## August 12, 2011

**This Week at Adventist Today Online**

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<td><strong>As Benjamin Franklin Said:</strong> “Two plus two equals four.”...Putting words into the mouth of a celebrity seems to give the words more clout. You are more likely to pay attention to a statement I make if I tell you that some famous person said it.... Why does name-dropping work so well? Mark Gutman helps us through the quandary.</td>
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<td>The Association of Adventist Women's Annual Conference is being held at La Sierra University, October 13-16, 2011 ... <strong>See more details</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Care and Feeding of the (American) Political Animal:</strong> We live in an era of power politics, where religious lobbies sometimes fail to understand the dynamics of the secular political system. Read what Stephen Foster has to say about getting results from your political overtures.</td>
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**Book Review**

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<td><strong>Additional reading of articles from last week ...</strong></td>
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Render Unto Rome* - Author Jason Berry, an eminent Roman Catholic journalist, picks apart the massive charade that has characterized the Catholic Church's handling of multiple embezzlements, blackmail, and ultimately pedophilia. Like Adventism, the Catholic Church wants the world to believe it can reform itself from within. This book suggests that in the case of the RCC, it's probably not going to happen. (*atoday.org subscription needed)

Are We Both Needed?

The Fourth Commandment - Edited Edition:

How Faith has Confused Lots of Theology:

What Holy Ghost?

Annoying Vegans:

Senate Chaplain Implores God to Help in Debt Crisis:

Lawsuit Filed on Behalf of Three Forced to Resign at La Sierra University:
Academy Principal Stabbed by 17-year old Student

Submitted Aug 10, 2011  
By Atoday News Team

A 17-year-old student from the Seventh-day Adventist's Memphis Junior Academy in Tennessee is being held in custody after a 48-year-old teacher was found in a pool of blood in a classroom Wednesday morning.

Police did not release the teacher's name, but an official for the Seventh-day Adventist national network identified her as Suzette York, who had been at the school for more than three years, and also the school's principal, The Commercial Appeal reports.

Several sources report that York was stabbed to death, but police have not confirmed the claims.

"We have lost a great teacher and valuable member of our school," a school administrator told WREG-TV Wednesday. Memphis Mayor A.C. Wharton said it was an isolated incident.

The victim was pronounced dead at the scene when police arrived just before noon, according to The Commercial Appeal. School was promptly dismissed and will not be in session for the rest of the week, WMC-TV reports.

Another source, same story, more details:

Student charged with first-degree murder, more details

There are no comments.

You do not have sufficient permissions to post a comment.
Teen charged with murdering Memphis principal

17-year-old told investigators he planned to kill Suzette York because he did not like her and she had made him angry, police say

updated 8/11/2011 7:59:25 PM ET

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — A 17-year-old student charged with first-degree murder in the slaying of a Christian school principal told investigators he had planned to stab the woman on the third day of classes, when he knew he'd be alone with her in a classroom, police said Thursday.

Eduardo Marmolejo was held without bond and ordered to undergo a mental evaluation by a Juvenile Court judge during a hearing Thursday. State law allows police to release the names of juveniles charged with first-degree murder.

Marmolejo has been charged with planning the killing of 49-year-old Suzette York for months. York's body was found by a teacher in a classroom on Wednesday at Memphis Junior Academy, a Seventh-day Adventist school of less than 100 students.

The thin teenager with short brown hair appeared before Judge Sheldon McCall, wearing a bright orange jail jumpsuit. Marmolejo was joined by his parents, who both wore black shirts and blue jeans.

Prosecutor Chris Lareau said the killing was premeditated and asked McCall to detain Marmolejo. Both Lareau and the two defense attorneys appointed by the court asked for mental evaluations of the teenager.

The judge appointed the two attorneys after Marmolejo's mother said the private lawyer she hired did not make it to the hearing. She said she could not remember the attorney's name.

During a break, Marmolejo asked for his glasses, which a court officer provided. Marmolejo's mother, whose name was not made available, asked for tissues.

The judge then returned to the courtroom and ordered the mental evaluation.

"Our main concern is to determine if he is a danger to himself and a danger to the community," McCall said.

After the hearing, the parents were shuttled away in a van and were not available for comment.
The killing shocked current and former students of the school, located next to a church and a cemetery in a residential section of east Memphis. They described York as a caring person who taught science and math before becoming principal in 2008.

