in only a few months' time, something that would have caused a major breakdown, but in each case, there was a distinct turn-around giving her the advantage of what could have been disastrous.

How does one know who to credit? Can there be certainty, or is it just a feeling? Or as some religionists claim "a burning in the bosom"?

Kevin Riley  
1 week ago  Reply

Elaine,

I would suggest we follow tradition: if something good happens to us, it is God; if something bad happens to our enemies, it is God; if something bad happens to us, it is the devil out to get us; if something good happens to our enemies, it is the devil protecting his own. Simple, isn't it?

Elaine Nelson  
1 week ago  Reply

If a lottery winner hits the jackpot: praise God! Or is it only if I hit the jackpot? If some DUI plows into my car, it's the devil working. If an enemy has good luck--it's ? Or bad luck, it's God?

Glad that settles all such questions. What would we do without the Ol' Debbil!

laffal  
1 week ago  Reply

Elaine,

It is at times like these that I start to wonder how sincere you really are. Your listed scenarios are without a doubt used by folks, but that does not mean it's just that simple. How would you explain the tragedies and ecstasies of life? Are you able to control what happens to you, much less understand it all? Or are we simply living in a world by which calamity / jackpots are just a rule of life, some sort of random process?

It's easy to be cynical, but there was a time you stated that you were just looking for answers to questions you have. Well, maybe if you would give some humble consideration that the "Ol Debbil" has muddied the water to the point by which your not able to see / hear as clearly as need be to get some of those answers that your looking for. To discount Satan out of hand, to imply that we need him for some sort of purpose is ludicrous. He is that other spirit, as apposed to the Holy Spirit... doing what he does best... confusing folks with the intent to
deceive... playing like he's God and knows what's best for us.

Preston Foster
Trevor,

In re-reading your questions, I believe you may have misunderstood (because of my awkward wording) what I was saying about the Holy Spirit's availability to us.

I said, "It is not because the Holy Spirit is not yet available to us," meaning "The Holy Spirit IS available to us now." It is because we often take the assumptive position that the Holy Spirit is a distant, intermittent force who arbitrarily intervenes in the lives of some, we fail to recognize His omnipresence and willingness to lead every detail of our lives.

For that reason, along with those stated in the article, we seldom call on Him and recognize Him less.

Trevor Hammond

Some use the term 'evolve' rather presumptuously when describing the development and growth of the Church by presupposing that the influence of a changing culture and society, good or bad, is always change for the better and never for the worse. In doing so they urge worldly compromise on the Church and dig up some school of thought to support it.

T

songbird

IMO, I don't think it would be such haunting question if it was not for such delay. Going on two centuries since the alleged 'day of atonement' two millennia since the ascension. I'm very comfortable in my retirement but the world is in a horrible mess - so much disease and cruelty to all living things. What's it going to take? Why can't we know more than "...not willing that any should perish?? Even Mat. 24 seems to have become irrelevant. It seems to me that everyone consciously or not is waiting or hoping for something, looking wistfully to heaven.

Preston Foster

Elaine,

I'm sure this is above my pay grade, as they say, but my understanding is The Men "upstairs" (in heaven) are God The Father and His Son, Jesus, our Savior. The Man (or Spirit) "downstairs" is The Holy Spirit, per 1 John 5: 7-8 KJV.

As one of my favorite wise men puts it, "The Holy Spirit is how God get things done, here on the
earth" Genesis 1:2. J.D. Leggett, summarizes the work of the Holy Spirit in these categories: preaching, teaching, exhortation, counseling, and sacraments (i.e., baptism, communion). I'm sure there are other means (likely metaphysical), but this is a starting point.

Elaine Nelson
1 week ago  Reply

Preston, so they have a division of labor, that never overlaps?

It would be helpful if you could furnish a chart with designated duties so we would know who should get proper credit.

Some say Jesus was the Creator; others say God, His Father was Creator; some say Jesus rose from the dead by his divine power; others say God raised him from the dead. Inquiring minds would appreciate understanding all this.

Preston Foster
1 week ago  Reply

songbird,

We've been told a little more than " . . . not willing that any should perish" (1 Peter 3:9). The book of Revelation, for example, gives more specifics about the conditions that precede His coming. For me, Matthew 24:36 remains relevant, as Christ Himself has not been given the information you (and I) seek. 1 Peter 3:4,10 predict both your frustration and the element of surprise of Christ's coming.

The Holy Spirit is The Comforter (John 14:16-18). One of His primary roles is to help us to bear the burdens of this world until Christ comes to redeem us. Hold on, My Sister.

laffal
1 week ago  Reply

Elaine,

Here's the concept: to give one credit is to give them all credit. They are a perfect unit when it comes down to all that is done for the universal kingdom in which God rules / reigns.

But more specifically, the Bible states that the order for purposes of the plan of salvation / interaction with mankind is: the Father oversees the work, Christ the Son is redeemer / mediator / intercessor, and the Holy Spirit is the communicator who helps make all things spiritual / divine, real / understandable in the experience of humanity.

Doctorf Doctorf1
5 days ago  Reply

Laffal,

Thank you for describing what Elaine asked for, which was the division of labor of the God head. I
like the Jewish version of one God better. Less confusing.

Elaine Nelson

This is so confusing! How many Adventists have said that Jesus was with God in Creation. We pray to God, in the name of Jesus, which indicates that only our prayers will be heard unless through him.

During all the centuries of Judaism, they only had God? Or was there also a Holy Spirit? Where was Jesus during all those centuries?

Preston Foster

Elaine,

I appreciate irony as much as anyone, but, of course you know any chart of duties of the Godhead would be foolish, limited, and pretentious. I am no more an expert about the Godhead than any interested layperson. I am student and a disciple. My purpose is to point others to the Word and to urge them to listen to the Spirit. laffal's outline is very helpful and I believe God is ready and willing to reveal Himself to us whenever we are ready (Revelation 3:20).

As you have very likely read the Word more than I, I am sure that prayer and an open heart will allow God to reveal Himself to you.

laffal

Elaine,

It's the Bible that says not only was Jesus with God in creation, He was the that actually did the creating. (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16.17 as an example).

In the OT there are texts that refer to the "Angel of the Lord", in those you will find that this person does that which God alone can do. So where was Jesus at the time? Working with the Holy Spirit thru the sacrificial system.

And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands. And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction. (Genesis 16:9-11 KJV) - Who promised to multiply Hagar's seed?

And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. (Genesis 22:11-12 KJV) - Who did Abraham not withhold his son from?
And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. (Exodus 3:2-6 KJV) - The angel of the Lord is speaking with Moses in the burning bush.

The Angel of the Lord is Christ. And there are far more texts then this small sampling.

Elaine Nelson

Retrospection is a different view than the present. The Jews who sacrificed knew nothing of Jesus; the Jews who wrote Genesis knew nothing of Jesus as Creator; Abraham was ordered by God, not Jesus to kill his son.

The NT writers REINTERPRETED much of the OT to fit their theological agenda. To claim that the OT speaks of Jesus is lacking in evidence. Where is the evidence from those writings?

Calling the "Angel of the Lord" as Christ, would indicate that the only angels are the devil's demons. Aren't all angels "Angels of the Lord"?

Elaine Nelson

Luke says the angel was Gabriel who came to Mary to announce she would conceive.

Are you saying that Jesus and Gabriel are the same?

laffal

Elaine,

Your amazing. You ask questions, then you take the answers and twist them with a philosophy that defies reason.

1st of all, if the NT writer REINTERPRETED much of the OT to fit their theological agenda, you

The sampling of texts I submitted identified the person as "THE ANGEL OF THE LORD." There's a big difference. Again, if you read most of the OT texts the identify THE ANGEL OF THE LORD taking close note of what He says, does, or promises to do, only God, or His appointed Mediator, His Son, can do that which is to be done.

No, Gabriel was not Christ. Neither was he identified as THE ANGEL OF THE LORD, but as THE ANGEL GABRIEL.

Elaine,

As long as you see the Jew's / Israel's religion of the OT as different all together from Christianity, you are missing what the Jew's in Christ's day missed. What's that? Everything in the Jewish system given to them by God was to prepare them to meet / greet / receive their promised Messiah.

Instead of a suffering servant, they wanted a conquering king. So when Christ came in a way that they, in reality, didn't want, they rejected / crucified Him. Why? Because as Stephen put it, they always resisted the Holy Spirit. Acts 7 makes it very clear as to why, in essence, God could no longer use the Jews for the work He had to do for the salvation of humanity through His Son.

What kind of Messiah are we looking for? Or do we even see the need for one? Are we also potentially guilty of resisting the Holy Spirit?

I think we actually prefer not to have the Holy Spirit in our lives. I know most anything super natural is usually considered from the devil whether it is good, bad or neutral. Unless it happens to a missionary. If we actually took the time to listen to "the Still, Small, Voice", we might have to do something we don't want to do, so it is safer not to listen. Besides it was probably meant allegorically anyways.

Having the Holy Spirit in our lives takes real commitment. We have to learn to listen. We have to be humble. We have to follow were the Spirit leads even when it may seem foolish or wrong. We have to be willing to say no and still keep listening.
"Having the Holy Spirit in our lives takes real commitment. We have to learn to listen."

Listen to what? This thread with all these purveyors of whisperings of the holy spirit reminds me of people that I run across in a psyche ward. If they are serious it sounds like they all might benefit from an anti-schizophrenic agent. That group of drugs usually quiets the "voices."

Kevin Seidel
Reply 5 days ago

Right, that is where the work comes in. If you want to hear, you need to learn which voices are you talking to yourself, which are insanity or drugs, and which is the Holy Spirit. Most people find tv more interesting....

Elaine Nelson
Reply 5 days ago

There seems to be a supposition that if believers don't hear the Holy Spirit instructing them that they are not really serious!

OTOH, they are warned about evil spirits and even practice exorcism! If I heard voices I would immediately seek psychiatric help.

Preston Foster
Reply 5 days ago

There are other voices out there, including scoffers and evil spirits.

But a relationship with God allows you to recognize His voice (John 10:27). If we are not familiar with and alert to His voice, we will be misled. Of course, I you don't believe He exists, the question is moot (Hebrews 11:6). In short, a non-believer is likely not to find Him as He does not impose Himself on us uninvited (Revelation 3:20).

He is not hard to find, Proverbs 8:17, Isaiah 55:6, Jeremiah 29:13, Matthew 7:7-8.

laffal
Reply 5 days ago

Preaton... In addition...

"I did not send the prophets, yet they ran; I did not speak to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my council, then they would have proclaimed my words to my people, and they would have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their deeds. "Am I a God at hand, declares the LORD, and not a God far away? Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 23:21-24 ESV)

And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having
determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for "'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we are indeed his offspring.' (Acts 17:26-28 ESV)

"What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. (Luke 15:4-5 ESV)

Peace

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Matt Britten

Hi Preston,

Love your topic(s). It has been a personal pursuit of mine since 1992 to walk in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit and learn to recognize His voice. He is the ultimate guide, not only in study of the Word but also in practical ministry. I will include one (of many) personal story that may make some people nervous. But, no apologies from me or the Holy Ghost...Be blessed! (Sorry about going over your 3 paragraph limit!)

One afternoon at Big Camp, a friend of mine (Andrew) and self were talking to an unbeliever about God. I shared a couple of personal stories of my life with God. She was very skeptical. So, whilst talking to her I asked God for a sign that will make her wonder!

I got a word that she has lower back condition, so asked her and she said “yes, how did you know?” I told her that God showed me, and that He cares for her. Andrew (a believer) was more amazed than she was! But she turned and said “I have a more serious problem than the back issue, can God tell you what it is?” I said "yes". God showed me that one of her ovaries was not functioning, so told her. Andrew turned to see her reaction. She nodded her head and confessed that it was true. She explained how she had been to 3 doctors all confirming the same issue. I suggested prayer to which she agreed. She wasn’t really sure at first but Andrew told her “you would have to be mad to reject prayer in light of what God has been doing here!”

I grabbed my wife and a couple of girls to pray for her. The Holy Spirit showed up. She felt something cool move through that area. We finished up and went back to our tents.

My wife spoke with the girl the next day and she said that something has changed. I ran into the guy that brought her to camp and he wanted to know about healing and how I knew her conditions. It really is a surprise to many that the Holy Spirit is with us and ready to communicate to us as we co-labour with Him in ministry.

A year later at big camp, she came up to me and asked if I remember her. I said, “Of course I do.” I asked her how she was doing. She explained that she went to another doctor to get some more tests done. The results showed that she is completely healed. She showed the doctor the earlier reports and
he said that it is impossible, they must have made a mistake! She is now a believer, baptised and following Jesus.

Preston Foster
4 days ago

Thanks Matt.

Christ, Himself, said we would do greater things than He did (John 14:12-14). This is accomplished in us, on earth, through the Holy Spirit.

These testimonies sound unfathomable to those who don't believe. Ironically, they only happen through belief. God will manifest Himself through and to us. But, first, we must humble ourselves and believe.

William Noel
3 days ago

Preston,

Wow! You really touched a live wire by talking about the Holy Spirit! Well done!

I really appreciate people like Matt, who have a testimony about their experience with the Holy Spirit. One of the things I've learned in my experience with gift-based ministry is how people who don't know the Holy Spirit discuss about Him while those of us who do know the Holy Spirit can't stop testifying about Him. That's why I'm writing a book about the adventures God has led me on in the course of my ministry. It isn't so much a collection of stories as a testimony about the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the most common revelation of God through the entire Bible and is mentioned more often than Jesus. He is the first revelation of God in Genesis and the last in Revelation. Everything Jesus did and everything He taught was in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus taught His followers to seek the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. We are offered that same, undiluted power. More than that, scripture promises that all who believe will be empowered by the Holy Spirit. So here's a really sticky question: If a person claims to be a follower of Jesus but they are not obviously empowered by the Holy Spirit, does that absence not prove they are not believers?

Stephen Foster
3 days ago

To be “obviously empowered by the Holy Spirit” is the “sticky” part of the question. There are people, I would think, who appear to be “obviously empowered by the Holy Spirit,” but may not be.

The fruit of the Spirit, according to Galatians 5:22, 23 “is [are] love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” It may not be up to us to determine who believes and who doesn’t; since we have no heaven with which to reward belief,
and no hell in which to cast unbelievers. Who are we anyway?

It would seem that we should humbly pray to receive the Holy Spirit and to be shown God’s will for us; and leave the rest to the Lord.

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Preston Foster

William,

Thanks for your encouragement.

My reactionary take to your question is, even Satan believes, but manifests different, fleshly fruit. A person may believe, but, for whatever reason (pride, vanity, lust, etc.), choose not to follow Christ.

That is the work we all avoid: the sacrifice of our will to His. Being a disciple, following someone's lead when you do not quite understand their modus operandi, is quite a step. In the case of following the Holy Spirit, it is, at least at first, even more challenging.

One benefit of a relationship is that over time you begin not only to understand, but also to trust the other party. That dynamic makes the relationship both more functional and powerful. I think the latter rain is more a function of our readiness (or lack thereof) than the Holy Spirit's willingness.

I don't believe that God intended us to receive it in small, incremental doses.

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William Noel

Preston,

I'm going to disagree with your last paragraph because my experience with the Holy Spirit has been progressive. Have I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit as happened at Pentecost? Not yet. But I'm seeing God use me in ways that were not possible a few years ago. From time to time I have an experience where I look back and realize how much my relationship with the Holy Spirit has grown. My latest example came from the April 27 tornadoes. In the past few weeks I've been working on a chapter for my book about how God used others and me on that day. Reflecting on the events of that terrible day has left me amazed by what He did and hungry for the next experience God has planned for us that will bring us even closer with Him. So I can only imagine what will happen when the baptism of the Holy Spirit happens.

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Preston Foster

Stephen,

As I said to Elaine earlier, when someone makes the claim (particularly in a group setting) that the Spirit spoke to them, either it is true or not. Do you think that, having confidence in the Spirit, we might be bolder in challenging Him to make His way known to us.
I'm thinking Elijah and Mt. Carmel. Or is that kind of confidence (faith) a function of a certain period?

Preston,

Using your example and Stephen's assessment. In Elijah's case, Mt. Carmel was 3 1/2 years away from the initial confrontation. Having to wait quietly in Jezebel's backyard for 3 years is equal to being humble and praying for the Lord to prepare / guide for the next confrontation.

Jesus told the disciples to go to the upper room and wait for the blessing. And this was after He had already breathed upon them the Holy Spirit. There's something to be said about the emptying of self for the purpose of being filled / used. When they came to be in one accord, then the blessing was poured out in its fullness. This is the only way they could confront the world and its sin with any hope of success.

Yes there is an individual need to filled with the Holy Spirit, but there is also a collective need as well. This cannot / will not happen without the individual humbling oneself to be led / used by the Holy Spirit for the good of the body of Christ. My blessing is to be for your good ... and so on.

Preston,

I tend to be leary of those who openly proclaim "that the Spirit spoke to" me. If it were the case, one would be humble enough just to say / do as one is lead. To evoke the Holy Spirit in such a way has the appearance of looking for some sort of leverage... this is why you need to follow me / my idea... etc. But that's just me.

Hey - Brother Preston

Before you go on another roll I just thought I'd pop in a small query within this deliberation. Well here goes...

Please allow me to backtrack a bit. The article is extremely relevant as the Holy Spirit is. The premise of the first lines do however allude more towards the outward display somewhat as an indicator of the Holy Spirit's working rather than the more important INDWELLING of the Spirit.

The Charismatic’s use this outward show as evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit - keeping in mind that the indwelling Spirit is a full representation of Jesus Christ who reigns in our hearts.
through the Holy Spirit. But... a blanket statement like: “a major problem within Adventism” seems to me to be a bit over the top. Question is: “How does one arrive at such a conclusion such as this”?

Secondly, is there any evidence for your next premise? “Many traditionalists, who define their religion by the law (first), embrace the law as their guide -- and as a substitute for being led by the Spirit.” Our fundamental beliefs are as traditional as one can get yet such a position is not supported. The ‘way of the Cross leads home’ is a fundamental traditional position. Are you referring then to another type of traditional constituency that I haven’t come across recently?