York’s body was found at about 11:20 a.m. Wednesday. Parents were called and students were sent home after the body was discovered.

Police said Marmolejo told investigators he planned to kill York because he did not like her and she had made him angry. Marmolejo told authorities he knew that he was going to be alone with York in a classroom, police said.

Marmolejo was one of the oldest students at the school, which has students in pre-kindergarten through high school.

York is survived by her husband, who lived with her in an apartment in suburban Memphis.

About 30 friends and current and former students attended a tear-filled prayer service for York on Wednesday at Mullins United Methodist Church, located next to the school.

Peter Hunter, a former student who also has a cousin currently attending the school, said York tried hard to nurture a family atmosphere at the school.

"She was a person who was very much involved with the students," said Hunter, 25. "She cared deeply about the development of her students."

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Police: Teen waited months to kill principal

MEMPHIS, Tenn. - A 17-year-old student charged with first-degree murder in the slaying of a Christian school principal told investigators he had planned to stab the woman on the third day of classes, when he knew he'd be alone with her in a classroom, police said Thursday.

Eduardo Marmolejo was charged with killing 49-year-old Suzette York on Wednesday at Memphis Junior Academy, a Seventh-day Adventist school of about 100 students, Memphis police said Thursday.

Memphis principal found dead; student in custody

CBS News affiliate WREG-TV in Memphis reports that Marmolejo had been planning to kill York since he learned in May that he'd be returning to the school, according to the police.

State law allows police to release the names of juveniles charged with first-degree murder. Online records do not indicate if Marmolejo has a lawyer. Marmolejo had a court hearing scheduled for Thursday afternoon.

The killing shocked current and former students of the school, located next to a church and a cemetery in a residential section of east Memphis. They described York as a caring person who taught science and math before becoming principal in 2008.

York's body was found lying in a pool of blood by a teacher at about 11:20 a.m. Wednesday. Parents were called and students were sent home after the body was discovered.

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"She was a person who was very much involved with the students," said Hunter, 25. "She cared deeply about the development of her students."

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AAW Conference Schedule

(Schedule subject to change)

October 13-16, 2011
La Sierra University
Riverside, California

Thursday, October 13
6:30 Registration
7:00 Get to Know Your New Friends
7:30 Keynote Presentation – Chris Oberg

Friday, October 14
8:30 Plenary Session — Carla Baker, Bonnie Dwyer
Where the Church has Been and Where It Is Going:
Perspectives from Within the Organization and from the Laity

9:45 Break-out Sessions
a. Sometimes a Woman is the Best Choice: Ellen White on Women in Pastoral Ministry — Ginger Hanks Harwood
b. Laughter, The Best Medicine — Lee Berk
c. “Happy Rooms” Around the World — Iris Landa
d. Forgiveness — Cheryl Simmons

10:45 Break

11:00 Break-out Sessions
a. Women as They Serve and Lead Around the World — Carla Baker
b. Health Benefits of Nuts — Joan Sabaté
c. Abuse in the Christian Home — Audray Johnson
d. Coping with Menopause — Danielle Sawyer

12:15 Lunch

1:30 Plenary Session: Women Professionals in a Man’s World
Linda Wysong Becker, Lisa Beardsley, Elaine Hagele, Andrea Luxton

2:45  Break
3:00  Panel Discussion: Women’s Ordination and Ellen White
     Trisha Famisaran, Lisa Beardsley, Larry Christoffel, Chris Oberg
5:30  Supper
7:00  Mini-concert: La Sierra University String Quartet
7:30  Agape Supper: Guest speaker: Ella Simmons
     Also featuring Praise and Peace, Body and Soul
     (Liturgical Dance, Joyce Christoffel, director)
     Communion

Sabbath, October 15
9:30  Worship Service — Chris Oberg
10:45 Sabbath School: Female Metaphors in the Bible — Lora Gerigus
12:30 Lunch
3:00  Panel Discussion: How the Church Can Support Women in Leadership
     Carla Baker, Yami Bazán, Lisa Beardsley, Dily Brooks, Bonnie Dwyer, Elaine Hagele, Andrea Luxton
6:00  Woman-of-the-Year Awards Banquet
8:00  Business Meeting

Sunday, October 16
10:00 Branch at the Mission Inn

Conference Registration form -- .doc file
Conference Registration form -- .pdf file
Online Conference Registration
Render unto Rome: The Secret Life of Money in the Catholic Church

Submitted Aug 11, 2011
By Edwin A. Schwisow


Adventism from its beginnings has spent a great deal of time gazing on the Roman Catholic Church, publicly denouncing the ‘Papacy’ in its publications and soul-winning crusades, and proclaiming it ‘Antichrist’ and the Dragon’s handmaiden, while managing to quietly imitate it in much of its administrative structure.

Render unto Rome: The Secret Life of Money in the Catholic Church, is written by a practicing Catholic journalist who makes this the third of three highly acclaimed books on the topics of money, secrecy, and revelations of pedophilia among Catholic priests. The author does not excuse any of the church’s behavior, and like a journalistic John the Baptist, makes a serious and plaintive call for the church to change its ways.

Berry points out that the church keeps its financial records vague at best, and unavailable at worst, though one horrendous figure is known officially: Between 1950 and 2009, Rome has spent $1.775 billion to compensate victims of child abuse and provide treatment for errant priests. It is also known that a great deal of that cash has come from the closure of churches and the selling of real estate, to the tune of 1,373 parishes in the U.S. since 1995—more than one a week for the past decade-and-a-half. Yet, during that same time, the church has often elevated priests who participated in its many cover-ups—hardly acts of a contrite and humble spirit! The author characterizes the experience of the typical Catholic lay person as “passive,” in which the parishioner is told to “pray, pay, and obey.”

The past 60 years for Rome has been a near-constant litany of revelations involving embezzlement, sexual indiscretion, and downsizing. Yet, the book does not see Catholicism as either retreating or changing. Secrecy under the most recent two Popes has remained the status quo, and able fund-raisers apparently continue to be rewarded with virtual immunity. One priest, in particular, was known to have two common-law wives and more than a dozen young lovers, both male and female. Yet, his ability to raise funds was so pronounced, the institutional church declined to look into charges against him.

Adventist laymen would do well to read this book — a litany of factual information at times smothering in its detail — and contemplate the lessons it teaches on the need for transparency and accountability, two attributes often lacking in both Adventism and Catholicism. Perhaps by observing the shameful behavior of our proverbial antagonist, we can avoid some of the same pitfalls encountered by her on a scale roughly 100 times our size.

Edited and posted by Clive Holland
Interesting and valid points you make, Edwin, concerning the twin issues of transparency, and accountability. For us, La Sierra University and the continuing shameful episodes there are significant. I do not really think that we can go to Catholic writings and discern virtues we need reformation on and neglect the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. The 7th Day Adventist Church is the only depository of God's truth on earth today, and until the end. However, we can peruse Catholic writings in matters of Sunday promotion, and the papacy's current plan for worldwide domination once again. God is not against people--He has a great many faithful followers among Catholics who live up to all the light they have, and will come out of Babylon when we give the call.

The shameful and tragic results of forbidding priests to marry are well documented in current history--the verses below having a dual application:

1Ti 4:2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;
1Ti 4:3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God has created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.
As Benjamin Franklin once said, “Two plus two equals four.” You don’t remember that famous quote? Come to think of it, I don’t think I’ve ever seen Ben quoted as saying that either, although I have reason to think that he said it. Why don’t we give him credit for the line? Or why don’t we give some other famous person credit for saying it? After all, aren’t witty and profound statements normally made by famous people?

John F. Kennedy is known for saying, “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country,” but he (or his speechwriter) appears to have lifted the quote from General Omar Bradley and/or Cicero (hard to pin down on the internet). Quoting Kennedy carries more clout nowadays than quoting either Bradley or Cicero, so we’ll give credit to the one with the highest current star power.

Putting words into the mouth of a celebrity seems to give the words more clout. You are more likely to pay attention to a statement I make if I tell you that some famous person said it.

I submit that the truth of a statement is more important than who said it, or didn’t say it. I don’t believe that 2 + 2 = 4 because Benjamin Franklin said it, nor do I disbelieve it because Adolf Hitler said it. The statement can stand on its own. A similar logic can apply to religious matters. A statement is not true because an authority figure said it; rather, authority figures state (generally) what is true.