Blessings

T

William Noel

Trevor,

Here's the problem: as a we denomination Adventists have become so exclusively focused on the law that we have lost sight of the numerous admonitions in scripture about the Holy Spirit being the actual presence of God who is both WITH us and IN us. The two are not in conflict with each other. The abuses of the Holy Spirit by charismatics have caused us to become fearful of being associated with the abusers has caused us to generally reject the Spirit. So our challenge is to understand that God wants an intimate relationship with each of us individually at a level far greater than we have ever imagined. The natural result of that that relationship is that we begin experiencing the guidance and empowerment that allows us to demonstrate the loving power of God to others.

Trevor Hammond

Well Sir,

Your point is noted.
This is what I said in my first post which to me is the First Base in receiving the Holy Spirit: “Acts 2:38 And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

T

Preston Foster

Brother Trevor,

My statements may seem over the top, but I was raised, schooled, live, and work with a most traditional crowd. My statements are based on my observations, both recent and over the years.

I can only think of a handful of cases where, as a corporate body, the leading of the Holy Spirit was relied on as the primary decision factor in determining the direction of the church (or school). Even in those few cases, the decision was met with forceful and loud opposition, based on present-state
trends and logic, only. Reliance on the direction of the Holy Spirit was seen as unreliable and foolish.

I have tried to be careful in my language, by saying "many" instead of "most," regarding my characterization of traditionalists. Still, I believe our lack of reliance on the Holy Spirit, not the Ford controversy or any other symptomatic crisis, accounts for the atrophy of the Adventist work in North America. Our approach to the Lord's business is corporate. Although we begin and end our meetings with prayer, seldom, if ever, is fasting, prayer, and a sign from the Holy Spirit the primary means employed to reach a decision.

Look at the fruit. Do we have love, joy, peace, and long-suffering across the church? Or do we have division, malice, evil speech, and hate among those who differ?

We are simply too embarrassed or weak in faith to rely on spiritual guidance. Doing so would make one seem primitive and unexposed. Like the world, we use politics, financial leverage, and wedge issues to advance our agendas.

Our fundamental beliefs acknowledge the existence of the Holy Spirit as a part of the Trinity. My observations have to do with our (lack of) reliance on the Holy Spirit as our guide, in practice.

Need evidence? Just ask your Sabbath School class to pick one: when in doubt, what or who is our guide, the law or the Spirit? Then duck.

Cheers!

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Laffal,

Attribution abuse (by some who claimed, for the purpose of gaining political leverage, to have heard from the Holy Spirit) aside, the Holy Spirit does speak to His people:


As we wrote in an earlier post, it seems the challenge for believers is to either validate the claim or dismiss it. Doubting the claim, alone, seems to cast doubt on both the person making the claim (reasonable) and on the Holy Spirit, Himself (rather dangerous). Doubt, alone (it would seem), can weaken faith.

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If anything, the comments on AToday reveal that there are many different Adventists and they may all be represented in one congregation. What we may have grown up in and experienced in the SDA church may not at all be the same as a state or even city away. Unless we can recognize that no one...
individual, nor a single church represents "true Adventism" as there ain't no such thing! Just reading here one should be disabused of such an idea. If members cannot agree to stop being judgmental about so many minor things, we could, like Rodney King "all get along."

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**Douglas Cooper**

1 day ago  

Preston, Elaine et al
I would like to refer anyone interested in a progressive, contemporary Adventist take on the Holy Spirit to www.thegentledove.com.

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**Preston Foster**

1 day ago  

Thanks Douglas. I hope that the Holy Spirit is revealed to many through your writings.

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14 hours ago  

Preston, I have never read anything so spiritually mature within the Adventist church! According to Rom 8:14, those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. You are right on. May God give you power to get this message out.

Toby Joreteg

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**Preston Foster**

5 hours ago  

Praise God. Thanks for the encouragement, Toby!

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You do not have sufficient permissions to post a comment.

Annoying Vegans

Submitted Aug 4, 2011
By Adam Hendron

A block of cheese — it’s a favorite whipping-post within Adventism. We hear familiar phrases: “It’s not a sin to eat cheese.” “There’s more to worshipping God than avoiding cheese.” “A lot of people will go to Hell who wouldn’t touch cheese.”

I was not raised in a believing family, and before becoming a Christian, I was a vegan vegetarian. It could not be said, therefore, that I was trying to work my way to heaven through diet. For me, it was a matter of biology, ecology, sociology, economy, and sympathy for animals.

In the kitchen of a Seattle restaurant where I worked, the radio was always tuned to a particular station from which a whiney voice cried regularly, “What about the cheese?!?” It was an amusing way of describing their ‘no nonsense’ broadcast style.

Cheese is that superfluous, non-essential ingredient that largely makes up for a lack of imagination in cooking. It covers a multitude of evil. Cheese, it seems, can redeem most any dish. Unlike the Savior, however, the effect of cheese is deleterious on the digestive system.

Many of us have heard the testimonies: “Cheese stops-up my system.” “Cheese makes my arthritis flare-up.” “Cheese disturbs my sleep.” Anticipating these problems, Jesus gave the gracious counsel: “Cheese should never be introduced into the stomach.”

Whether or not we experience any symptoms, it should be enough that Jesus has spoken on this matter. It is an insult to His grace, to presume that His message is not clear enough. While church members debate the meaning of this subject, outsiders suffer.

John was considering becoming a Seventh-day Adventist. One of his children was extremely allergic to dairy. Out of consideration for the boy, the whole family was vegan. At a youth event, however, an unaware leader insisted that the child have some pizza. “A little cheese now-and-then won’t hurt anyone,” she said, not realizing that it would precipitate a trip to the hospital. John was even more exasperated after learning what the Church’s prophet warned about cheese.

Notwithstanding that Christ would discourage ice-cream socials, even crueler it is for our Churches to host one and make no provision for those who wish to avoid the harmful combination of milk and sugar. Such must either face strong temptation or social isolation.

Should a little paper sign that reads ‘vegan’ be placed beside respective dishes, or is this an affront to those who choose to eat otherwise? On the other hand, some vegans are indignant at what they see as rebellion in the kitchen. Yet those who object to dairy don’t necessarily condemn those who partake of it, as it is often claimed. Both parties err, at times.

Though we should teach people the dangers of dairy, it is not the worst of evils and should not be our primary burden, nor should its use made a test of fellowship.
Strident vegans are annoying. On the other hand, vegans are understandably upset by the carelessness of those who know better. “I am sad,” said Mrs. White, about those who willfully made dairy an article of diet. She was especially grieved when it seemed a particular hostess knowingly tempted her husband to eat cheese — for which he had a weakness.

It is especially disheartening to see the leadership snubbing Christ’s counsel. “Your responsible men in the Office are not reformers. They eat meat, butter, cheese and rich pie and cake. Others will excuse their indulgence of appetite…”

“Nothing brings such discouragement upon the Lord's watchmen as to be connected with those who have mental capacity, and who understand the reasons of our faith, but by precept and example manifest indifference to moral obligations.”

“The gospel of health has able advocates, but their work has been made very hard because so many ministers, presidents of conferences, and others in positions of influence, have failed to give the question of health reform its proper attention. They have not recognized it in its relation to the work of the message as the right arm of the body. While very little respect has been shown to this department by many of the people, and by some of the ministers…”

“Satan and his agents are seeking to hinder this work of reform, and will do all they can to perplex and burden those who heartily engage in it.” But no one suffers so much as our Savior, and those on both sides of this question can look to Him for strength to do what is right.


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1 Counsels on Diet and Foods, p. 368.
2 Ibid, p. 533 & 536.
4 Seventh Manuscript Release, p. 348
5 Fifteenth Manuscript Release, p. 246
6 Pamphlet 11, p. 76.
7 Counsels on Diet and Foods, p. 38.
8 Ibid, p. 73.
9 Ibid, p. 76.
Guidelines for Productive & Courteous Comments:

- This is the writer’s court & play – no upstaging please
- Stay on topic – don’t wander off chasing butterflies
- Be brief – no more than 3 modest paragraphs – if longer, you are too windy
- We ask you to be considerate & courteous – the golden rule, remember
- Absolutely no denigrating of individuals – to err, earns banishment
- Make this a stimulating encounter & come back often

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Ron Corson
4 days ago  Reply

"Many of us have heard the testimonies: “Cheese stops-up my system.” “Cheese makes my arthritis flare-up,” “Cheese disturbs my sleep.” Anticipating these problems, Jesus gave the gracious counsel: “Cheese should never be introduced into the stomach.”1 

A classic example of Adventist confusion, Jesus and Ellen White...no really they are not the same person!

Elaine Nelson
4 days ago  Reply

Please, please, stop confusing Jesus with EGW.

Where in the Bible could you come up with such a statement:

"Whether or not we experience any symptoms, it should be enough that Jesus has spoken on this matter. Whether or not we experience any symptoms, it should be enough that Jesus has spoken on this matter"?

This is an outright lie! Sorry to be so explicit, but unless you can give a Bible text where Jesus says anything about cheese, please do not spread such untruths.

Yes, there are allergies, but many more to nuts than cheese, and anyone who has such life-threatening allergies, carries an epi-pen for such hidden foods.

Cheese, in moderation is a good source of calcium and is far more safe than meat, for which it is often a substitute for vegetarians. If one wishes to be a vegan, then he should more carefully observe his diet to get proper nutrients. Cottage cheese and yogurt are also dairy products that are recommended on a healthful diet. Adventists have often been obsessive about diet and if the SDA message is to include becoming vegans, it shouldn't claim to be an SDA doctrine. It is such ideas that have caused many to completely reject EGW.
The Testimony of Jesus—not Ellen White—is the spirit of prophecy (Rev 19:10). When God's prophets served their role, "the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when it testified" 1 Peter 1:11. Two chapters later, we read that Jesus preached to the antedeluvians through Noah (vv 18-20). Noah was the spokesperson, but Jesus was the preacher. Whose message is it? Christ's! His Spirit testified through the human agency.

EGW in too many places is not only erroneous, but contradictory. To equate her with Jesus is blasphemy, something she never claimed.

Peter may have claimed that Noah preached to the antedeluvians, but it was never mentioned in the several accounts in Genesis. Sadly, Noah may not have known that millennia later he would be cited as preaching. Why did the writer exclude that?

First, no one is equating EGW with Jesus. That's a straw-man argument. Next, her writings are no more "erroneous" or "contradictory" than the Bible itself. (Critics make the same sort of arguments about both.) Now, are you questioning the inspiration of Peter's epistle? If the Bible is not trustworthy, you put yourself in the position of God as the final arbiter of truth.

You ask why the writer of Genesis did not mention that Noah preached? Well, why did Moses not mention a plethora of other details that later biblical writers added to the periods he wrote of, for that matter? Paul, for example, says the rock that followed Israel through the wilderness was Jesus. And how could Moses himself write authoritatively about events that took place long before he was born?

Too many eggwhites is bad for the system.

Balance is the BEST option. The Bible shows us what we can and what we cannot eat and cheese isn't described as something that we can't. I've been a vegan before knowing Christ and I'm the only one in my family even now that almost all my relatives accepted Jesus as their Savior. To eat or not cheese, does not make any difference in salvation or relationship with God, but in fact, avoid eating dairy products is way healthier and beneficial to the body, than eating it.
"Know ye not that your body is the temple of God?" "Hearken diligently unto Me and eat ye that which is good." We should be intelligent as to what is the best food for the best physical, mental, and moral growth. Diary is never the best or even good. Great article here.... "Cow's Milk Damages Kidneys and Sickens Children" It's at the bottom of the page. http://www.drmcdougall.com/misc/2011nl/jul/fav5.htm  Thanks Adam.

Don't give us modern evidence, Peter, just stick with the Bible! Besides, if the diaries are filled with sweet words, one might do well to eat them! (...better than animal products ;)

Humans seem to be the only mammals that feed their young the milk of another species and continue to consume it even into adulthood. Weird!

Actually, Americans use more cow's milk that any other nation. However, cheese is a very, very old food as is yogurt--which has many health benefits.

If one wishes to be a vegan, the diet is more important to ensure sufficient nutrients.

Is this a serious article? It reads like something from The Onion. It certainly puts the exclamation point to Annoying Vegans. Eating a nutritious vegan diet that includes everything one needs for health is very difficult. It requires a knowledge of nutrition that few vegans I've known have. Additionally, I agree with Elaine that equating EGW with Christ is blasphemous. It certainly won't win anyone to your point of view if they actually go looking for the cheese quote in the Bible and discover it's not there.

This provides another context for asking what do this verses mean: 1 Timothy 4: 1-5? They seem
very clear (and contrary to the direction of this article) to me.

Adam Hendron

That verse is a reference to the Roman Church, which has commanded its members to abstain from red meats on Fridays, and its priests to abstain from marriage. The SDA church makes no such demands.

Timo Onjukka

Interesting. Searching history books for when RCC instituted their "meat free friday penance". Seems it came after the date this was written. Adam, I did not know there were exclusive Roman sections of scripture.

http://www.fao.org/documents/show_cd...E/V8490E03.htm
Fish consumption during the Middle Ages in Europe was promoted by the Catholic Church which ordered 166 days of fasting a year (including 40 days of strict fasting for Lent) during which fish could be eaten. This situation was usually reinforced by rulers; for instance, Charlemagne ordered that all his farms have fish ponds. Alternatively, the Reformation in England (involving changes in fasting) reduced the number of fishing vessels, severely affected freshwater fisheries (Montanari, 1993), and nearly abolished aquaculture (Kreuzer, 1974).

This source may not be as credible, but is a good read.
http://www.cliffordawright.com/history/med_fishing.html

Elaine Nelson

Are there any true vegans here? No leather shoes, no leather belts, furniture or car upholstery? What are you shoes made of?

This is a perversion of Adventism if it's real, and not a joke. If any SDA pastor promoted this type of message, it would be the last time many listen. Is this for real? Where did ANYONE, let alone a SDA pastor come up with the idea of promoting veganism for Adventists? Even vegetarians should read the verses highlighted above:

"Everything God has created is good, and no food is to be rejected, provided grace is said for it. Jesus certainly was not a vegan, and what Bible character has ever been a vegan? Surely the article is satire.

Adam Hendron

Surely, Jesus has been vegan for some 2000 years since His ascension and for an eternity prior to His incarnation. And the verse you quoted is followed directly by these words: "For it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer." The Word of God clearly does not sanctify every animal for food. See Leviticus 11. The Lord even forbids the use of dairy in a certain context (Ex
These last days also present a questionable context, in the way dairy is produced. Jesus sent His messenger to attest of such.

Elaine Nelson
Did anyone notice that not a single Bible text was quoted to support the writer's thesis? Only EGW quotations were used. Some Bible texts were linked but unquoted. Could it be that not a single Bible text supports the idea of veganism as does the writer?

Adam Hendron
Could it be? Look them up and find out. Obviously, the Bible does not address these issues so specifically as does the prophet of the end. The quotes were chosen on the basis that people are more familiar with the Scriptures than these, and for brevity. (A discussion of the Bible references could constitute another entire article.) Familiarity, however, does not always equate to understanding. "Some who profess to make the word of God their study are found living in direct opposition to its plainest teachings. Then, to leave men and women without excuse, God gives plain and pointed testimonies, bringing them back to the word that they have neglected to follow. The word of God abounds in general principles for the formation of correct habits of living, and the testimonies, general and personal, have been calculated to call their attention more especially to these principles" 5T 663.3 "Your testimony is of a different character. It is to come down to the minutiae of life, keeping the feeble faith from dying" 2T 608.2

Ymous
"Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes about doubtful things. For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats, for God has received him" (Rom 14:1-3).

"We must remember that there are a great many different minds in the world, and we cannot expect everyone to see exactly as we do in regard to all questions of diet. Minds do not run in exactly the same channel. I do not eat butter, but there are members of my family who do. It is not placed on my table; but I make no disturbance because some members of my family choose to eat it occasionally. Many of our conscientious brethren have butter on their tables, and I feel under no obligation to force them to do otherwise. These things should never be allowed to cause disturbance among brethren. I cannot see the need of butter where there is an abundance of fruit and of sterilized cream. Those who love and serve God should be allowed to follow their own convictions. We may not feel justified in doing as they do, but we should not allow differences of opinion to create disunion. May the Lord help us to be as firm as a rock to the principles of the law spoken from Sinai, and may He help us not to allow differences of opinion to be a barrier between us and our brethren:--Letter 331, 1904. {MM 269.1}
Adam Hendron 3 days ago Reply

Excellent EGW quote. It does not, of course, obviate the others. And the prophet does not express the same sentiment with regard to flesh meat, alcohol, or coffee. The Scripture cited is with reference to clean meats, offered to idols; not everything man might dare to eat. But notice the writer calls for abstinence of the food in question, rather than eating that which might offend another (v. 21).

Ella M Rydzewski 3 days ago Reply

This sounds like satire to me. Good nutrition is not a sacrament or religious work. It is strictly for good health. Granted, what affects us physically can also influence our spiritual health. A prophet with inspired insights, obviously does not use God's words, but speaks in her/his own vernacular and time period. SDAs have long taught that or are supposed to as per EGW herself.

As for cheese, its greatest evil is the high sodium with so many suffering hypertension. Its best left alone if for that reason only. Dairy is not a good food as many researchers are discovering; there is more osteoporosis in countries with a high-milk diet. There is lot of misinformation about the vegan diet. It's a myth that it is difficult to get nutrients this way. In fact it uses the highest-nutrient foods available. Vegetables have all the protein you need, and we are generally over-proteinized. It's a simple way to lose weight because one knows what they can and can't eat--no calorie-counting. It's the best diet for almost any disease including heart, diabetes, etc. One good source for information on a plant-based diet is at drfuhrman.com It is also the diet used in popular wellness programs like Pritikin and the LLU Program called CHIP (Coronary Health Improvement Plan) that has more than 55,000 graduates.