“2 + 2 = 4”

Benjamin Franklin

Religious people sometimes are more interested in who said something than in whether or not a statement makes sense. In 1 Kings 13 a prophet delivers a message to King Jeroboam and then refuses Jeroboam’s offer to come over for lunch because God told him to turn down such offers. Later the prophet is given another offer to eat with someone and again turns it down, only to be told by the new would-be host that, “God told me to have you come and eat with me.” “God said it” packed a punch that altered the prophet’s thinking – bad move. “God said it” turned out to be a claim that was not supported by evidence. And even today people fall into line if, evidence notwithstanding, they are convinced that “God (or God’s equivalent) said it.” Remember Jonestown and Heaven’s Gate and the recent Harold Camping story. Could Adventists ever quit thinking on an issue because of a mistaken thought (misinterpretation) that God said something?

Even in the everyday world, we add to our attempts to persuade by depending on something other than “logic” or “common sense.” If you
are riding in a car with me and you see that I’m not wearing a seat belt, you may recommend that I belt up, reminding me that I’m better protected in case of an accident. But say that I don’t belt up. I counter that there are many cases where people died because they were either trapped in a vehicle by a seat belt or held where they couldn’t be thrown clear of something that hit them. So you raise your case to a new level, telling me that belting up is the law in this state, and that I can get pulled over by police for not wearing a seat belt, even if I’m not guilty of any other infraction. In other words, if you can’t achieve what you want by appealing to safety reasons, appeal to a higher authority. Use the police to add weight to what you’re saying.

Of course, you can do better than relying on my fear of the police; instead, you could refer to Romans 13 and the Bible’s admonition to follow the rules of our government. So rather than merely referencing the state government, you could warn me of divine punishment. Hard to top that! While I might not have a new heart that wants to wear a seat belt, you might at least bring about (coerce?) some outward conformity. (Many church members are more likely to be coerced by the police than by Romans 13.)

Reminding me of the risk of a fine might be a good idea, and one that I would appreciate if a police car sailed past me. But isn’t it a shame that I’m not moved to action by something more logical – by the nature of reality, by the fact that I am more likely to be better off if we are in an accident, which by its very nature is unexpected? Disobedience to the state could cost me over $100, but disobedience to God has more long-term consequences. For some people, that rebellious act of defying the state and thus defying God could be inviting God’s retribution (revenge).

I’ve noticed different topics of interest in the church over the years: movies (well, movie theaters), Sabbath activities, cheese, jewelry. Those are behavior topics. Then there are the theoretical, relatively non-behavior topics, such as salvation, inspiration, creation, and whether or not Jonah was a real person. For such topics, I find two types of persuasion tactics. One is a natural consequences, reality-based view, corresponding to the safety argument for using seat belts: Doesn’t this make more sense? Doesn’t this fit the evidence? Can’t you see how you would be better off if you agreed with me or did things the way I think you should? The other approach is the if-you-don’t-agree (with my understanding of a rule or theory), an authority figure will step in and administer the punishment you richly deserve.

I may find it frustrating when obvious (to me) truths are unseen or rebelled against by others, but should I load my argument by insisting that my quotation of God settles a matter? If you don’t eat the way I do (and that I think you should), why can’t I just let the natural consequences of your eating show that when you put two and two together, you get four? Isn’t the “wrath of God” his giving people up to natural consequences (Romans 1)? Similarly, if you don’t buckle up but are never involved in a car accident, it didn’t matter that you didn’t buckle up, so why should punishment be added on top of the risk you ran? Your rebellious attitude probably reaps troublesome results in other ways.

“The gullible believe anything they’re told; the prudent sift and weigh every word.”
Proverbs 14:15, The Message

We do find some sources more helpful for guidance and learn to rely on them. If two people disagree
over the correct spelling of a word, they will usually agree that a dictionary should settle the argument. Taber’s can be used for settling a medical dispute, and the Baseball Almanac may help a manager who tangles with an umpire. But can the Bible be used as a dictionary or a Taber’s? Or can Ellen White? For some people, one or both can. For those people, a preacher’s case is stronger if he uses a Bible text or an Ellen White quotation. Even in matters which cannot be proved otherwise, some people feel that the Bible has shown its trustworthiness in enough matters that it can be used with authority even when other evidence is lacking or ambiguous. Ditto for Ellen White. Of course, interpretation can be tricky, as two informed, sincere people can interpret the same passages in very different ways. Which can make it tricky to use a Bible or Ellen White quote to buttress an argument. For some folks, adding quotes from inspired writers is tantamount to bringing in Ben Franklin to help convince someone that two plus two equals four.