Adam Hendron 3 days ago Reply

Good nutrition not a sacrament or religious work? "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Cor 10:31

EGW is inspired on the same basis as the Bible writers.

Nice health info.

Pat Travis 3 days ago Reply

Vegans are not annoying to me they are simply a non spiritual issue. Bless them in their observances. My mantra is moderation in all things including foods exercise and weight. Rom.14:17.

Elaine Nelson 3 days ago Reply

Some have made a god of diet.

Adam Hendron

"...whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things" Ph'p 3:19.

Doctorf Doctorf1

Talk about a ranting post. Vegans can get away with that type of diet because they can take B-vitamin supplements. We are omnivores and a variety of foods including dairy and meat is the best diet. Cheese is a great food in moderation.

Adam Hendron

I'll go with the testimony of Jesus, Doctor. "Cheese should never be introduced into the stomach" CD 368. How's that for moderation?

William Noel

Adam,

Since you so obviously like the writings of Ellen White, I'm surprised you appear to be unfamiliar with her explicit instructions about how her writings were to be used. To summarize, no doctrine or teaching should be based on anything she wrote. Rather, we should teach from the Bible and the Bible only. If you can't make your point using just the Bible, you should be quiet and study the scriptures until you can.

Adam Hendron

The manuscript I submitted placed the Scripture references at the very beginning of the article; not the end (an editor has done this). The effect was intended to be something like each chapter of the Desire of Ages, "this chapter is based on... (texts)."

William Noel

Adam,

I sympathize about what editors sometimes do to what we write. Still, that's a lame excuse
because your posting was so typical of how the writings of Ellen White have been abused and 
elevated by many in the church to the same authority as scripture, if not superior. The issue is 
not how I feel about her writings, but if we are willing to follow her explicit admonitions to 
ever base any doctrine or teaching on her writings because we should be using the Bible and 
the Bible only as our supreme authority.

Ymous

Are you quite sure Rom 14:1-3 is about clean and unclean meats? If so, on what basis? Some insist 
that it is referring to foods offered to idols. But is there absolutely clear evidence for that? In 1 Cor 
Paul does write about foods offered to idols, but is specific in addressing the issue. Why not in Rom 
14, if that is the issue there?

As for EGW, did you notice the date for the quotation I posted? It was 1904. You quoted from CD, 
which was published later, BUT the citation(s) to which you refer were from the 1890s. That being 
the case, should they not be interpreted in light of the LATER statement?

Adam Hendron

I did mention idols, but nowhere in the Bible are unclean meats ordained as food. There is certainly 
no clear evidence to the contrary. If Paul were not speaking of (biblically) clean meats, idols would 
be a moot issue at that point. Unclean animals are forbidden, regardless of idols.

Now regarding the EGW statements, there are several. Can you be more specific?

John Andrews

Only the weakest of theologians resort to Ellen White to advance their arguments.

For these, the Bible is simply not enough, Ellen White is much more fun than the Bible.

What a shame, I'd expect more from Adventist Today writers...

Adam Hendron

Fun?!?

If the arguments are so weak, what does it say that you cannot overcome them?
John Andrews

Adam:

1. You misuse Ellen White to advance an opinion that is not in equilibrium. She once said: "Never quote Sister White again until you can obey the Bible." Clearly the Bible has primacy in ANY theological matter, not EGW. She is a lesser light and you continue to upgrade her to the GREATER light.

2. Worse, you have made her words to be the words of "Jesus". Wrong. She wrote many things that were not revelatory nor came from Jesus. For instance, she once said to her own child (!) that God does not love disobedient children. That's not the testimony of Jesus, that's heresy, something she later realized and made up for. She has caused more problems for Adventist theology than helped, not the least of which is our tendency to put her ahead of the Bible, something you yourself did. Bible references are a mere footnote in your text. Every theological controversy in the church, from the sanctuary to the human nature of Christ, was caused by things that EGW said or wrote. Read up. So much for making the Bible "clearer'.

3. Because of an out of balance view of EGW's relationship to the Bible, your agenda on this forum seems to be to advance an adventist worldview that is mostly preoccupied with exterior, behavior, estereotypes and petty questions that no doubt concerned our members in a bygone, legalistic era. You are trying to ressurrect it.

4. I continue to think that a conservative blogger to counterpoint others in this forum should AT LEAST base his/her reading on the Bible, and the Bible alone. EGW is irrelevant if you can't speak from Scriptures. As George Knight says, "If it's not in the Bible, it's not important for the SDA church." If she's taking the place of the word of God, she is a curse, not a blessing.

---

Elaine Nelson

John-A-M-E-N!

Can't help wondering what seminary some pastors attended--the short Weimar-type Bible school or what's-it-name in Oregon? If this is what Andrews is teaching, we should worry for the future of the church.

---

Adam Hendron

Play nice, sister. If you can't speak to the issues, better not speak at all.

---

Ella M Rydzewski

Adam, you said "Good nutrition not a sacrament or religious work?"
My understanding of the word "sacrament" as used by many Christian religions (Catholicism for instance) is a religious act that is thought to be a means of salvation. The same is often meant by the term "religious works" as well. Diet is not a means of salvation in our church; only by Christ's righteousness are we saved.

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Cor 10:31
"The glory of God" means that we live as a witness to his glory and point to Him by how we live. The fruits of this are better health to serve for His glory. It is not a goal in itself, but a means to an end--to serve and show God's goodness in better health.

You said: " EGW is inspired on the same basis as the Bible writers."

I don't think the church has ever taught this, though some people act as if it were true. EGW herself says many times that the Bible comes first. She has also said that she should not be quoted in sermons and that the words of even the Bible writers were not God's words but the words of the writers who were inspired. She spoke within the context of her time period and culture. The principles do not change but the specifics often do. I don't have time to look these quotes up now, but you can find them through the GC White Estate or the EGW-CD index.

Are you a new convert? You might want to study this subject of inspiration a little more. That way you won't become disillusioned when you find minor inconsistencies in the Bible or with EGW. Only God is perfect and His son, Jesus. Pray for understanding and guidance by the Spirit in all your study.

Adam Hendron

Those were your words; not mine. I didn't know you had Catholic definitions in mind. My point is that all Christian conduct, including diet, connects to our religion on some level. "That which corrupts the body tends to corrupt the soul. It unfitsthe user for communion with God, unfitsthe him for high and holy service" MH 280.

Regarding the use of milk, EGW did not just speak to her own "time and place," but to an increasingly corrupt future. (CD 204.4, 206.1)

Regarding contradictions, I addressed that in the 5th comment, above.

Regarding the time of my conversion, I think you have violated the comment guidelines.

Ella M Rydzewski

Adam,

For some reason my reply to this post didn't go through. First I wanted to apologize for what appears to be a personal question. I should have said, "if" instead of asking.

The quote from MH sounds a little harsh. Then I found it had to do with the use of clean and
unclean meats by the Israelites. Mrs. White's language often sounds harsh concerning behavior, because this is the way people in the 19th-century spoke concerning such things. Reading a secular magazine of that period would show the same thing. But I did say that the physical has an influence on the spiritual, so was agreeing with you.

I agree that the milk quote was for the future which is certainly now, as even many non-Adventists understand. But place will make a difference--If one lives on an island in the Pacific where fish is the main food, it's needed for health. Or for Eskimos in the north, the food choices are limited. But we have no excuse in this or most western countries, we have an abundance of replacements, and B12, provided for and planned for us by our Creator.

Please understand that, unlike your long-term diet experience, diet changes for most people, especially in families, takes time and patience. Your promotion of the plant-based diet is appreciated.

---

Don Bowen 3 days ago  Reply

The only nutrient that it is not possible to get with a 100% plant based diet is Vitamin B12. Period. Some people don't need the B12 supplement but it is wise for all vegans to take B12 as a measure of insurance. The words of Christ have always gotten my attention. To paraphrase; It's not as important what goes into your mouth as what comes out.

---

Adam Hendron 2 days ago  Reply

Does that paraphrase include what comes out of our computer keyboards? (Try pouring some milk on yours...he he.)

---

Adam Hendron 2 days ago  Reply

Mt 15:20 concludes that matter you addressed... "These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man." The context is hand-washing. Jesus is not giving us permission to eat just anything.

---

John Andrews 2 days ago  Reply

The principle is the same, whatever you eat, that will not defile you, but whatever comes from your HEART, that will defile you. The "context" does not cancel out the greatest principle Christ is trying to drive home.

Many pork eaters will be saved, many vegans will be in the lake, and not lake Michigan...
Adam, you may be interested in reading the following verses: "So Noah went out, and; his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. Every beast, every creeping thing, every bird, and whatever creeps on the earth, according to their families, went out of the ark. . . . And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that moves on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs" Gen 8:18-19; 9:2-3. Doesn't it seem as if these verses not only do not prohibit eating "unclean" meats, but clearly gave permission to do so?.

There was no prohibition I am aware of against eating unclean meats until after Sinai. {If I am mistaken, please correct me--with specific BIBLICAL evidence.) There was, however, a prohibition against eating blood in Gen 9:4-6. .

It is interesting to notice that at the Jerusalem Concil in Acts 15, there was no indication that Gentile Christians were not to eat unclean meats, but there was a prohibition against eating blood. Might that possibly have been the issue in Rom 14? (I am not interested in eating unclean meats, but should we not be fair and accurate with the Scriptures?)

In Rom 14 it is possible to find four very interesting and important points for serious consideration (1) the strong should not DESPISE the weak; (2) the weak ("vegetarian") should not JUDGE the strong; (3) the strong should be careful not to place a stumbling block in front of the weak; and (4) the weak should not violate his/her OWN conscience, for doing so is sin. Sound like good counsel?

As for EGW quotations, I am not sure what you mean about being "more specific." If the one I quoted was not specific enough, which I think was originally written LATER than all of the ones you quoted) could you let me know more clearly what you are looking for. I should add, however, that I believe, and believe EGW also believed, that the Bible should be our source of doctrine. That is where I would prefer to leave it. However if someone insists on EGW, I think we should be fair with her. She can be found to be more reasonable and balanced than many people realize (both supporters and critics), but the BIBLE must ALWAYS come first and be the final authority for doctrine. And we really should not have to have her be he one to tell us that, as the 28 Fundamentals seem to suggest, though she does.

Adam Hendron

Genesis seven contrasts clean and unclean beasts (vv 2 & 8). Even in Leviticus, God mentions unclean animals in earlier chapters, before giving the descriptive terms in chapter eleven. We have the same understanding here as with the Sabbath; that it was observed from the beginning, not just after its delineation on Sinai.

I see what you mean about the dates on EGW's statements. Again, one does not obviate the other. The Lord does not contradict Himself. Look carefully at the statement you selected: 1) She makes no disturbance because some eat butter occasion ally. 2) While she does say that it should
not be a regular article of the diet, she does not resort to force. 3) Emphasis is on how the truth is administered; not whether the counsel on diet is truth.

laffal  
Ymous,

It appears that your reading of Genesis 9 is premature. You would have to consider chap 7:2 to properly grasp the context of what happened. Why would the Lord ALLOW eating of the unclean when it was allotted only to have a pair of each species on the Ark? In contrast there was an allotment for 7 pairs of clean animals of each species to enter the Ark? Would it not be true that under the pretext of your statement that extinction would have become an issue as a result?

It is my understanding that the Lord had made provision for the needs of man after the flood event. Flesh eating was to be a temporary arrangement until the necessary vegetation would become replentished for the good of man.

Romans 14 is not talking about vegetarians vs. flesh eaters, as is 1 Corinthians 8. It's about food offered to idols. The weak thought it was wrong to eat perfectly good food because it was offered to idols and purchased at the market later. The strong, didn't have an issue with eating perfectly good food that was bought, more then likely at a better price, at the market, knowing full well that the idol could not effect the quality of the food in any way.

So instead of declaring me to be a conservative / legalist because you think its wrong for me to eat food offered to idols, its not your place to judge me for that. Likewise, its not my place to despise you because I have the freedom to eat the food offered to idols. God is judge of us all. And we all must stand before Him for ourselves... Whatsoever is not of faith... that's sin.

laffal  
Let me get this right...

So instead of declaring me to be a liberal / law breaker, because you think its wrong for me to eat food offered to idols, its not your place to judge me for that. Likewise...

Connie Severin  
Elaine,

My dad would be spinning in his grave if this sort of stuff is now taught at Andrews. He was the head of the agriculture department there for near 30 years. Last I checked they still had a pretty good herd of milk cows and sold off any bull calves most probably for meat purposes. He did know better than to get into arguments with vegans, though, not because they'd win but because it was a waste of time.
I grew up lacto-ovo vegetarian, because that's what you did at Andrews, and never could tolerate the taste or texture of meat. Even Grillers are too close to the real thing for me. I did make sure our kids could eat meat on occasion though if they so chose, because an obnoxious vegetarian at a barbecue is a poor witness to the love of Christ.

Adam Hendron

I think the world has far more obnoxious carnivores than vegetarians.

Your practice regarding meat with the children has alarming implications. What if that principle were applied to alcohol, fornication, and other harmful activities?

Timo Onjukka

Fascinating, Adam, and illogical, this summary judgmental leap towards Connie, likening offering some requisite (such as meat for food, to children), and then suggesting "alarming implications", as if they chose to expose their children to alcohol, or sexual experience.

Your bias is alarmingly clear; "obnoxious carnivores" speaks volumes. Of course, one who might be an obnoxious vegan will necessarily find many obnoxious hungry people if said vegan chose to blatantly try take their meat away. Jesus did not spend his time throwing blood in the faces of meat eaters (hey, post-cross he barbecued seafood on the beach for the 11 who got away on the boat that fishless night).

I have been alarmed by how certain loud-n-proud vegans (we have many "freaky vegans" with some rather unusual beliefs) just love to get the most egregious videos showing extreme views on the meat industry, to "scare" people away from their choices. This lack of balance is equally detestable! Ministries who cater to this behavior will necessarily attract the most extreme and radical adherents. Sort of like how Revelation used to be taught (and by some, still is, as if it were about scaring people with "the revealing of beasts and harlots" and not the revealing of Jesus Christ)

Do not get between a hungry man and his fork. Or he might become canibal!

Read my forthcoming comment i will append to the end of this thread, for a hearty potluck-line belly laugh!

Adam Hendron

Check out those egregious videos showing extreme views of the vegan industry.

John Andrews

"I think the world has far more obnoxious carnivores than vegetarians."

Really? Any statistics to back that up? I think carnivores do not necessarily become all of a
sudden obnoxious on the question of "food" since they don't see it as a major issue of life.

Quite different from the adventist vegetarians who suddenly become monomaniacs (and annoying!) about eating soy.

Still more troubling is Hendron's lambasting of the commentator for allowing her kids to eat meat occasionally and drawing a silly parallel with alcohol. Little does he know that many biblical character consumed alcohol with moderation, including Timothy. Most likely Jesus turned water into wine and not grape juice. He also sat down with meat-eaters and drunkards, according to witnesses. Was he a drunkard and pork-eater? Not necessarily, he just met people where they were.

We need a little more grace in this forum.

"For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval." (Rom. 14:17-18)
about that lifestyle unless asked. Then it's not a long lecture but merely an informational response. Maybe most of them are hiding because of misconceptions about such a diet.

Adam Hendron  3 days ago  Reply

...maybe hiding like Guideon. No wonder, seeing these comments.

Ymous  3 days ago  Reply

Laffal: If you believe I was unaware of Gen 7:2, you are mistaken. As to why God specifically stated that Noah and his descendants were allowed to eat of everything that moves, are there not times when even you wonder why God allowed certain things? Isn't the question at issue here not WHY He allowed it in Gen 9, but WHETHER He allowed it? If we leave the WHY out and ask WHETHER, doesn't the answer seem pretty clear from the verses?

Did God not have the right (and the wisdom and love) to change it later? (By the way, for those who depend as much or more on EGW as on the Bible, she also changed on the issue of unclean meats). I cannot help but wonder why the SDA Church makes an issue of unclean meats, but while it does not require vegetarianism, has nothing to say about eating blood, which WAS specifically forbidden both in Genesis and at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15).

Sometimes it is assumed that if God says not to do something, it is always, and always has been wrong to do it. But will such an assumption hold up under close investigation? I think not. After Israel was called out of Egypt, they were told that marrying a close relative, including half-sister, aunt, or uncle, (and I think cousin also, though no time to double check now) was an 'abomination."

Did Abraham commit "abomination" in marrying his half-sister, Jacob commit an "abomination" in marrying his cousin, the father of Moses commit an "abomination" in marrying his aunt, which I think (but am not quite sure) was the case? What about circumcision? What about David and his men eating the shewbread (KJV spelling)? Is the Bible really as rigid (and EGW as well) on some issues as some people make it sound?

Adam Hendron  2 days ago  Reply

Will you show me where the prophet changed her position on unclean meats?

Preston Foster  3 days ago  Reply

Still, what does 1 Timothy 4:3-5 mean in this context? There seems to be no reference at all to food offered to idols (which, I agree, is forbidden). Rather, verse 4 is all inclusive and verse 5 provides a remedy for other questionable foods.

Adam Hendron  2 days ago  Reply

Yes, verse five provides the remedy: The Word of God sanctifies ("sets aside") foods that may be
eaten, from those which should not. Notice also verse three: "...meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." It's one thing to know the truth and another to believe (practice) it. In any case, one must know and believe the truth (Thy Word is truth) to understand what meats God has ordained as food. Clearly, He did not create any animals to be food in strict sense, because death was not part of His design. After sin, He made the decision that certain animals could be eaten, with numerous caveats. Overall, the passage refers to the Catholic Church, departing from the faith (the great falling away), forbidding priests from marrying and commanding its members to eat no meat but fish, every Friday. "Friday is a day of abstinence from meat for Catholics in order that this little sacrifice will be a work of satisfaction for the sins they have committed. The Church commands it" (*The 40 Questions Most Frequently Asked About The Catholic Church By Non-Catholics*).

**Bill Cork**

1 day ago  Reply

How is abstinence one day a week (and, since Vatican 2 nearly 50 years ago, only on Fridays in Lent) "commanding to abstain from meats"?

**laffal**

3 days ago  Reply

Ymous,

I don't believe it is a fruitful argument to try and parse out why God would "why" or "whether" He allowed Noah and his family to eat "everything that moves." By that I mean to say, sure God has the freedom to change things later if He so chooses, but why would He out of wisdom and love allow man to eat "everything that moves" knowing that "everything" that may taste good is not good for us. And if we really get down to the heart of the matter when it comes to what / what not to eat, it's taste. Health is not even in the question, which happens to be God's stated concern from His wisdom and love.

Is the Bible rigid? Or is it speaking to what is best for mankind?

**Adam Hendron**

2 days ago  Reply

"You have washed your robes in My blood, stood stiffly for My truth, enter in." 1T 60.3  
...sounds rigid to me (as far as their own lives were concerned; not forcing it on others, of course)

**Elaine Nelson**

3 days ago  Reply

Jesus was neither a vegetarian or a vegan. For all those who wish to follow His example, maybe his diet should be our diet, too? Oh, I just forgot, He hadn't read EGW.

**Adam Hendron**

2 days ago  Reply

You speak of Jesus as though He were dead and gone.
Trevor Hammond

Yeah, food is been produced differently. I was at an animal feed manufacturer the other day and saw fish waste in bags which I assumed were to be added to the sheep and cattle feed. I have also heard of animal flesh been added to the feed of supposedly grass eaters – even genetically modified stuff, antibiotics and maybe some steroids/hormones? There is also the ‘reworked’ chicken industry which takes 'past the sell by date chickens' off the shelves and injects them with scientific goodies and repackages them (reworked) - then sends them BACK to the stores at a reduced rate.

Mr. Adam Hendron has taken it to the next level...

Those who accept the Gift of the Prophecy in the writings of Ellen White will have to acknowledge such admonition from the pen of inspiration and deal with it.

The lesson I can learn from this blog is that we need to take our health and diet seriously. Obesity in the US and around the world is a growing concern which is compounded by economic crisis and depleted healthcare benefits in the First World and the insurmountable lack of decent healthcare in the Third. Maybe that's why our planet has become so... CHEESY?

T

Adam Hendron

Don't confuse us with the big picture, brother. Let's keep it narrow and "in house." ;)

Ella M Rydzewski

TH

You are right--it's time for a change and more nonAdventists understand this than Adventists. More of them are seeing the light in dropping animal products because harvesting animals takes more space, time, and money. It causes pollution unsurpassed by other processes. On the eastern shore of Maryland chicken raising for eggs and meat has polluted the bay and waterways substantially. Marine life is dying. Cattle raising is even worse. The animals are treated inhumanely and cattle cut up before they are even dead! This is not only a health issue but one of caring for the planet and its animals. It goes beyond our selfish desires to resolving world hunger. Of course this won't happen before Jesus returns because of human selfishness and addictions.

Glenn Hansen

Angels and YHVH ate meat and dairy products:

Gen. 18:8 he [Abraham] took curds and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and placed it before them [angels and YHVH]; and he was standing by them under the tree as they ate.
The passage in Timothy is a quote from a passage in Genesis:

Gen.9:1 and god blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.
2 "the fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given.
3 "every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant.
4 "only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.
5 "surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. and from every man, from every man’s brother I will require the life of man.

1 Tim 4:3 men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which god has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.
4 for everything created by god is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude;
5 for it is sanctified by means of the word of god and prayer.

Adam Hendron 2 days ago Reply

You seem very particular about the tetragrammaton, but not about Christ's health message. The Lord also accepted animal sacrifices back then, but today calls for something better.

Regarding the last two incongruent passages, see previous responses.

Preston Foster 1 day ago Reply

The text in 1 Timothy seems to me to not be a "quote" for Genesis 9 at all. The context is completely different. Timothy is not discussing survival or replenishing the earth. He is talking about the last days and the preaching of false doctrines.

For some reason, declarative sentences (from Paul, it particular) are often rejected as having some other context that conveniently avoids any conflict with traditional Adventist teachings.

I believe we miss much, wanting the Scriptures to conform with our traditions rather than meaning what they actually and directly say.
Pat Travis

Seems remarkably like asceticism doesn't it Glenn...but if that is what they choose it is ok with me...but not binding on me.

Thanks for the editing improvements Atoday

regards,

pat

Adam Hendron

Which of God's counsel is binding on you?

...I find it quite liberating to be free of the troubles unhealthful foods incur.

pagophilus

Whilst I agree with the sentiments expressed in this article/blog, and that Adventists should in general eat a plant-based diet, I have to ask this question: Why do most of the vegan Adventists I know look like walking death? Why are they more prone to illness? Why are they so sickly? Do they exclude too much from the diet? Do they not know that by excluding meat/dairy/eggs they must replace them with something.

Many vegans I know also seem to be more intolerant of different foods (or at least they won't/can't eat them).

The other problem is inflexibility. The goal should not be to set a record (eg I have not touched animal products for x years) but to eat the best diet you can in your circumstances. My wife and I travel to the Philippines for evangelism and sometimes take others with us. Some are rather inflexible in their diet and insist on being able to eat things difficult or impossible to get over there. Also, fish and rice with a few leaves is all that many people there can afford. Vegetables are rather expensive and may only be affordable for a special treat once in a while. To stick to veganism in such circumstances is not setting a good example for the locals, whilst making it difficult to find acceptable food for the hosts. And it causes friction and arguments.

By all means we should promote a plant-based diet (and we should call it a plant-based diet rather than veganism, which has eastern religious connotations). But we must not fall into extremism.

And those of you who do eat meat and/or eggs/milk, don't tempt those who don't to eat them. Let us all live according to our conscience whilst promoting the healthiest way to live.

Adam Hendron

Some go too far, to be sure. But the great majority do not go far enough. There are vastly more diseased, obese "walking dead," as you put it.
Thank you especially for that last paragraph. Very nice.

Ella M Rydzewski
2 days ago

Dear Pag,
Your first paragraph doesn't fit my experience or that of researchers. Dr. Fuhrman (drfuhrman.com) has researched some 20,000 studies and, as a physician, he works with ill patients and gets them back to health with the plant-based or what he calls nutrient-based diet. He is only one of many around North America. This includes places like Weimar. For most of us in situations like yours, we do need to be flexible and the diet can't work where food sources are limited. This is common sense. Our best witness in such places may be to eat what is set before us. But here in this country of abundance, there is no excuse. By the way, there is nothing wrong with "eastern religious" terms if we want to reach those people even here in our own country. We have to decide what is more important to us, reaching people or keeping our terminology "pure." We are to meet people where they are.

pagophilus
2 days ago

Ella, I agree that a plant-based diet is the best. But my experience comes from Melbourne, Australia and surrounds, where most mainstream Adventists are fairly liberal and most "conservative" Adventists seem to be very conservative, on the edges of Adventism, frequenting "independent" churches and ministries and being more of the "extreme" or "fruitcake" mentality, highly critical of the church proper, arguing about semantics such as sinful vs carnal with the speaker during the sermon, dressing like James and Ellen White and having long beards. I think you know what I mean.

KellymanSDA
2 days ago

Hi Elaine,
The way I understand the example of Christ is in the light of the sanctuary service. The priest ate meat in the holy place or when they would serve in the holy place. There was no meat eaten in the service of the most holy place. At this point in earth's history we are to enter into the most holy place with Christ by faith and experience. This would include excluding meat from our diet. Again, this is the way I understand it. I am open to correction of course.

Nic Samojluk
KellymanSDA
2 days ago

ApproveDelete
“The way I understand the example of Christ is in the light of the sanctuary service. The priest ate meat in the holy place or when they would serve in the holy place. There was no meat eaten in the service of the most holy place. At this point in earth's history we are to enter into the most holy place with Christ by faith and experience. This would include excluding meat from our diet.
Again, this is the way I understand it. I am open to correction of course.”

*********
This is an interesting argument favoring a vegetarian diet. I am wondering what would have happened to the system of animal sacrifices in the event the Israelites had accepted the vegetarian diet the Lord wanted them to adopt in the desert? Is it possible that perhaps the killing of all the animals might have been avoided and cereal offering would have been the only kind required by God from his people?

Under such a scenario, is it possible that God’s chosen nation would have accepted Jesus as their rightful Messiah and that God’s kingdom would have been established two thousand years ago and extend itself to all the earth? Didn’t Ellen White state that if Israel of old had accepted Jesus as their King, that Jerusalem would have eventually become the capital of the world?

laffal

Nic,

The Israelites did practice the vegetarian diet in the wilderness (Deuteronomy 8:1-5), with the exception of the quail given them by God upon their request for meat. The only other exception was the portion of the sacrifice that was allotted from the sacrificial service.

Preston Foster

KellymanSDA,

Christ ate flesh (broiled lamb) at Passover (Luke 22:7-8,14-15), and, later, AFTER the resurrection (broiled fish, Luke 24: 41-43), when He was, again, fully God - only.

Christ was not a vegetarian -- even after His resurrection.

KellymanSDA

Forks Over Knives makes a great case for the vegan diet. http://forksoverknives.com/

Pat Travis

When I hear theories like Kellyman given, I like to remind others that we will not have sexual intercourse in heaven. Shall we discard this legitimate pleasure of the spirit and flesh now for a "superior ascetic" practice?

I think not.

But if it makes your boat float vegans...go for it.
The kingdom of heaven is not about food and drink.

Adam Hendron

1 day ago  Reply

I appreciate Kellyman's humility and the tentative way he put forth his idea. His view seems to be based on what is happening in the Sanctuary right now; not the future reward that you speak of.

Now sex is much more than "pleasure," as you say. But if it is so legitimate, why do you like to remind people that we will not have it in heaven? It's a rather sensational subject to be preoccupied with.

Timo Onjukka

2 days ago  Reply

I read above that someone made rather boisterous comment implying non-vegans had "made their bellies their gods."
I see some rather large gods hanging out in the vegan potluck line, too; the gods of pride, in perfect vegan lifestyles.
Militant pride, even...proudly spoken, with equally overhanging pendulous bellies....

Adam Hendron

1 day ago  Reply

You must be on a level with God, to know the hearts of men.
Rom 2:1

Timo Onjukka

17 hours ago  Reply

Lighten up Adam, you know not satire, though you unwittingly wrote quite an excellent one. I rib a little good-natured fun at you (*directed here @YOUR judgemental boisterous claim that some make their "belly their gods" ) and you not only cry foul, while continually regurgitating some string-cheese theory about the supposed origins of ...cheese prohibition. After your predictable and trite follow up replies...your final volley using scripture is epithetic. What excuse is yours, for this, then? I've judged no one. My fellow vegetarians are hungry; Peter, FEED them, if you love me!
( BTW I am semi-lacto-ovo-piscitarian; perhaps i shall live long enough to see God vindicated and obtain salvation, before being translated into perfect vegan. Unless i starve to death, get stoned by hungry angry convert, or get run over by my cheese wheel)

I have not charged in here with at-best tenuous (and entirely unsupportable) claim for scriptural basis judging others dietary habits. Your very title implies you have a sense of humor; perhaps i ought complain "false advertising".

On the other hand, I welcome potluck entrees consisting of any fare, except the clearly forbidden. We tactfully turn the baby back ribs back to bearer, although Adam did fare sort-of pretty well, at first, with his ribs ;-) But PLEASE bring the yardbird and the salmon! And do NOT mess with my Danish Cream Havarti.
Ever seen a roomful of hypoglycemic vegans after a far-too-long-winded sermon? Trippin' and slippin' to be first at each others throats...just wait till AFTER the high-carb potluck! Can you spell comatose?

I suppose this might be opportune moment to mention that over 80% of western commercial cheese production utilizes GMO (which, unarguably, is safe for vegetarians, if you understand the process, language, and science). I admit i am unabashedly baiting debate here!

Please pass the crackers!

Nic Samojluk

Ella M Rydzewski

“Dr. Fuhrman (drfuhrman.com) has researched some 20,000 studies and, as a physician, he works with ill patients and gets them back to health with the plant-based or what he calls nutrient-based diet. He is only one of many around North America. This includes places like Weimar.”

**********

Yes! I grew up in Argentina at a time when during the presidency of Juan D. Peron a meat diet was the cheapest one. We were rather poor and could not afford a balanced vegetarian diet. Nevertheless, when we emigrated to the U.S., I realized that meat was more expensive than vegetables here, and I saw no reason to eat meat and became a vegetarian. So far I have no regrets, and my health is great given my age—79.

Adam Hendron

Okay, now whose going to take a pot-shot at this guy? (God bless you, Sir.)

Ymous

Adam, you asked for evidence that EGW changed her views about swine's flesh. The quotation below was written in 1858 in response to a man who was apparently trying to make not eating pork a test of fellowship. About that time James White wrote in the RH that there was no biblical support against eating it. I have seen this statement, but do not remember offhand where it was. In any case, isn't the final authority the Bible rather than EGW or JW? Wasn't that HER position? Wouldn't anyone who disagrees be disagreeing with her?

"If God requires His people to abstain from swine's flesh, He will convict them on the matter. He is just as willing to show His honest children their duty, as to show their duty to individuals upon whom He has not laid the burden of His work. If it is the duty of the church to abstain from swine's flesh, God will discover it to more than two or three. He will teach His church their duty. {1T 206.3}"

You may say that the above statement keeps the door open for a later change. Agreed. But likewise, the fact that God gave specific permission to eat everything that moves at the time of Noah doesn't
mean He couldn't prohibit some things later.

Someone above implied that some things might not taste good, so God's permission was limited. But God did not COMMAND that everything SHOULD be eaten. He rather gave permission for everything that moves to be eaten. Isn't there a pretty big difference between the two?

I might add that the issue of swine's flesh was not the only issue on which she changed her views.

---

Adam Hendron 1 day ago  Reply

Did this command you speak of permit cannibalism? (I'd try to stay really still.) And if one failed to eat everything that moved (like the "see food" diet), was this disobedience?

Timo Onjukka 1 day ago  Reply

Recently, after concluding our groups inductive study on Paul's study on acceptable foods from Romans, we shared a potluck meal. About 60 were in attendance, so we shared grace and thanks, and divided the serving lines on both sides of the table. In loud, inquisitive voice, I inquired "pardon me, which way is this line movin?"

to which i answered myself in that moment of silence; "Oh, this one is NOT going to heaven. Where is the VEGAN line?"

Adam Hendron 1 day ago  Reply

Do you take pride in annoying vegans?

austudent 1 day ago  Reply

I personally am a vegan, at least for the most part. While I may partake of the dreaded dairy foods if that is the realistic only option I pretty much do not eat much dairy. Nevertheless this article is very ridiculous and rather legalistic. Paul informs us that "each must be fully persuaded in his own mind" yet the author attempts to do the persuading for us. I was convicted to give up dairy (for the most part) not through people saying it was a "salvational" issue, but because I saw that it could have health benefits that would be favorable in God's eyes. This does not mean I look at my fellow brother eating his cheese pizza with disgust or judgment. Peter learned this lesson, the hard way over several issues. The issue of diet is one which the individual must be convicted of. Sure we can provide relevant information and materials or even documentaries like Fork Over Knife, but ultimately the person who makes the choice to become vegan will do so under free will without the kind of pressure and actions of "annoying vegans" that this author subscribes.
Adam Hendron

What pressure and actions are you referring to? Is it that you just don't want anyone to quote the testimony of Jesus?

Vernon P. Wagner

While on military duty in Germany, my 9 year old daughter went to a 'Metzgerai' (butchering company) on a class field trip. She became a Vegan on the spot. I praised her decision, but advised her to NOT make a religion out of it.

Adam Hendron

Amen! (on both counts)

Elaine Nelson

I am in excellent health, and at age 86, I have been a life-long vegetarian, but never a vegan. Each year of life, my longevity expectation is extended, so I expect to live another 10 years, and by then will be willing to go. We have not been promised immortality by what we eat or don't eat.

The focus on food is contrary to Paul's instruction to the Christian church and there has been no reason to now dispense with it. "Let every man be persuaded in his own mind." When did Jesus or the apostles prohibit eating meat? It was only that which was offered to idols and than which had been strangled. Why are there Adventists now who want to add to Paul's decisions?

Adam Hendron

In Moses' day, "He [The Lord] did not prohibit their eating meat, but withheld it from them in a great measure." TSDF 159. But let's not stay stuck in the past. Jesus has present truth for those who are preparing for translation. Let everyone be fully persuaded in his own mind, and let us exhort one another while we see the day approaching.

Adam Hendron

...God bless you too, Ma'am.

Elaine Nelson

The author was most prescient and astute in titling his article "Annoying Vegans." Such extreme diet positions in the SDA church have been most annoying to those who try to have a balance in their...
lives and find that diet is not religion, although it seems for some that it is their entire religion.

Adam Hendron 1 day ago Reply

The first word in that title was intended as both an adjective and a verb. The growing mass of "total vegetarians" out there find the religious excuses of Adventist regressives to be most annoying. God forbid these Spirit-led seekers should show up at a potluck and hear the dietary liberties we boast of. Jesus has declared His position on dairy in this day, and we dare not call it extreme.

Ella M Rydzewski 1 day ago Reply

Yes, right on, Elaine--it's the vegan who can be annoying and not the practice. But it's not an extreme any more. A lot of people and especially the young are doing it. They are ahead of the "church." Any way you are making the right choice for yourself. (by the way, a lot of us are milk intolerant)

Elaine Nelson 1 day ago Reply

There is no reason why one's personal diet choices has to have a religious reason, nor that everyone needs to be told. We all have certain foods we either like, or don't like, or can't tolerate, but we quietly live and understand our bodies. It's the "do-gooders" who want to convince others that the choices they have made are not only more healthful, but should be adopted by others because of religious reasons, ignoring that what emanates from the mouth can be far more harmful.