Two plus two equals four, no matter who says it, no matter who agrees or disagrees. Same goes for the Proverbs 14:15 quotation. Those who act in harmony with both those quotes will be better off than those who don’t. No one will need to *impose* a penalty for disbelieving either sentence.

Elaine Nelson 1 week ago Reply

There is no one who has more clout among Adventists that Ellen White. She is the most liberally quoted, in fact, probably 10x more than any who is second. If someone can't come up with his own opinion, she shuts all else out.

Steve Billiter 2 days ago Reply

Ellen White was the instrument that the Holy Spirit spoke through, Indeed, those who have a problem with her writings, as a consequence always have problems with the Bible and God. The fact of the matter is: concerning Bible truth: The Spirit of Prophecy brings it out in such clear, amplified detail that no one can hardly mistake its meaning. BTW, there are plenty of evangelists, preachers, and teachers who liberally quote EGW along with the Bible when it seems prudent, including me. The "gross neglect" of her writings, while true, shows the apostasy and the presence of the tares with the wheat in these end times. It is simply impossible for Adventists to truthfully proclaim, "The Bible only" and reject the Spirit of Prophecy. Self deception is a terrible and tragic condition.

"It is Satan's plan to weaken the faith of God's people in the Testimonies. Next follows skepticism in regard to the vital points of our faith, the pillars of our position, then doubt as to the Holy Scriptures, and then the downward march to perdition. When the Testimonies, which were once believed, are doubted and given up, Satan knows the deceived ones will not stop at this; and he redoubles his efforts till he launches them into open rebellion, which becomes incurable and ends in destruction." {4T 211.1}

Trevor Hammond 1 week ago Reply

Adventist Today: As Benjamin Franklin Said... http://www.atoday.org/article.php?id=804&action=print

3 of 4 8/15/2011 10:17 AM
Interesting article!
Since Ellen White seems to emerge from this 2+2=4 SUMising(sic) it is evidently clear that some who have long parted ways with Adventism are a tad 'out of touch' with current trends in the Church - well, at least in terms of the frequency of her writings been used. I'm afraid there is hardly much of her quoted from the pulpit or pews in most Adventist churches. In fact there is a gross neglect of her writings.

1cross + 3nails = 4given

T

Elaine Nelson
1 week ago
Reply

Perhaps the latest article here about Vegans went unnoticed? EGW was quoted many times, and adding to the Bible what could not be found in its pages. So much for "hardly much of her quoted from the pulpit or pews" but liberally in articles here and in other official SDA publications. Ever read the Review?
The Care and Feeding of the (American) Political Animal

Submitted Aug 5, 2011
By Stephen Foster

As some may recall, last month I engaged in a colloquy with a few of this site’s more frequent participants on the subject of the danger of religion’s influence in American politics; that is, from an historical and eschatological Seventh-day Adventist perspective. In fact, in so doing, we essentially took Dr. Cindy Tutsch’s, “WWJD” blog in a direction that she could not possibly have foreseen. However this almost inevitably goes with the blogging territory; and can, of course, happen to any of us at any time. LOL

My objective in this blog is two-fold, and these reasons should be revealed or become evident as this is being read. First of all, I would suggest that although I am somewhat fascinated with the world of politics and public affairs, particularly American political science/history, and have considerable respect and admiration for many public servants, I consider the practice of politics — the art and science of getting elected — as, all too often, a dirty business; with striking similarities to the ‘industries’ of gaming and prostitution.

We would of course like to think that most public officials are idealists who believe they have an obligation (or a duty of sorts) to contribute their talents and abilities for the benefit of the communities from which they come, on behalf of their families and fellow citizens.

Public service is one thing; what it takes to serve the public as an elected public official, and to remain in office once elected — that is to say, the game or business of politics — is quite another.

When beneficial political outcomes are accomplished, they are accomplished by those who make public policy AND by those who have influenced the formation of beneficial policy. The problem is that public service and public affairs commonly represent an entanglement of competing social and economic interests; all of whom ostensibly view their particular interests as being in the public interest. Needless to say, they cannot all be right.

The skeptic, or cynic, in me tells me that some of those who represent certain interests have to know what they are seeking to accomplish is not actually in the public interest, but rather merely in the narrow interests of a particularly influential and powerful constituency or portion of the electorate. Some may actually be so narrow minded and provincial in their thinking as to believe that whatever is in their constituencies’ interest is somehow also in the public interest.

Whether a politician is sincere, or sincerely delusional, what they are in search of, for good or ill, is power; pure and simple. My observation is that this is the basic, instinctive motivation of most politicians; and the key to understanding them.

In the American political system, power in the legislative branch of government is most easily acquired, amassed, or accumulated by seniority. Seniority is acquired by being repeatedly reelected. Reelection is accomplished by piecing together a decisive, yet not divisive, coalition of the electorate; and amassing a sufficiently large campaign war chest. Campaign war chests are amassed by voting and/or promising to vote in the interests of those who have contributed most to the campaign coffers.
Those holding executive offices in the American political system include mayors, governors, and the President of the United States. Although these office holders obtain power through similar processes of election; they function differently than do legislators. Instead of voting in the interests of their most vocal and deep-pocketed supporters, executive office holders support, promote, champion, and eventually sign into law initiatives favored by the most vocal, deep-pocketed, and thus influential members of their electoral coalition; whatever those issues may be. Certainly, those perceived to be the most effective and 'successful' executives do anyway.

As we have noted, the two major types of political animals are the politicians who seek, or are elected to, public office and the political activists and operatives who influence and/or ‘handle’ these politicians. Political activists, of course, include those interests and/or interest groups who ‘petition’ their government by means of lobbying or through the funding of what have been termed issue ads; and those who likewise seek to inform and influence the public and public office seekers and holders, but perhaps by less expensive means (often of simple financial necessity). Political operatives are largely represented by the necessary entourage of politicians who, among other things, manage political campaigns and deal with the press in spokesperson capacities.

According to Bradford Fitch of the Congressional Management Foundation, and author of the, *Citizens Handbook to Influencing Elected Officials*, the political class is generally much more responsive to interests than they are to opinions. In other words, for all practical purposes, interest groups are more influential than are individual constituent opinions.

As identified by cliffnotes.com, interest groups in American governmental politics can be generally categorized to include economic groups, including for example the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the AFL-CIO, and the American Medical Association; public interest groups, such as Common Cause and the League of Women Voters; government groups such as the National League of Cities and the National Governors Association; civil rights interest groups like the NAACP and the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund; officially ideological interest groups such as Americans for Democratic Action and the American Conservative Union; single issue groups like the National Rifle Association and Mothers Against Drunk Driving; AND religious interest groups such as the North American Division of SDA Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department, the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and The Christian Coalition.

Recent Court rulings, notably among the Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission have made it possible for interest groups to spend unlimited amounts of money to convey campaign electioneering messages in or during political campaigns; thus strengthening the power of at least the most affluent interest groups to influence public opinion (in :15, :30, and :45 second intervals, at that) at the critically few times the public is paying some attention to issues and political candidacies. Some interest groups have effectively eclipsed the roles of political parties in this regard. Former U.S. Congressman Tom Davis (R-VA) has recently noted, for example, that the '527' entity American Crossroads spent more money in the 2010 mid-term election (on the unofficial behalf of Republicans) than did the Republican National Committee.

Unsurprisingly, the religious interest groups are of particular concern in this space. Make no mistake about it; religious interest groups are no less 'interested' in influencing public policy than are other interest groups. As we have noted, either money
or the ability to otherwise sway public opinion is what makes an interest group effective. The latter is the natural currency in which religious interest groups operate. Religions do, after all, seek to influence, if not completely change, ‘hearts and minds.’ This is in fact their raison d’être; so to say, that they are somewhat effective in mobilizing the opinion of the faithful is axiomatic.

It is therefore safe to conclude that religious interest groups represent the strongly held views and opinions of segments of the electorate; and depending on the cultural demographic of any given electorate, a given religious interest group will have more or less influence. Where religious interest groups have the most influence is where they find the greatest number of adherents to the ‘principles’ and policies for which they advocate. Put another way, politicians will advocate for principles and policies that are most commonly held by those whom they purportedly represent; and again make no mistake, politicians who are elected in states, districts, or municipalities where religious interest groups are most influential — because of the particular cultural or religious composition of their particular constituencies — are just as willing to listen to, and act on behalf of, those interests as they are any other similarly influential interest group.

Such is the nature of the beast.

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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**

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**Ella M Rydzewski** 1 week ago **Reply**

Are there any powerful anti-religion groups? Aren't labor unions a powerful lobbying force? More than religious groups? Highly-paid celebrities and media producers could also be in this group--they are often anti-religious. There are several high-profile atheists with lots of money and power.