Adam Hendron 1 day ago Reply

"Some may think that the question of diet is not important enough to be included in the question of religion. But such make a great mistake." EV 265

Jack Hoehn 1 day ago Reply

Adam, vegans have many health benefits and a few hazards that can be managed by supplements, but before you use Sister White to promote the vegan diet, you need to be meticulous about the context of the statements you are quoting.

Although immortalized in the compilation Counsels on Diet and Food, you should know that the origin of the “Cheese should never be introduced into the stomach” statement is from Testimonies 2, page 68 dated as 1868. The context of that Testimony is clearly directed to two individuals, Brother and Sister “I”. We learn that these are the sickest Adventist family Ellen White knew in 1868, that they had pale faces, that they suffered from anorexia, insomnia, fevers, chills, and specifically had “diseased livers.” The husband especially was sedentary.
To someone sick with cirrhosis, hepatitis, untreated cholecystitis, or fatty infiltration of the liver, surely the counsel that “cheese should never be introduced into the stomach” sounds both prudent and Heaven sent.

Also in 1868 to re-publish that advice for the general little flock of Adventists who only had unpasteurized cheeses in a pre-refrigeration, pre-antibiotic, pre-pasteurization era could have been a great idea. The FDA has published warnings even with our refrigeration, that soft raw-milk cheeses can cause "serious infectious diseases including listeriosis, brucellosis, salmonellosis and tuberculosis." In 1868 those illnesses were often fatal, so again the advice to avoid cheese may have of general applicability and both prudent and Heaven sent.

In a previous quoted letter in the comments above, Sister White in 1904 offers “sterilized cream” as an alternative to unsterilized butter and cheeses, suggesting that the infectious risk may have been behind the Heaven sent advice?

But for American Adventists today and those in places like Switzerland, Greece, France who survive largely on cheese, it is of no service to quote what was good Heaven sent advice in 1868 to some very sick believers.

The Adventist health message for the world at large is NOT the cheese should never be used. It is limited use of high fat dairy including cheese, free use of low fat dairy including pasteurized cheeses.

Unless you have a specific problem with allergies or a moral issue with taking the drink away from baby lambs, kids, and calves! To suggest that Jesus says cheese eating should never be done or to intimate that it is a sin, is reprehensible. Adventists are heading to a land flowing with milk and honey.

---

Adam Hendron

You've violated the comment guidelines (point three) and foisted a heap of conjecture, besides.

I suppose virtually all of the testimonies Jesus gave us back then have lost their relevance, since we're so sophisticated and knowledgable any more. One could have a real commical hayday with that tactic and inverting countless other insights from the Lord's penman.

Beware, “Men professing to be teachers, step in between them and the light God has given, that it shall have no weight or effect upon the hearts of the people.” Special Testimony to the Battle Creek Church (1882) p. 9

"Others will be greatly helped by the messages. Though not personally addressed, they will be corrected" 1SM42.2 "The counsel that they desire can be found here, given for other cases situated similarly to themselves" 2T 605.2

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Preston Foster

Reply

1 day ago

http://www.atoday.org/article.php?id=802&action=print

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Adam,

This is posted elsewhere. How do you explain this (below)?

Christ ate flesh (broiled lamb) at Passover (Luke 22:7-8,14-15), and, later, AFTER the resurrection (broiled fish, Luke 24: 41-43), when He was, again, fully God - only.

Christ was not a vegetarian -- even after His resurrection.

Was He limited by His environment?

Jack Hoehn

To place seemingly strange statements from Sister White, in their historical context so we can understand how they were not strange and even Heaven sent, under those circumstances, is to be Ellen White's friend and defender. She has ministered to my spiritual and physical health too much to allow her to be misapplied by bumper sticker Adventists who can quote the Testimonies, but haven't taken the serious effort to think about them first. I'm a fan of vegans. I'm a huge fan of Ellen White's writings out of context to thump over the head those Adventists who are cheesier than thou.

Ervin Taylor

I hate to bring this up after so many people have added their serious comments, but is it possible that this blog was written as a well-designed spoof of the obsession of traditional Adventists on what they eat? How about the title: “Annoying Vegans”? Does that mean that vegans are annoying or that we should annoy vegans? Should that title have been the tip off that the author might not be entirely serious? Or how about the line: “Unlike the Savior, however, the effect of cheese is deleterious on the digestive system”? Just think for a moment about the logic of that statement. Do we create or attract cheeseophobic people? Just wondering if the author has had enough fun and would consider coming clean.

Connie Severin

Ervin - I considered that when it first went up; however, I consider myself a connoisseur of great satire, and this didn't quite make the cut, particularly the comments he's made after some of the remarks. It it truly was intended as satire, I hope he keeps his day job. Also, I googled his name and couldn't come up with anything that looked like someone with a sense of humor about life.

There are some rather, um, unique pieces, however, and each taken on its own merit might be considered satire, e.g., http://www.examiner.com/seventh-day-adventist-in-national/governments-consider-tainting-water-to-slow-reproduction-and-revolution. In total, though, I think perhaps the author is more likely one who reads satire, thinking it is truth. Like conservatives who thought the
Onion article on children in grade school children starting up covens as a response to the Harry Potter books was factual. (see http://www.snopes.com/humor/iftrue/potter.asp)

Vernon P. Wagner
1 day ago Reply

Erratum:
Methinks I made a minor error in describing daughter's decision to skip meat. She's actually a vegetarian rather than a Vegan. She eats seafood, and dairy, but no meat from any creature that has walked on the Earth.

Glenn Hansen
1 day ago Reply

Jack Hoehn,

Thank you for illuminating that statement about cheese.

Adam Hendron
17 hours ago Reply

Illumination vs Inspiration. Explain it away...

Timo Onjukka
1 day ago Reply

More fun than fondue, this thing called cheese!
Covering a multitude of gastronomies since long before recorded history, and feeding multitudes since at least 8000BCE.

Can one annoy one already annoyed? ;~)
(Might be hypoglycemia, Adam. You need some protein, to balance out the cloying and frothy pith)

Adam Hendron
17 hours ago Reply

...cries "Foul!!"

Bill Cork
1 day ago Reply

That the author is associated with "Amazing Discoveries" suggests rather clearly that this is not satire.

I've been looking to see what the Bible says about cheese. I can only find three texts. 1 Samual 17:18 (Jesse tells David to take cheeses to his brothers), 2 Samuel 17:29 (David and his men given
provisions to sustain them, including cheese), Job 10:10 (cheese making a simile for Job's experience). Jesus never saw fit to mention it, either during his earthly ministry, during his resurrection appearances, in his revelations to Paul or in his revelations to John.


There are really only a handful of references to cheese in her writings, republished in multiple compilations so it seems like she talked about it more often. Most are simple dictums, "Don't eat it." Why? "Deleterious"? How so? What kind? She never mentions it in connection with a vision, so where did she come to this understanding?

What did she do when she visited someone who had cheese? Did she make a fuss? Nope. Here's how she writes about her trip to Sweden:

"At eight o'clock we were called to breakfast. There was a round table with a cloth upon it and a flower pot in the center, and bread, a quarter of uncut cheese, hot milk, and fried cakes, which constituted our breakfast. There were no plates at first, two knives and two forks. We were invited to come to the table, all standing. A blessing was asked and then we stood around the table, took something in our hands, and walked about, talking and eating. Plates were then brought in and we put our food upon the plates and I was offered a chair. Some seated themselves on the lounge, others walked about, eating with the plate in their hands. All the while when we wished anything we would take it from any part of the table. This was a new style to us but we shall get used to it, I think. After the meal is finished the guests shake hands with the landlord and landlady, thanking them for the food. {3MR 385.1}"

"A round table stood in the center of the room, with bread, butter, cheese, and cold sliced meat. We all stood around this table while Elder Matteson asked a blessing in Swedish. We then took bread and butter--if we eat the articles--and either stood and walked about and ate, or sat in chairs or sofas, of which there were several. Before these sofas and chairs were small tables covered with linen cloths. Next came the plates of plum soup and meat soup. The first soup was made of prunes, raisins, apples, and I know not how many kinds [of fruit]. These [plates of soup] were placed on the small tables. After this dish was brought wild meat and fish prepared in a very nice manner. After this was the dessert, of cooked peeled pears with cream. Then all stand and ask a silent blessing; then each guest shakes hands with the host and hostess and thanks them for the dinner, and the ceremony is ended. {3MR 388.2}"

She says that here and there that she might have had a nibble at this time or that, but that she didn't buy it or use it on a regular basis. She didn't want the example of her occasional nibbles to mean that it was OK to eat it. She got upset at Lucretia Canright at one point for bringing some cheese into the White house for suspicious reasons. She was upset it was sold at a camp meeting.

There are certainly things that can be said from a health standpoint about dairy products, milk based proteins, etc. But if we can't demonstrate it from the Bible and the Bible only as a point of faith, let's lay out the real science and encourage people to make informed decisions.

We dare not quote a snippet from Ellen White and say, "Jesus said it."

Adam Hendron  
17 hours ago  
The fifth comment above is the first part of my reply here. Moreover, is it the testimony of Jesus or is it not? We dare not say it is only human.

The counsel is that we should not discuss diet at meal time; this accounts for your lengthy citation. Her tact is not to be mistaken for anything like approbation. Again, the Lord does not contradict Himself, and has given unmistakeable and universal warnings, even to the end of the age.

Again, health reform is to prepare a people for translation. If we limit ourselves to salvation, you may have to wait in the grave while others see about God's vindication.

Bill Cork  
17 hours ago  
"Universal"? No.

Did you go to the seminary? Did you take the course on the Spirit of Prophecy?

I'm reminded of the story A. G. Daniells told at the 1919 Bible Conference.

... Take this question of health reform. It is well known from the writings themselves and from personal contact with Sister White, and from common sense, that in traveling and in knowledge of different parts of the world, that the instruction set forth in the Testimonies was never intended to be one great wholesale blanket regulation for peoples' eating and drinking, and it applies to various individuals according to their physical condition and according to the situation in which they find themselves. I have always explained it that way to our ministers in ministers' meetings. We had a ministers' meeting over in Scandinavia, and we had one man there from the "land of the midnight sun," up in Hammerfest where you never grow a banana or an apple or a peach, and hardly even a green thing. It is snow and cold there nearly all the time, and the people live to a large extent on fish and various animal foods that they get there. We had sent a nurse from Christiania up there as a missionary. He had the strict idea of the diet according to the Testimonies, and he would not touch a fish or a bit of reindeer, nor any kind of animal food, and he was getting poor; because missionaries that are sent out do not have much money, and they cannot import fresh fruits; and it was in the days when even canned goods were not shipped much. The fellow nearly starved to death. He came down to attend that meeting, and he was nearly as white as your dress [speaking to Sister Williams]. He had hardly any blood in his body. I talked to him, and I said, "Brother Olson, what is the matter with you? We will have to bring you away from up there if you do not get better. You have no red blood corpuscles in
"your blood." I talked with him a while, and finally asked him, "What do you live on?"

"Well," he said, "I live a good deal on the north wind."

I said, "You look like it, sure enough."

We went on talking, and I found out that the man wasn't eating much but potatoes and starchy foods, - just a limited dietary. I went at him with all the terror I could inspire for such foolishness.

Voice: Did you make any impression?

A. G. Daniells: Yes, I did. And I got other brethren to join me. We told that man he would be buried up there if he tried to live that way. We talked with him straight about it.

When I got back to this country I talked with Sister White about it, and she said, "Why don't the people use common sense? Why don't they know that we are to be governed by the places we are located?" You will find in a little testimony a caution thrown out, modifying the extreme statements that were made.

---

Elaine Nelson

"Annoying" is the appropriate word for anyone who has an extreme fetish on food. There are many diabetics, people with celiac disease, those with extreme allergies and more who do not feel it necessary to share their food habits and the specifics of their diet. This is such a personal matter that it is both discourteous and offensive to even expect anyone else to pattern their diet after ANYONE, regardless of whether it is illness, allergies, or worst of all: a religion that has very esoteric beliefs that should be practiced equally for everyone who claims Jesus as His leader.

This is nothing short of sacrilege since Jesus never advocated vegetarianism as it was one of the main problems with Judaism: a Kosher diet was so restrictive that they had special butchers (meat, anyone?) and special separate kitches and utensils for preparing food. Why not advocate such a diet? After all, most of Adventism is straight from the Hebrew Scriptures, with additional advice from the sainted EGW.

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Ron Corson

Ervin wrote:

"I hate to bring this up after so many people have added their serious comments, but is it possible that this blog was written as a well-designed spoof of the obsession of traditional Adventists on what they eat?"

I don't think you guys publish any satire, I seem to recall submitting a satire article last year, maybe you and the others at Atoday forgot what satire is, I published it on my blog however so if you want

Elaine Nelson 22 hours ago Reply

Yes, it is so far-out that it could be satire, but the further comments by the author did not suggest satire.
I agree, however, that such a subject is perfect for satire.

Bill Cork 20 hours ago Reply

Why did the early Adventists oppose cheese? That's not clear from anything written by Ellen White. But let's look at what was being written in other Adventist publications.

John Harvey Kellogg argued that it contained lots of germs, and that these increased with age.

*We may take food that is already poisonous, such as cheese, for instance. A very small piece of cheese contains millions of germs and germ poisons. It is simply decayed milk.* {February 11, 1895 N/A, GCB 92.1}

*Cheese always contains germs in great numbers. When six weeks old, a bit of cheese as large as grain of wheat contains thousands of germs. The germs increase as the cheese becomes older.* {February 15, 1895 N/A, GCB 170.9}

Here's how he described a camp-meeting that was an example to him of backsliding in health reform:

John Harvey Kellogg on cheese at camp meeting:

*The provision stands, and boarding-tents at camp-meetings ceased to be object lessons for our people and those not of our faith, in healthful dietetics. The camp-meeting provision stand in the last decade has rarely failed to include in its stock a good supply of lard crackers, ginger snaps, baker's pies and cakes of various sorts, dried beef, smoked halibut, sale codfish, smoked herring, painted candies and unwholesome knick-knacks of various sorts, a good supply of cheese, ripe enough to be buried and lively enough to move on if not kept in a cage, and in the background might usually be seen, arranged in a picturesque manner, sundry coils of sausage, warranted, however, to be bologna, as I have frequently been told, which is a guarantee that the article is not Simon pure swine's flesh, but a miscellaneous assortment of all manner of beasts.* {March 9, 1891 N/A, GCDB 42.2}

And this was J. N. Loughborough, Hand Book of Health (1868)

405. *What of cheese as an article of diet?* {1868 JNL, HBH 190.5}

*Cheese is always more or less difficult of digestion, beside being frequently colored by poisonous substances, as annato, arsenic, etc. Old cheese should never be used. Cheese not more than three months old made of milk from which the cream has been mostly taken, is most easily digested. But, of*
Cheese in general, it would be well for all to keep in mind the old adage, {1868 JNL, HBH 190.6}

"Cheese is a mighty elf, Digesting all things but itself." {1868 JNL, HBH 191.1}

Old cheese is exceedingly obnoxious as an aliment. {1868 JNL, HBH 191.2}

406. What of curds, and Dutch cheese? {1868 JNL, HBH 191.3}

Curds made of fresh milk, and pot-cheese made of milk as soon as it sours, before it becomes bitter, are not very objectionable. {1868 JNL, HBH 191.4}

And that is it, by way of explanation.

Elaine Nelson

Cheese, hard and soft, like yogurt contain "good" bacteria; bacteria was a word not known or used then, and "germs" covered much more than today. Many of the foods regularly used today were either unknown or rare then. Fresh fruits and vegetables were available only "in season" as refrigerated shipping was unknown. It is difficult to realize that so much of our food today is far superior to that of 100 years ago, we take for granted. People used underground cellars to "refrigerate food, or drying meat was very old.

Using any writer of 100 years ago as a nutrition expert is ludicrous. It was a different world with so many conditions of living unknown to moderns today who take so much for granted. I can still remember foods being placed in cellars to extend shelf life; oranges were a rarity and tomatoes were available only in season, as were so many foods that are on the produce shelves today.

Kevin Seidel

May be the Adventist pioneers were lactose intolerant and this influence their opinion of cheese. If you have trouble digesting it, then it is a good idea not to eat it. If you don't have trouble digesting it, then it should be fine to eat cheese as part of a balance diet.

Ervin Taylor

The last few postings are the voices of reason and historical context on this silly subject. The anti-cheese campaign in classic Adventism is an excellent example of Adventist folk religion in full bloom.

Connie Severin

I'm not sure I'd ever use Kellogg to justify any piece of advice I follow...
Per Josh Clark, one of Kellogg's biographers,

"Kellogg made sure that the bowel of each and every patient was plied with water, from above and below. His favorite device was an enema machine ("just like one I saw in Germany") that could run fifteen gallons of water through an unfortunate bowel in a matter of seconds. Every water enema was followed by a pint of yogurt -- half was eaten, the other half was administered by enema "thus planting the protective germs where they are most needed and may render most effective service." The yogurt served to replace "the intestinal flora" of the bowel, creating what Kellogg claimed was a squeaky clean intestine.

Bill Cork

Really? What biography of Kellogg did "Josh Clark" write?

Connie Severin

Bill, I found the description on several Internet sites, referring to Josh Clark as "one of Kellogg's biographers." I didn't spend a lot of time looking for one of his books. He seems to have some connections with a website/blog about famous American quacks. It fits with all the stories I've heard of the man, however. One of our instructors at Loma Linda told a story that Kellogg liked to carry a vial of his own ...um... manure shall we say... on his tours to prove that his "stuff" didn't stink. That story is purely anecdotal as our teacher wasn't quoting from anything I was aware of, but it was definitely before Road to Wellville came out.

Elaine Nelson

There is more than only one account of Kellogg's "Bowel Obsession" as it has been called. Even some of the self-supporting SDA (non-institutional) small sanitariums still suggest coffee enemas (supposedly, intaking in reverse is not sinful!) and high colonics.

These can be very dangerous to some individuals and even Kellogg "applied" yogurt rather than merely eating it, which we know today is very beneficial. No one needs a "squeaky clean intestine", as there are good bacteria absolutely necessary to be retained in the intestine for proper nutrition.