**laffal** 1 week ago **Reply**

I believe a question that fits here is this... who's actually the $$$ source that comes thru the Lobbyists? If you can track the $$$, you can find the link to those who are seeking to assume / execute power. In politics, as is in this world, everything is not as it seems / appears.
Elaine Nelson  
1 week ago  Reply

The slogan "Follow the Money" was never more relevant than in watching how laws are made. Anyone who believes that the lobbyists have no influence is from another planet. Currently, the huge financial and business corporation are the largest contributors to Congress. If someone has a solution, the Supremes have now allowed no limit to such "free speech."

Stephen Foster  
1 week ago  Reply

The point Ella is not that religious interest groups are necessarily any more powerful than others, or that there are not other groups whose interests clash with those groups of the religious variety, but that religious interest groups function in a similar capacity and in a similar environment and with similar intent (that of influencing policy makers and implementers) that other interest groups do; AND that politicians are just as likely to respond to their concerns, assuming the same leverage (they have--or might have--in given states, districts, or municipalities).

Ella M Rydzewski  
2 days ago  Reply

Are you saying that religious groups should not be involved in public policy at all? Some would say they should take a stand on issues that involve the public good such as drugs or alcohol as Adventists did concerning prohibition. They should not be promoting religious laws--that would be breaching the separation of church and state. A similar breach would be a law that denied religious freedom to some even though it may not be presented as a religious law. An example would be a Sunday-closing law such as they now have in Germany that impinges on the religious liberty of some but is not perceived by the secular government as religious. Another would be a law that forced Sabbathkeepers to work on Saturday. I don't know if Muslims work on Fridays, but the same would hold true for them. That is why not allowing Muslim women to wear a headcovering would be a violation of their religious liberties.

Stephen Foster  
2 days ago  Reply

No Ella, I'm not saying that religious groups should not be involved in public policy at all. What I am saying is that because of the nature of politicians (political animals, if you will; certainly American politicians at least), we should not be deceived into thinking that they cannot be influenced by religious interest groups to do their bidding—whatever that may be at any given time—given the right leverage, or pressure, applied by these groups.

I am also saying that these groups are as motivated and determined to gain leverage and apply pressure to politicians (though perhaps for differing reasons) as are most, if not any, other type of group.

Steve Billiter  
2 days ago  Reply

"the art and science of getting elected — as, all too often, a dirty business; with striking similarities
to the ‘industries’ of gaming and prostitution” (Stephen Foster). Well said, I totally agree. It appears to me that selecting a candidate for political office is very difficult in terms of how can we really believe their rhetoric, which we know is designed to get the vote, primarily.

I personally do not vote, nor do I take part in any form of the political processes. Why? I believe that we are so close to the image of the beast being formed in America, that I spend my excess energies (and Sabbaths) into presenting the 3 angels messages in some form, whether it be Bible studies, literature work, writing articles, giving money, or other supporting efforts. Certainly, it was necessary for A.T Jones to lobby effectively in Congress to oppose the Blair Bill, which was Sunday legislation brought forth in 1889. No doubt, such a need will arise again soon, even though all such lobbying will fail in its purpose, although some may be converted in the process. Occasionally, a proposition put to vote will be of such that responsible Christians should vote to uphold legislation that supports Bible principles. I especially like what the Spirit of Prophecy says about political endeavors:

"Those who teach the Bible in our churches and our schools are not at liberty to unite in making apparent their prejudices for or against political men or measures, because by so doing they stir up the minds of others, leading each to advocate his favorite theory. There are among those professing to believe present truth, some who will thus be stirred up to express their sentiments and political preferences, so that division will be brought into the church." {CCh 316.1}

"The Lord would have His people bury political questions. On these themes silence is eloquence. Christ calls upon His followers to come into unity on the pure gospel principles which are plainly revealed in the word of God. We cannot with safety vote for political parties; for we do not know whom we are voting for. We cannot with safety take part in any political scheme." {CCh 316.2}

"Those who are Christians indeed will be branches of the true vine, and will bear the same fruit as the vine. They will act in harmony, in Christian fellowship. They will not wear political badges, but the badge of Christ." {CCh 316.3}

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**Stephen Foster**

Steve Billiter,

Thank you for your observations! I too believe that we are close to the image on the beast being formed here, and that as EGW has noted, “We cannot with safety vote for political parties; for we do not know whom we are voting for.” I have also observed that labeling political personages and entities is asking for division and discord.