I would hope that there are still no SDAs today (somewhat doubtful after this thread) who would limit their lives to 19th century medical and dietary advice, but I'm afraid that there are some who eschew modern medicine for such "natural" methods which can be very suspect. Where is the evidence that vegans live healthier and disease free?

laffal

Elaine,
First of all, there are no one who claims that a vegan diet will bring about disease free living. Secondly, when it comes to a squeaky clean colon, it is vitally important because the colon is responsible for nutrition distribution to each organ group in the body. And whatever the state of the colon will be the state of whatever is distributed to the body's organs. The yogurt implants were designed to add the intestinal flora (bacteria) back into the colon. Acidopholus is another means of keeping the bacterial flora in its proper balance. And bear in mind, my father had colon cancer at 36 years old, and dies of cancer at 40. So I have a vested interest if for no other reason then genetically to understand the importance of colon health.

As for modern medicine, for the most part it's designed to deal with catastrophic disease. Yet, chronic disease is crippling our health system. For the most part, medication is the answer.

I would be the first to admit that there are "health reformers" that are definitively annoying. But nonetheless, properly understood and applied it is a positive blessing for mind / body / soul. And I speak from experience. My wife and I spent over $32,000 in over a 4 year period for health insurance, and spent a little over $100 for copays in the same period. Personally, I would have rather had the $31,900 then the umbrella I didn't need. That does not mean I will some day need the medical community's help. But I can vouch for a vegan diet... we stay healthy almost all of the time.

Heidi Craig

13 hours ago

Coming as a direct descendent of EGW, I just discussed this matter with my grandmother (EGWs great-granddaughter), we both find many of the quotes taken here to be erroneous and grossly out of context. My grandmother believes that even Ellen White never gave up cheese and eggs. Her children, the W.C. Whites at least, definitely never gave either up as well, I know for a fact her daughter-in-law cooked with both (I have been researching and writing a book on her, Mrs. May Lacey White, so this is all very fresh in my mind).

I am positive if EGW could read this she would be horrified to see how her words have being taken and used here (and many other places as well). Diet was never something to be used to determine salvation. EGW was very adamant about the fact that it has, and always will be a personal choice of conviction. If you're vegan great, but the rest of us are not damned, thank-you-very-much.

Lastly, I think the thing that shocks and scares us (and my grandmother - who doesn't like to use the computer so I'm giving voice for her here too) the most is that Ellen White is being quoted as Jesus, this is heresy, and a serious apology and retraction needs to be made.

Ymous

11 hours ago

THOUGHT-PROKING QUESTIONS—Based on Romans 14????

Some say eating cheese will make your soul freeze, And that drinking of milk is for Lucifer’silk,
That eggs increase passion if they’re part of your ration, 
And butter’s no tonic—it’s really demonic. 
Should I be a good vegan, never fall off the wagon? 
Salvation by diet—should I break down and try it? 
I can then judge another, whether sister or brother, 
Whose food’s not divine, since it isn’t like mine.

Should I think I am wise, vegan scruples despise? 
Should I mock and berate, ‘cause I just cannot wait, 
For the things I adore, eating too much, and more, 
Of things that may please, at the risk of disease, 
And trip up the weak with words that I speak, 
Or lead them astray as I go my own way? 
Or should I show love, like the Father above, 
From arguments cease, try to live in His peace?

What do YOU think?

Jack Hoehn

Nice rhyme! But it's not about cheese, its about what to do with words inspired by the timeless God, given by mortal prophets for humans who lived in a particular place and during a particular time.

If an inspired prophet like Paul says in Corinth, "I do not allow women to speak in churches." Does that mean Ellen White can never step into a pulpit? No.

If Ellen White writes in 1864, "Drugs never cure disease." Does that mean that the children cured of Lukemia, and the malaria victims rescued from death, and the meningitis victim healed by modern drugs maker her a false prophet? No.

So unless all Adventist can learn how to tell what was true then, under those circumstance, may not be true now, under present conditions, we are doomed to becoming as Dr. Siegfried Horn once worried, "a church of oldsters and simpletons." "God said it, I believe it, that settles it, so I don't have to think about it," is a recipe for spiritual disaster.

Timo Onjukka

Nice ending, thought, Jack
....extremists, unbalanced, peculiar for peculiar sake, shane based. Afraid to use conscience or God-given reason, and resting solely on what someone tells them they must do.

Such is a dangerous church, and one that is easily led out of communion with God. Such is also a church that fails to bring souls to God. The only measure of a church is this: what sort of man does it produce? I shudder, sometimes, and cry out.
Jesus' question is always; Peter what do YOU think? Who do YOU say I am. A church, willing to dig in, debate with integrity, tolerant of all peoples, not dogma and deed fixated- this is a healthy church that gets on with the task of feeding the flock, of binding the wounds, of freeing the enchained, of teaching and of honest preaching the gospel of Love. This seems to be another color of peculiar...and a church, that though may appear as a rag-tag bunch of ragamuffins, addicts, fishermen, meat eaters, musicians and healers and tax collectors and lawyers and prostitutes and prodigals. More concerned with bringing the bread of life to a dying world than argue about stupid and meaningless minutiae designed only to "make the peculiar church look better in her own prideful eyes".

"Thankyou that You teach me how to think, God, not what. Thank you that you gave to me a scripture full of unanswered questions, that I might take the principles that you make so evident in all that You, and that I might apply these principles in all the areas of my life. Thank you for the Spirit of the law which liberates, and helping to release me from the letter of it, which only condemns. Amen"

Glenn Hansen

“You have told me what the advantage of a meat diet is to you. I must tell you what a non-flesh diet has done for me. Ever since the stone was thrown in my face, when I was nine years old, I have had difficulty. At that time I nearly lost my life through the loss of blood.

Dropsy then set in, and since I have suffered very much from kidney affliction. After a long sickness of eleven months of malarial fever and rheumatism, I was not able to ride without the most easy spring seat. Even when this was made as easy as possible, with soft cushions, it was a torture to my hip and lower part of my spine to ride.

I prayed much over this matter. I sought the Lord during the night hours, and He heard me. Some months ago a new spring seat was made for me. One day I said, “Take that spring seat and put it in the store room; I shall not need it any more.” This was done by faith, and never since have I needed it. The difficulty which made it agony for me to sit in meeting or in the carriage, was taken away.

After I had suffered for years, the Lord healed me. My hip continues to trouble me, but I think my health is better than it has been all through my lifetime. I prayed much in regard to the affliction of the kidneys, and I am healed of that trouble also. Some four years I was dependent upon the use of a syringe in order to make a movement of the bowels, but after the lower part of my spine was healed, I have no need to resort to artificial means.

I eat only two meals, and can not eat vegetables or grains. I do not use meat: I can not go back on this. When tomatoes, raised on my land were placed on my table, I tried using them, uncooked and seasoned with a little salt or sugar. These I found agreed with me very well, and from last February until June they formed the greater part of my diet. With them I ate crackers, here called biscuits. I eat no dessert but plain pumpkin pie. I use a little boiled milk in my simple homemade coffee, but discard cream and butter and strictly adhere to a limited amount of food. I am scarcely ever hungry, and never know what it is to have a feverish, disagreeable feeling in my stomach. I have no bad taste in my mouth.” Spalding Magan 38
Notice that EGW suffered from constipation for four years and required a syringe enema to move her bowels. Furthermore, she was unable to eat grains or vegetables.

Timo Onjukka

I wish to share in toto an email that I received from someone who has watched (this very thread, and the culture itself) as we adventists eat ourselves gluttonously, trying to get ourselves closer to the right hand. Seems our personal resources, perhaps our corporate resources, our focus is all on the wrong things. Dare we ask ourselves these things? Do we think we are any better than the 12, all vying for the coveted seat? Do not foreget, they all slept the night before, all but one hid during three trials, and then, together, they all bolted into a boat on the darkest night.

Notice her use of the important "here we sit". Inclusive, gathering, accepting language. She is not SDA...perhaps I shall invite her to write a column (despite, or maybe because what the cheese-eschewers might say about that)

Folks, do we realize we marginalize our God's message? A world is watching, starving, dieing, and we are in this place arguing about who gets to be perfect-translated and see God's vindication, while we others ONLY obtain SALVATION? In our prideful zeal to whitewash the sepulchers, we lose a little more of our capacity to love, exchange more of our soul for smug pride in our polished apples and finely-cut fig leaves. God is not impressed, and weeps over us, and those we reject...

"Hmm. Advent Today. Advent today.
Where are you? Get off the cheese and get on your knees.
People just outside your door, are hungry,
need you to carry their wood, feed their child,
hold their hand, tend their farm, help their spiritual emptiness...
People outside your door ... need you ... and here we sit, measuring each other's cheese intake?
God help us ... God help me ... get off myself
off of myself and onto Thee.
God help me, please.
By anonymous..."

Timo Onjukka

Quoting the OP-
Again, health reform is to prepare a people for translation. If we limit ourselves to salvation, you may have to wait in the grave while others see about God's vindication.

Perhaps we have this all wrong. (the following is tongue in cheek, playful, and not intended as anything to be construed as personal)

Perhaps we should all keep our eyes on Mr Hendron, as he bursts into a glorious and spontaneous translation, having reached an heretofore impossible earthly perfection in all that he does.
My question, as a loving fellow-member of this same church; should I keep an extinguisher handy when the spontaneous-combustion occurs, or should I fan the flames? Should we apply flame-retardant to the pews in preparation?

God's vindication; brought about by love, faith in the power of love, and global and measureless giving of love by those who have taken the name of the lover of our souls. That is what my reading of all 66 says.

I somehow doubt cheese-eating will be on the final exam...although some may fail the only question (answered above) because of it.

---

Trevor Hammond

Sometimes at an omnivore lunch where some delicious veggies and salads are prepared to cater for the vegans/vegetarians, I do notice that the mainline carnivores will grab their meat dishes quickly and then weirdly en masse seek to devour the veggies as well, leaving very little for the herbivore constituency. This wholesale assault on the veggies by the flesh-eaters is one way of ANNOYING VEGANS. Though, not yet a Vegan myself, I have noted that flesh-eaters tend have issues with appetite and temperance. When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness after His Baptism, the first temptation was on the point of Appetite [Matt 4:3] And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.”

The first test in the Garden of Eden which our first parents failed after been tempted was again on the point of appetite. [Gen 2:16-17] “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” So apart from the temperance aspect which Christians have to be accountable for We have to acknowledge too, that cheese is not a very healthy food.

We have to also acknowledge that there are those who will turn this into a self-righteousness exercise which encourages a spirit of criticism and ill-feeling towards brothers and sisters who may eat cheese. This the danger of extremism which Ellen White has warned about. With that been said we will be accountable for our actions based on the light God has sent through His Messengers. It was this ‘form of religion’ which ANNOYED JESUS too [Matt 23:23-26]. This blog does not encourage this although Mr Hendren has come down hard ‘like a ton of bricks’ with regards to us wilfully disregarding the counsel of His messenger. After all she was right about tobacco and the flesh eating. Look at all the disease manifested as a direct result of these unhealthful practices. Cheese will have to fall in this category too. All we have to do is to learn to say NO CHEESE - PLEASE!

T

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Trevor Hammond

Oops - spelling mistake:
It should be - Mr Hendron

Preston Foster
4 hours ago  Reply

Jesus multiplied fish and bread and fed it to people before seeking to convert them. It was considered to be a great miracle. His example is sufficient for me.

Trevor Hammond
4 hours ago  Reply

I agree with you Brother Preston. It was indeed a great miracle. Jesus CAN feed us (He does) when we are hungry, and hungry we are. But... 'fish' from the hand of Jesus ain't 'cheese' from the hand of McDonalds. ;)

Timo Onjukka
3 hours ago  Reply

Perhaps, Trevor, a surface read of Jesus temptation may have been alchemy, or appetite- "change these stones to bread". Perhaps the apple in the garden can also be seen thus. Yet, Eve in a garden of bounty surely had no need; and Jesus, well. HIS test was very clear. Perhaps the point of temptation is not at all on what we feed.

"IF you are the SON of God..."
This was the first test for Jesus...and the only.
Held accountable NOT for what he did, or knew, nor condemned by it, but only who, and whose, he was...(the scribes and elders tried to engage him on the deeds and doctrines, just like satan did)
This is my test too; do i think I can make myself a better son, by hand and head? Then I believe i am an orphan. And this belief...changes me.
and it was also his own admission, deposition, confession, and hanging offense.

It was also the prodigals test; "make me a slave, daddy"
as well the elders; "daddy, i've been a slave for you twenty years,(and vegan, too, for you killed me no fatted calf, OR crippled goat)"

The answer has always been the same. Nonsense, you are SONS, not slaves.
My question, like Eve's, and Lucifers; do i trust my Daddy?
I want the faith of Jesus, in his dying breath; "yet I trust You...."
As the Senate has mired itself in bickering and deadlock this week, there has been at least one voice of the panic rising in the country around Washington. It’s been the deep, solemn voice of the Senate’s chaplain, retired Admiral Barry C. Black.

A longtime Navy chaplain and Seventh-Day Adventist minister, Black opens Senate sessions with a brief prayer. Over the last few days--as the Senate has slid closer to a national default--those prayers seem to have revealed Black as one of the most worried people in the chamber.

Back on July 20, Black was speaking only in hopeful generalities. In the prayer that began that session, he asked the Almighty to “give to our lawmakers the wisdom to know the role they should play, in keeping freedom’s holy light bright.” But, as the days passed by, it became apparent that the Senate was not showing any more wisdom that it had previously...   Read full article

Guidelines for Productive & Courteous Comments:

- This is the writer’s court & play – no upstaging please
- Stay on topic – don’t wander off chasing butterflies
- Be brief – no more than 3 modest paragraphs – if longer, you are too windy
- We ask you to be considerate & courteous – the golden rule, remember
- Absolutely no denigrating of individuals – to err, earns banishment
- Make this a stimulating encounter & come back often

Vernon P. Wagner

Hard to imagine that the 'Creator of the Universe' would be overly concerned about our national financial problems for the same reason He/She has no paticular reason to care if His/Her name appears on our dollar bills.  OTOH, He/She might help us by overthrowing Wall St, mortgage bankers, and the Federal Reserve.  The wars that keep us bankrupt were started by us...do we really warrant a divine bail-out?
Senate chaplain implores God to help in debt crisis

By David A. Fahrenthold

As the Senate has mired itself in bickering and deadlock this week, there has been at least one voice of the panic rising in the country around Washington.

It’s been the deep, solemn voice of the Senate’s chaplain, retired Admiral Barry C. Black.

A longtime Navy chaplain and Seventh-Day Adventist minister, Black opens Senate sessions with a brief prayer. Over the last few days—as the Senate has slid closer to a national default—those prayers seem to have revealed Black as one of the most worried people in the chamber.

Back on July 20, Black was speaking only in hopeful generalities. In the prayer that began that session, he asked the Almighty to “give to our lawmakers the wisdom to know the role they should play, in keeping freedom’s holy light bright.”

But, as the days passed by, it became apparent that the Senate was not showing any more wisdom that it had previously. By last Tuesday, Black’s request indicated that his senators might need more divine help.

“Keep them,” he prayed, “from the pit of disunity and discord. And empower them to build bridges of cooperation. Give them the courage and humility to do what is right, knowing that you are the only constituent they absolutely must please.”

But lawmakers only descended further into that pit of disunity. In fact, the Senate seemed to be digging that hole deeper.

So Black’s prayers began to warn of the consequences if the Senate did not straighten up and act right.

“Lord,” he prayed on Wednesday, “as our nation faces the potentially catastrophic, inspire our lawmakers to seek your counsel which will stand forever.”

Still nothing. The two sides remained far apart, and the “potentially catastrophic” crept closer.

On Friday, Black dialed it up another notch.

“Lord, help them to comprehend the global repercussions of some poor decisions, and the irreversibility of some tragic consequences,” he prayed. “Quicken their ears to hear. Their eyes to see. Their hearts to believe and their wills to obey you. Before...”

And here Black slowed his usual stately cadence down even further, in case people weren’t getting it.

“...it is. too late.”

Nothing. On Saturday, Black seemed to be more specific with God: “We need you on Capitol Hill,” he said.

And his warnings to the lawmakers became even more dire. He spoke of “when night comes”—a reference to a verse from the Bible’s Book of John, where night is a metaphor for death.

“Deliver our lawmakers from the paralysis of analysis, when constructive and prompt action is desperately needed,” he asked. “Faced with potentially disastrous consequences, give the members of this body the wisdom to work while it is day. For the night comes, when no one can work.”
Finally, on Sunday morning, Black gave a prayer that might have fit the crew of a sinking ship.

"The waters are coming in upon us," Black said. "We are weary from the struggle, tempted to throw in the towel. But quitting isn't an option."

After he spoke, the Senate said the Pledge of Allegiance. And then Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid (D-Nev.) got up to speak, hopefully, of the possibility of a deal to end the crisis.
Adventists and What They Mean to You

Submitted Jul 27, 2011
By Atoday News Team

THROUGH EDUCATION WE CAN MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE!

*World Life Expectancy* is the latest in a series of Educational Experiences developed by LeDuc Media. The Site’s purpose is to stimulate meaningful research on this important subject through leading Academic Institutions worldwide, while displaying the data in ways the less informed visitor can understand and use.

The following is excerpted from World Life Expectancy website - read more, to see what a non-Adventist says about Adventists.

It is simply an irrefutable scientific fact that the uniqueness of the Adventist population has allowed and will continue to allow the discovery of relationships between certain lifestyle behaviors, health and disease that are not easily determined from other populations. It is for this reason we decided to learn more about them and we are pleased to share some of our research with you. We think you'll be as amazed as we were when you discover where so much of what we accept as basic truth about our health comes from and who the people are that provided that information. We also believe that those who give so generously of themselves to help others deserve to be recognized for what they do and the contribution the Adventists have made to global health, over such a long period of time, makes them worthy of being singled out in this regard. We hope you agree and will join us in saluting these healthy, happy people for the contribution they've made to each of our lives.

WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED FROM THE ADVENTISTS

The first major study of Adventists that benefits us today is known as the Adventist Mortality Study. It began in 1960 and consisted of 22,940 California Adventists. It entailed an intensive 5-year follow-up and a more informal 25-year follow-up. The study (1960–1965) indicated that Adventist men lived 6.2 years longer than non-Adventist men in a concurrent American Cancer Society Study and Adventist women had a 3.7-year advantage over their counterparts.

A PRODUCT OF THEIR RICH HISTORY

From the very beginning, Adventists have focused on the importance of education and healthcare in improving people's lives. They have championed the poor all over the world and were leaders in the early days of the civil rights movement here in the United States. Read more.
expectancy but women showed no increase in their longevity. Raises lots of questions.

Elaine Nelson

Correction:

Women had no comparable increase of longevity over men who experienced approximately twice the benefit that women experienced.
In some parts of the world over 50% of the male population still smokes, millions of people still die from tuberculosis and malaria, 2,000,000 die from aids and many believe having unprotected sex with a virgin is the cure, even in some highly educated countries hearing the words breast cancer is comparable to being sentenced to death...how is this possible, haven't they heard of medical research? What is medical research anyway, who are the people who conduct these studies, how long do they take and what do they cost, who pays for them and who are the human beings that become the subjects of these studies? How are they selected, are they sick or healthy when the studies begin, do we pay them or do they volunteer, how many of them do we need for the study to be valid and are they endangering their own lives, so we can improve or save ours?

The answer is all of the above, depending upon what we're trying to learn. But there is much more to it than getting people to respond to a TV Ad thinking they can earn some easy money. Serious studies take years to tabulate and complete and who the subjects are is vital to their success. Almost all of the people that participated in the studies that helped us define what good health means today were Volunteers and many of us are alive today because of them. Who are they, where are they now and how do we round some of them up to say thank you? For obvious reasons that's not easy to do, but we can be pretty resourceful at times...Meet the Adventists!

THE ADVENTISTS AND WHAT THEY MEAN TO YOU!

You don't have to be a member of the Adventist religion for them to have a powerful influence on your life...Due in part to their unique dietary habits lowering their risk for certain diseases, they provide a special opportunity for medical science to get answers related to how diet and other habits might affect the rest of us. Add the fact that Seventh-day Adventists live longer than virtually any group of people on the planet and it is easy to understand why they are one of the most heavily researched populations on earth. There has likely never been a series of scientific medical studies that provided more useable health benefits to as many people than those conducted on the Seventh-day Adventists over the last 50+ years. And there have almost certainly been none that have undergone such comprehensive, worldwide scientific peer review. Much of the increased life expectancy of humans over the past century is due to medical research and what is written here about the Adventist Health Studies is based upon documented scientific fact. The contribution these humble servants of God and mankind have made to the health of us all has gone largely unnoticed, outside the halls of medical science, and what follows is an attempt to give them their due.

THE ADVENTISTS AND WHAT THEY MEAN TO YOU!

THE MOTTO OF LOMA LINDA MEDICAL SCHOOL
"To Make Man Whole"

We are not Adventists and we have no interest in promoting one religion over another. But we can tell you that the fact that they are a religion, rather than a specific ethnic group, is of enormous value to medical research. It may even be a key reason for the Adventist Health Studies being held in such high regard. One group of scientists who did a study of Adventists living in Norway put it this way:

"Examination of the figures also suggests that there has been no genetic selection, a conclusion which American observers have also reached. Their longevity cannot be due to the fact that they belong to a privileged social class, since an examination of their distribution among social classes revealed no advantage over the general population. Nor could their geographic distribution in Norway explain the difference. These natural experiments are much more instructive and reliable than experimental studies of the type of controlled clinical trials."

It is simply an irrefutable scientific fact that the uniqueness of the Adventist population has allowed and will continue to allow the discovery of relationships between certain lifestyle behaviors, health and disease that are not easily determined from other populations. It is for this reason we decided to learn more about them and we are pleased to share some of our research with you. We think you'll be as amazed as we were when you discover where so much of what we accept as basic truth about our health comes from and who the people are that provided that information. We also believe that those who give so generously of themselves to help others deserve to be recognized for what they do and the contribution the Adventists have made to global health, over such a long period of time, makes them worthy of being singled out in this regard. We hope you agree and will join us in saluting these healthy, happy people for the contribution they've made to each of our lives.

"Sometimes God calms the storm...Sometimes He lets the storm rage and calms His child"

You will have to speak to a member of the church if you want to explore the Adventist faith in greater detail than we are qualified to provide. We can tell you they are a biblically based denomination of Christianity and their beliefs include their interpretation of what God intended regarding health and lifestyle. One of their core beliefs is they take "God at His word" that your body is your temple and not taking care of it is an insult to God. They point to passages within the Bible related to eating mostly fruits, vegetables, whole grains and nuts and avoiding food that's bad for you. Having a full day of rest on the Sabbath, which is an Adventist is Saturday instead of Sunday, is a key belief, and so is getting enough exercise. We believe what delivers such amazing health benefits is that taking care of their bodies is built into their faith, so they follow the rules more carefully than most of us do. The results speak for themselves in the good health they enjoy and since these rewards take place during their lifetime they seem to act as an affirmation that they've chosen the right faith. Anyway the data we reviewed indicates they are one of the fastest growing religions in the world, so they must be doing something right. The Adventist faith isn't for everyone, but they have something to teach us all about how to live longer and healthier lives.

Before we begin our own review of the data we felt it was important you know we aren't alone in our admiration for them. The World Health Organization, US National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute, National Institute on Aging, the governments of Norway and the Netherlands and many other countries, the Harvard Medical School and numerous other academic institutions we don't have space to mention, feel the way we do. And of course the role of Loma Linda University, the home of the Adventist Medical School, is vital to this process, without them much of this would not be possible. We provide links to their website at the bottom of the page that will give you access to around 200 abstracts of peer reviewed scientific opinions you may want to review. We decided to begin our own review with their relationship to the "Blue Zones".
THE BLUE ZONES

A Blue Zone is a “longevity oasis” and the people who live there have the longest life expectancies on earth. There are only five official Blue Zones in the entire world and they are located in regions of different countries where people commonly live active lives past the age of 100. It took several years of research for scientists and demographers to find and classify these longevity hot-spots because each required intense study to determine the healthy traits and life practices they had in common that caused them to lead healthier and happier lives. Dan Buettner wrote a book about the Blue Zones and if you’re into longevity it is a must read.

Only one of the Blue Zones is located in the United States. It was found when researchers, who were studying a group of Seventh-day Adventists in Loma Linda, California, discovered they suffered from a fraction of the diseases that commonly kill people in other parts of the United States and throughout the developed world. Prior to this discovery the extent of the long and healthy lives these amazing people live was not well known to the general public. Loma Linda is the home of Loma Linda University and Adventists make up the majority of the population living there. In addition to being where the Adventist Medical School is located, the university graduates one of the highest percentages of registered dieticians and nutritionists in the country.

Another Blue Zone was discovered in the mountains of Sardinia, Italy where even men reach the age of 100 at an amazing rate. The longest living women were found in Okinawa, Japan and another Blue Zone was discovered on the Nicoya Peninsula of Costa Rica in 2007. The final Blue Zone was found on an expedition to the island of Ikaria, Greece where they have 50% lower rates of heart disease, 20% less cancer, and almost zero dementia.

The Blue Zones have had significant national media coverage, including ABC News, World News Tonight and many more. Since Loma Linda is the only American Blue Zone, they have been singled out many times, including significant mention in a special National Geographic feature article, “The Secrets of a Long Life”. You can learn much more about all the Blue Zones many places online or by reading the book.

WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED FROM THE ADVENTISTS

The first major study of Adventists that benefits us today is known as the Adventist Mortality Study. It began in 1960 and consisted of 22,940 California Adventists. It entailed an intensive 5-year follow-up and a more informal 25-year follow-up. The study (1960–1965) indicated that Adventist men lived 6.2 years longer than non-Adventist men in a concurrent American Cancer Society Study and Adventist women had a 3.7-year advantage over their counterparts.

Death rates of Adventists compared to other Californians from the original study:

Death rates from all cancers was 60% lower for Adventist men and 76% lower for Adventist women
Lung cancer 21% lower
Colorectal cancer 62% lower
Breast cancer 85% lower (further study reduced this percentage dramatically)
Coronary heart disease 86% lower for Adventist men, 98% lower for Adventist women

An additional study (1974–1988) involved approximately 34,000 Californian Adventists over 25 years of age. Unlike the mortality study, the purpose was to find out which components of the Adventist lifestyle give protection against disease. The data from the study has been reviewed for decades and many of the findings linking diet to cancer and coronary heart disease still guide our thinking today. For example:

On average, Adventist men live 7.3 years longer and Adventist women live 4.4 years longer than other Californians
Five simple health behaviors promoted by the Seventh-day Adventist Church for more than 100 years including not smoking, eating a plant-based diet, eating nuts several times per week, regular exercise, and maintaining normal body weight, can increase life span up to 10 years
Increasing consumption of red and white meat was associated with an increase of colon cancer
Eating legumes was protective for colon cancer
Eating nuts several times a week reduces the risk of heart attack by up to 50%
Eating whole meal bread instead of white bread reduced non-fatal heart attack risk by 45%
Drinking 5 or more glasses of water a day may reduce heart disease by 50%
Men who had a high consumption of tomatoes reduced their risk of prostate cancer by 40%
Drinking soy milk more than once daily may reduce prostate cancer by 70%

Adventist Health Air Pollution Study (ASHMOG)

This was a sub-study of AHS-1 conducted from 1976 - 2000 which included 6,328 Adventists from California. The study was funded by the Environmental Protection Agency. The study linked the effects of various indoor and outdoor pollutants with respiratory diseases and lung cancer.

Another even more comprehensive study known as Adventist Health Study 2 involving roughly 100,000 volunteers is underway. It continues to explore the relationship between diet, lifestyle and disease among an even broader base of the Seventh-day Adventist population across the United States and Canada and because the Adventist population is so ethnically diverse, it will be the first major study of its kind that includes race as a criterion. It takes years to gather all the data and calculate the outcomes, but all parts of the medical science community are anxious to get their hands on the results. And there will no doubt be more studies after that, here in America, and in other parts of the world...

ADVENTIST HEALTH SYSTEM:

In a recent study performed by Thomas Reuters, based on an analysis of their Top 100 Hospitals report, Church owned systems significantly outperformed investor owned or other not for profits in virtually every category and offered higher quality service to the communities they serve as well... You might know the Adventist Health System is the largest protestant Healthcare system in America, but did you know they provide more uncompensated and charity care than any health system in the nation? One of their Hospitals in Colorado, donates $40,000,000 a year in charity care and underwriting medical care for the uninsured, while still ranking #1 in the state and in the top 10% nationally for overall cardiac care. And they aren't even close to being their largest hospital. Speaking of Heart Disease the Cardiovascular Institute at Florida Hospital treats more heart and vascular patients than any Hospital in the country. Each team of cardiac experts sees more than 70,000 patients a year and they have performed 81,000 open heart procedures since 1981.

Florida Hospital, the flagship of the system, is not only the busiest hospital in the State of Florida, it is the largest not for profit hospital in the country. Leaders in every medical service you can imagine, from transplants to the use of cutting edge technology and
research, they set the example for others within the system to follow. Now that you know the Adventists live longer than virtually any population in the world you know you can trust their advice on how to stay healthy once you get back home. If you need medical care we highly recommend you check them out.

Nothing points to their commitment to the communities they serve like their love of children. The Walt Disney Pavilion at Florida Hospital for Children is the only hospital in the nation to carry the Disney name. Combining the largest, not-for-profit hospital in the country with the worldwide leader in children’s entertainment is a source of great community pride. At the Walt Disney Pavilion, patients will not only get expert medical care but receive a top-of-the-line experience. State-of-the-art Disney technology has been integrated throughout the entire hospital and there are more than 80 highly trained pediatric sub-specialists to care for the children of Orlando and around the world.

Designed by Disney Imagineers, the lobby features supporting characters from “The Lion King,” “The Little Mermaid,” “The Jungle Book” and “Brother Bear.” All seven floors of the hospital feature concepts, colors, sounds and themes inspired by these classic Disney movies. The welcoming, healing environment places young patients in the starring role.

Disney president Iger said, “As a company with more than 62,000 cast members in Central Florida, we care deeply about the families in this community and are proud of our collaboration with Florida Hospital. Disney Imagineers” worked closely with the hospital to create a truly unique environment for pediatric patients and their families that we hope will inspire courage and comfort to those who seek care here.”

**THE ADVENTIST CONTRIBUTION TO GLOBAL HEALTH**

Promoting religious beliefs in foreign countries is not always well received. Some countries feel as though it infringes on their identity and alters the history of their beliefs. But the Adventists bring more than just new churches they also build hospitals and schools and bring disaster relief as well.

Today, the worldwide Adventist Church has over 15 million members in more than 200 countries. Adventists operate 7,200+ schools and universities worldwide with nearly 1.5 million students. In fact, Adventists run the next-largest denominational education system in the world, second only to Catholic schools. They also run 168 hospitals worldwide, 138 nursing homes and retirement centers, 442 clinics and dispensaries, and 34 orphanages and children’s homes. In addition, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) International, a disaster relief organization, funds over 2,400 projects in 112 countries.

Adventist hospitals and clinics are numerous here in the US, including Florida Hospital, America’s busiest hospital. You’ll find at least one Adventist healthcare center in many major metropolitan areas in North America. The church is well known for its excellence in healthcare, education, and human service activities. One of the founding principles of the Adventist church is a healthy lifestyle—a balanced combination of exercise, diet, and trust in God. They operate successful stop-smoking clinics worldwide and they continue to be active in providing schools and hospitals where they are needed around the world. Although the Seventh-day Adventist church was born in America most of their growth has taken place in other parts of the world. According to recent church statistics somewhere in the world, someone is baptized by total immersion into the faith every 30.33 seconds, and a new Adventist church is organized every 3.99 hours. “We are not an American church with foreign missions. We are a world church with a world mission.”

**A PRODUCT OF THEIR RICH HISTORY**

From the very beginning, Adventists have focused on the importance of education and healthcare in improving people’s lives. They have championed the poor all over the world and were leaders in the early days of the civil rights movement here in the United States. Sadly, their generosity and love of country has been taken advantage of from time to time. Adventists volunteered for a US military study in 1954 where their generosity and love of country has been taken advantage of from time to time. Adventists volunteered for a US military study in 1954 where their generous spirit and attitude of “what’s good for the country” didn’t go as well as planned. Interestingly, the 2,200 Adventist soldiers who agreed to be infected with unknown and potentially life threatening diseases were less concerned about the risk to their own lives, when things went wrong, as they were about the lives of others. They were very disappointed when they learned one of the purposes of the experiments may have been to discover ways to develop new biological weapons...enough said.

Another military example offers additional insight into their courage. The Conscientious Objector classification is used by some people to avoid military service altogether. Others want to serve their country, especially in a time of war, but they object to participating in killing people in combat. The risks of combat aren’t limited to those who carry a weapon, arguably the most at risk are members of the medical corps. A high percentage of Adventists chose to serve in the medical corps during many of our wars. The Congressional Medal of Honor is America’s highest military award. The first Congressional Medal of Honor ever given to a non-combatant was given to a member of the medical corps for acts of bravery, above and beyond the call of duty, during the Second World War. His name was Desmond Doss. He was an Adventist. [Learn more](http://www.sdada.org/position.htm)

More information about Adventist Health Studies here: [http://www.sdada.org/position.htm](http://www.sdada.org/position.htm)

More information about the Adventist Diet here: [http://www.sdada.org/position.htm](http://www.sdada.org/position.htm)
In plane geometry, three points define a line. Any two points can be connected by a straight line, but it takes three to define a line. I mention this because I have spent several columns concerning the identity and unique purpose of the Adventist movement. Mighty forces today attempt to pull the denomination in very different directions, and indeed threaten to pull it apart. I submit that one factor may be related to this simple geometric arrangement of needing three points to define a line.

It seems to me that three points also define our identity. Only one of the three great questions concerns identity directly: “Who am I?” The other two concern history, “Why am I here?”; and destiny, “Where am I going?” Considering that great questions exist concerning history and destiny, we shouldn’t be surprised that we cannot ascertain our identity.

“Why am I here?” has two conflicting answers (and of course innumerable variations). Either I am here because God created the world in six days, and placed humans in charge, or I am here because of a very long series of random events. Either I live in a world of sin and death—where death is the last enemy—because of a Great Controversy between Good and Evil, and my ancestors chose the evil side; or I live in a world where death is necessary and even beneficial because it eliminates maladaptive organisms. You can quarrel with my wording or quibble over the choice of examples, but it would be difficult to deny that these two narratives of our history lead to radically different conclusions about who we are.

Closer to home, we can believe that our denomination came into being as a fulfillment of prophecy, or through a misunderstanding of a too literal reading of an old book. I constantly see both of these positions put forth in the discussions here.

Similarly, our destiny, “Where we are going,” will differ greatly depending upon our view of our origins. And it seems to me that the great tug-of-war concerning our identity— who we are going to be right now – is a contest of where to put the third point that defines our narrative line.

From my perspective, a currently ascendant group wants to take us “Back to the Future,” to attempt to either maintain or return the Adventist movement to some (largely imaginary) earlier, more pristine state. Another large faction don’t really care much about our history, and simply want to chart a “new” course, which strangely echoes quite a few 19th century ideas and concepts.

Both approaches, however, end up with little or no sense of who we should be today, for the simple reason that one or both ends of the narrative line are anchored in thin air. The traditionalists can plot a straight line from what they see as a pristine church to where we are; enthusiasts for the ever emerging church (sorry, but I can’t think of a better term, though I don’t wish it to be considered identical to the “emerging church movement”), can draw a straight line from where we are to where they think we will eventually emerge. But attempts to align all three are few and often futile.
Both sides view at least some portion of our church history as, shall we say, embarrassing, although they disagree over which portions. Increasingly, people are simply throwing up their hands in exasperation. Again, I see much of that echoed in Atoday discussions.

At least some of this frustration comes from a distinctly utopian approach C.S. Lewis called “chronological prejudice” on the part of both factions. That is to say, all can see the flaws in what actually is and has been done, and imagine, in hindsight, that a perfect course could have been steered, had only the benighted individuals in charge been as wise as we are, at our exalted level of development.

I submit that the only way we’re going to find a coherent identity is to locate our position on that narrative line that begins with our history, how we got here – warts and all, by the way-- and our destiny. My belief is that we are primarily a people of “present truth,” of a dynamic engagement between God’s plan of salvation and the culture where we find ourselves. This explanation lines up with our history, gives us direction for the present, and leads directly to our destiny.

This is a demanding identity, for it requires us to be continually attuned to God, and to attempt to view our current situation through the lens of salvation history. That also requires that we be continually aware of the culture in which we live. Finally, it requires us to be aware that God is drawing this world to a conclusion. As I see it, progressives and traditionalists each tacitly reject one or more of those requirements.

Until we settle these basic questions of existence, we will continue arguing past each other. And more crucially, making arguments that the world we are trying to reach doesn’t care about.

laffal 1 week ago Reply

Why do you talk so much when you know so little? Now get ready to face me! Can you answer the questions I ask?... I am the LORD All-Powerful, but you have argued that I am wrong. Now you must answer me. Job said to the LORD: Who am I to answer you? I did speak once or twice, but never again. Then out of the storm the LORD said to Job: Face me and answer the questions I ask! Are you trying to prove that you are innocent by accusing me of injustice?... Job said: No one can oppose you, because you have the power to do what you want. You asked why I talk so much when I know so little. I have talked about things that are far beyond my understanding. You told me to listen and answer your questions. I heard about you from others; now I have seen you with my own eyes. That's why I hate myself and sit here in dust and ashes to show my sorrow. (Job 38:1.2; 40:1-6; 42:1-6 CEV)

Thanks Ed

songbird 1 week ago Reply

Instead of concept, or hypothesis, how about further explanation? Please narrow this down some more and especially elaborate on "present truth". To Ed, who quoted abstracts from Job, what is your point? If personal, never mind.
Songbird,

The point... We oft times get caught up talking about things we're not humble enough to let the Lord show us... because we're spending to much time talking about what we really don't understand, much less know. I was told once that the most difficult person to deal with is the one who thinks they know something. The problem is that they don't realize that they don't know what they think they know. What makes them so difficult is that they have to unlearn what they think they know, to learn what they thought they knew.

Again, my point, Jesus Himself says of us, "thou sayest... but thou knowest not."

Peace

I can only speak for myself, but my feeling is that we spend too much time naval gazing and analyzing ourselves as a church. It's more negative on this site as it has its share of malcontents. But should a fulfilled, mature individual or church with a purpose be so concerned with their identity? Sure, we need to recognize problems and sometimes uncover wrongdoing, but let's not forget that we are all children of God before being Adventists.

Another problem is our self-image as "the chosen ones." the Bible doesn't name the remnant. I don't think it's an organization. (I understand the word means "that which is left" and is not necessarily a term denoting quantity.) I suppose most religions feel they are something special, but ours seems to take this further. With John, we should be saying "I must decrease, but Christ must increase."

I think, it's not so much bringing together traditionalists and "progressives" as it is to respect and love one another and be open to learning from each other. None of this happens without being "attuned to God," and seeking His will in this particular society at this time.

In Gallileo's time, he was pushed outside of the church for suggesting that the geocentric concept of the solar system was incorrect despite it being the church's position. The supports of the flat earth idea supported their beliefs from Scripture that said that the earth had four corners. Today the vast majority of us accept that the earth is a sphere. Today we all accept the heliocentric explanation of the universe. The controversy between change resistance and change proponents is not new to the SDA Church. Do we really think that we have such complete knowledge of God and of the origins of the universe and of the plan of salvation that our understanding can never grow. Yes, these ideas challenge our very understanding of Scripture and of ourselves, but the principle of 'present truth' means that our understanding evolves over time. We should not divide ourselves between progressives and non-progressives. Let's accept our diversity of understanding and
thought and accept each other as part of the very rich fabric which makes up the Seventh-day Adventist church. Unity despite diversity of opinion and understanding.

Martin Schrattenholzer

I don't think the geometry allegory helps your argument, because you start by being patently wrong about geometry. Lines are in fact defined by two points. Given your second sentence "Any two points can be connected by straight line, but it takes three to define a line", you seem to understand this. But the last part of the sentence make no sense. Did you mean that three points define a plane. I assume you did, but a you seem think in lines rather than planes. Maybe that as the problem.

The options for beliefs are not a linear continuum but are far more multi-dimensional than your description. Ultimately we really only know about here and now. The past, which did not actually involve us, is no more knowable than is our future. This alone make you insistence on agreement impossible. But then you mention the "lens of salvation history"; a lens? How exactly is this lens supposed to operate? Aren't you arguing that we must arbitrarily agree on the history of salvation before we can truly "love" each other? If that is the case then we are certainly doomed.

Ella M Rydzewski

Ed,
In looking at your third paragraph, I see either/or statements. I don't think the lines can be drawn that strictly. Believing that the world wasn't created in six actual days as we understand them, doesn't mean we think it is random over millions of years of death and sin. nor does it deny a Sabbath. I don't know how God created life, but I know He did. I just don't think that the primitive people of that era (of the writing) had any concept of the earth and its workings. I think they relied on stories passed on from generation to generation. This is evidenced by there being two stories of creation. That does not make them untrue in principle, but they are not based on the knowledge we have today. Yes, we are living the drama of a great controversy between good and evil. And yes the first death is necessary in a sinful world, or the world would have run out of space a long time ago. It is the second death that is the wages of sin and which Christ died for all who do not reject Him and His Holy Spirit.

Ymous

History is as unknowable as the future? Really? Then should we do away with all "supposed" history? That's pretty scary.

Agreed that history AS IT HAPPENED is unknowable to human beings, in that it includes not only everything ever done, said, or thought by God, angels, human beings, or anyone else, but also everything else that ever happened, whether seen or unseen, known or unknown by any intelligent being (other than God).

History AS WE KNOW IT involves a great deal of intended or unintended selection of events, and,
more problematic, the interpretation of those events and their relationship to each other.

It is true that selection and interpretation of events that happened create problems for KNOWING history. But is it entirely "unknowable?" I hope not. Otherwise there would never be any way to understand anything about cause/effect relationships. Could one know that a cobra bite is highly likely to be fatal without "unknowable??" history?

Isn't history very important to understanding possible and probable consequences of present or future actions? According to the Bible, what happened in the past was recorded for our learning.

While it may be true that history never repeats itself entirely, isn't there at least some truth to the saying that those who fail to learn the lessons of history are likely to repeat it? That can be very good. It can also be very bad.

Thomas "Vastergotland"

Could we not all agree to anchor the historical end of this line in the close neighborhood of Jerusalem some 2000 years ago? That might prove a more solid foundation to build agreement upon than the more recent dates mentioned in the article.

Elaine Nelson

Thomas,

Good idea. But then there would be no Seventh-day Adventist church, on the beginning of Christianity. So, if we all were "Christians" rather than very discordant groups all claiming to be the "one true church" we could stop fighting over our differences and focus on our many mutual beliefs.

Ron Corson

Ed wrote:
"My belief is that we are primarily a people of “present truth,” of a dynamic engagement between God’s plan of salvation and the culture where we find ourselves."

The problem is that present truth is really just a propaganda term, it has no real meaning but Adventists keep using it because it sounds so good to them sort of like the communist who uses the term "social justice" and the atheists or religious traditionalist who uses the term. They don't define it so it means whatever they want it to mean, they can't define of they find it does not mean what they want it to mean. And we Adventists have our own special term present truth, though like social justice it is used by others also, we just ignore it. See the article Defining and Redefining Present Truth
In the early history of the church, "present truth" referred especially and primarily to observance of the seventh-day Sabbath. Is that still "present truth?"
Adventist Teacher Accused of Molestation

Napa Patch - July 26, 2011

Mike Copithorne, 36, has been charged with three counts of lewd acts and one count of oral copulation. The victim in all four counts is under 16, according to court records.

Copithorne has been teaching for nine years at the private K-12 school Napa Christian, which is operated by the Seventh-day Adventist church, court records show.

Napa County Chief Deputy District Attorney Michael O'Reilly declined to confirm if there is more than one victim, and if the victim(s) were students at Napa Christian...  

There are no comments.

You do not have sufficient permissions to post a comment.
A preliminary hearing is set July 29 for a local fly-fishing outfitter and Seventh-day Adventist school teacher who is accused of sexually molesting a girl in Napa.

Mike Copithorne, 36, has been charged with three counts of lewd acts and one count of oral copulation. The victim in all four counts is under 16, according to court records.

Copithorne has been teaching for nine years at the private K-12 school Napa Christian, which is operated by the Seventh-day Adventist church, court records show.

Phone calls from Napa Patch to the office of education for the Northern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists were not returned.

Napa County Chief Deputy District Attorney Michael O'Reilly declined to confirm if there is more than one victim, and if the victim(s) were students at Napa Christian.

Copithorne was arrested last month on a warrant.

The court record states one of the alleged molestations happened when Copithorne picked up the alleged victim from her home and drove to the Lucky's parking lot in Napa where he touched, kissed and orally copulated her.

The other accusations allegedly took place in a classroom and involved kissing the alleged victim.
He is also owns and operates Off the Hook Fly Fishing Travel, Inc. in Napa. A biography on the company's website describes him as a professional athlete who grew up in Northern California.

In 2000, he suffered a snowboarding accident which left him paralyzed from the waist down and confined to a wheelchair, according to an article in Orvis News.

Copithorne is out of custody after posting a $100,000 bail. His preliminary is set for Friday at Napa County Superior Courthouse.

Related Topics: Arrests, Crime, Teachers, and child molesting

COMMENTS (15)

Jeanine Hemmeter
7:38am on Wednesday, July 27, 2011
Absolutely spectacular. Yet another incident of children being placed in harms way under the supposed care of "moral authority" figures. Sickens me. Did NO staff in the academy have suspicions or notice that this dude was eying the young girls like a lion eyes a prime rib roast?

Log in to reply

Louisa Hufstader
8:13am on Wednesday, July 27, 2011
Hi Jeanine, just a reminder that we ask folks to use both their first and last names when commenting on Napa Patch. Also I need to correct the story, which initially said his preliminary is next week: It's this Friday, July 29.

Log in to reply

Jeanine Hemmeter
8:49am on Wednesday, July 27, 2011
You have subscriber's email addresses, so if someone is blatantly violating TOS then I'm sure it can be handled by banning their login, or their IP. I have not tested the waters on this site enough to feel comfortable using my full name, as I'm sure many others would agree. I don't want to hide behind anonymity so that I can disrupt the community, but neither do I want to put my actual name out here in a fairly new and very public online community. I'm not a napapatch contributor or staff, so I don't see the necessity of the rule. Is it indeed a rule or a polite request? I have made several comments on various posts, why is it this one that caught attention? I would have rather this been handled privately, but you initiated the public format.

Log in to reply

Louisa Hufstader
8:30pm on Wednesday, July 27, 2011
Hi Jeanine -- I apologize for taking so long to write back today and let you know I would not want anyone to feel uncomfortable on Napa Patch. I have a lot of leeway applying the "identity" policy, and you gave me a lot to think about. Ultimately I'm glad you chose to join me in using our full names. The Patch is an online community and we're all members of it. I truly appreciate your engagement and welcome your comments. Thank you!

Log in to reply

Jeanine Hemmeter
8:09am on Friday, July 29, 2011
I do apologize if I "bristled" a little. I looked into it and saw that patches across the board really want people to use their full name, so I figured I would step up and play nice :)

Get Patched In
Napa news, events, and deals, delivered straight to you.
That's a great example of media literacy, Jeanine. Thank you for taking the time to check us out. I hope you're feeling good about your decision and I appreciate your thoughtful comments.

Kami Hawks
5:54pm on Thursday, July 28, 2011
I think it interesting, JH, that you make assumptions on the guilt of a man without hearing the evidence against him or the motives of the girl in accusing him. In no place in the article was Copithorne declared guilty and I think as responsible members of society we should be careful to withhold judgement until all facts are known. As a teacher who was once investigated because of false accusations (I was exonerated) I feel uncomfortable condemning anyone until I personally know a person is guilty based on evidence given.

Jeanine Hemmeter
6:29am on Friday, July 29, 2011
You are correct, he has not been declared guilty so it is wrong of me to assume such. I admit to a kneejerk reaction. You cannot read the news without hearing about institutionalized child molestation on a daily basis, honestly my attention is more focused on the academy than Copithorne, and I will be paying attention as evidence is revealed.

Louisa Hufstader
5:34am on Friday, July 29, 2011
I'll confess made pretty much the same slip yesterday in a Facebook comment on another story -- and was quickly called to account by no fewer than three people. Thanks to all.

Jeanine Hemmeter
8:13am on Friday, July 29, 2011
Yes, it's very easy to do especially with such a sensitive topic. I think we are a better society if we keep in mind "innocent until proven guilty by a jury of peers".

lance hedges
10:58am on Sunday, July 31, 2011
another sad situation, but as most bloggers note, we have to wait for trial or a plea so the facts come out.

Doug Herich
2:42pm on Sunday, July 31, 2011
Even if he is innocent, or what is supposedly being alleged found to be true and accurate, justice can not be guaranteed in a system of courts that is corrupt. The court system in napa is no different than ANY other district court in that it is NOT judicial and never has been. Article III courts require ALL judges to take the subscribed Article VI oath "to support this constitution" and although I requested and obtained all the judicial oaths from the Napa county executive officer, not one of them were THAT oath. the courts are MILITARY courts and the power they wield is "proprietary" which means that the government MUST own the land the alleged incident occurred within. This means that this guy could walk even if he is as guilty as sin...and that my friends is the SAD truth.

Maggie Walters
7:43pm on Tuesday, August 2, 2011
I attended the sixth and eighth grade with Michael Copithorne and he does not seem to be the type of man that would harm or on the other hand molest one of his students. His wife is very attractive and I was in the class with the suspected "victim" from second-sixth, and eighth grade. And Mr. Copithorne has a adorable son, so I have reason to believe that this is a true crime. It is very hard to believe that he would attempt this crime. And the girl that I, and many others suspect to be the "victim" has had a hard life but it is still hard to believe that she would ever tell a lie this big. so I want to believe that both are telling the truth.
Teacher from Napa Christian Accused of Molesting Girl Younger than 16...

http://napa.patch.com/articles/teacher-from-napa-christian-accused-of-m...
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In the aftermath of the 9/11 aerial attacks on the Twin Towers in New York City, the narrative emerged—especially among conservative Christians—that a preamble to Armageddon had occurred, pitting Islam against Christ in a final showdown.

In her just-released book, “Rock the Casbah” (the word Casbah or Kasbah refers to the fortified administrative center of a traditional Middle Eastern city), international journalist Robin Wright sees the 9/11 attacks as the high-water mark of a now-failed reform movement (Al Qaeda) in the Middle East, and she documents a new approach to reform based on the examples of Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King.

Far from representing Islam as a whole, she says, Al Qaeda encapsulated a particularly virulent interpretation of “jihad,” or Holy War—a view that God required deadly force to purify Middle Eastern governments and religious practice, and that this purification process required the economic destruction of the presumed puppet-master, the United States.

The current Middle Eastern Spring is a continuation of that struggle (jihad), but without the emphasis on deadly force, she says. In fact, Muslims are well aware that during its long and deadly decade of struggle, Al Qaeda killed far more Muslims than Christians or foreigners.

The author notes that the Middle Eastern Spring is by no means an Islamic movement, nor has it pitted Christians against Muslims. The fall of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, for example, was the product of efforts entered into jointly by a host of younger people, with Muslims and Coptic Christians demonstrating at times side by side.

Adventists in particular have watched the Middle East for harbingers of the Second Coming, and would do well to read “Rock the Casbah” for an up-to-the-minute contemporary understanding of the nuances of what is currently happening there. The author particularly focuses on the rapid advances of Muslim women in the Middle East.

The book’s main points can be summarized as follows: (1) September 11, 2001, was the high-water-mark of the now discredited view that armed conflict offers the only solution for reformation in the Middle East; (2) Hard-line Islam has been extensively promoted and used by corrupt governments, as a way of holding onto power in the Middle East; (3) The current successful Reformation movement in the Middle East, while favoring Democracy, is not pro-Western but primarily pro-moderation.
"Every reliable poll since 2007 shows steadily declining support for the destructive and disruptive jihadis, even in communities where politics are partly shaped by the Arab-Israeli conflict," she writes. This fall from grace is particularly evident among Sunni Muslims, which account for more than 80 percent of the Islamic world.

"For a decade, the outside world was so preoccupied with its ‘war on terrorism’ that it gave little credence to efforts among Muslims to deal with the overlapping problems—autocratic regimes and extremist movements—that fed off each other. Extremism emerged largely to challenge autocrats in countries where the opposition was outlawed, exiled, under house arrest, or executed. And autocrats justified not opening up politically on grounds that extremists would take over.” Now, the stalemate is broken and lightning-fast chess moves are the rule.

Though secular in viewpoint, the book contains vast amounts of factual information well worth the study of anyone interested in understanding the big picture, as well as the finer nuances, of the Middle East’s continuing struggle for religious and political reform—and how Christians can best relate with the emerging realities.

Jean Y.  4 days ago  Reply

I'm pleased to see a review of a book that is trying to portray the Middle East as it should be. Far from being a hotbed of terrorism, it is struggling to free itself from autocracies that have so long ruled the region. Not to say that there aren't extremists, there are. However, we have our own homegrown extremists as well. We need to look at a wider picture of the people and this is a nice place to start.

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