I do vote however, with the knowledge that “we cannot with safety vote for political parties; for we do not know whom we are voting for.” Additionally, the nature of the political game/science/animal being what it is, we never can be absolutely certain for what we are voting either.

You are also spot on in your observation that we will undoubtedly be engaged in lobbying against legislation that will be reminiscent of the Blair Bill and that ultimately such efforts will fail, but that some (I believe many) “may be converted in the process.” It is a fact that this reality ironically contributes to the tension between enlightened non-partisanship on the one hand, and enlightened...
watchfulness on the other.
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.

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

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

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”!!!
Galon 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 alsmost 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}

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**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 if 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!"

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**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 refering 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...

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?

Gailon Arthur Joy

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.

Timo Onjukka

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.

Ella M Rydzewski
1 week 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!

Steve Billiter
1 week ago

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

Editor
1 week 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

Jeff Boyd
1 week 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?
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

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 divisons 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

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
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 any wise 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 (i.e., prodigal and elder) is moving oneself from relationship with God. The relational template is quite clear; your love toward your God (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 1 week ago Reply

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, 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.

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

Ron Corson 1 week ago

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)

Keep the Shabbat day (5:12)
In Exodus 20 (where the Ten Commandments are first written), it says, "Remember the Shabbat day." "Remember" and "keep" (which represent the imperative and prohibitive aspects of Shabbat) were expressed in a single utterance -- something which the human mouth cannot articulate and the human ear cannot hear.
In Deut.5:12-15, verse 15 shows that the Sabbath is not only a memorial of creation, but also a reminder of the deliverance of Egyptian bondage (sin). Some folks would say, I thought that was Passover only.
The church I think should be sharing this view along with creation.

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

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

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

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

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

Kevin Riley

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

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.

Vernon P. Wagner

The different story of creation found in Genesis 1 & 2 is another example of unknown scribes recording tribal legends.

Elaine Nelson

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.

Vernon P. Wagner

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.

Here in Australia “six days shalt thou labour” was the primary reason that we have Religious Liberty Section 116 in our Constitution.

The Seventh day of “rest” (note not “worship”) is always connected to the command to work Six days. This is to commemorate the 6 literal days of Creation. Six days work has no connection to the deliverance from Egypt that I can see.

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?

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
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.

Elaine Nelson

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.
Elaine, what does Genesis 2:2-3 have to do with the Jews? It seems it has to do with God, His creation, and how He determined would be it would be celebrated and remembered.

Who, but the Hebrews wrote the entire Torah? In fact, all the Bible, except Luke, was written by Jews. The Fourth commandment was given only to the Jews. Show me a text stating otherwise. Re-read Genesis, there is not a single command given by God for man to rest on the Fourth. He rested because HE had FINISHED His work.

There are two accounts of the Ten Commandments, each one addresses the Israelites brought by God from Egypt, no other peoples. Please furnish a single Bible text instructing Christians to observe a holy day. Christians are not Jews; Christianity only began following the Resurrection, a day celebrated for the birth of Christianity. Who would be Christians without the Resurrection? The Jews do not celebrate the Resurrection, but Orthodox Jews still observe the seventh day. Which is of more importance to Christians: remembering creation, or remembering when they were given hope of everlasting life (which the Jews never had) through the Resurrection.

Elaine, Jesus did not say the Sabbath is for the Jews... no my friend, read you bible, he stated "The Sabbath day was made for man" Mark 2;27" that means for humanity. Elaine just enjoyed... you could have even a "veggi capuchino" in that HOLY DAY.

It the Sabbath was only for the Jews... and Jesus stated the Sabbath was made for man... so the humanity started the Jews (actually with israelites)?... so all the beens who lived before Moses were apes? maybe pre-apes? so all the patriarchs were not man? interesting theology indeed.

The people who became Jews, were not a specific people until Sinai. There were many other peoples (Abraham came from Ur, and he was not a Jew); Adam and Eve were NEVER identified as Jews, nor any of the descendants until when they left Egypt. The Hebrews wrote the Torah, but I never claimed, nor has anyone else, that Adam was a Jew. To infer that all the humans before Moses were apes is ludicrous and a sad joke. Where were the patriarchs ever identified as Jews? People were separated beginning with Cain and later at the tower of Babel, and following the flood, the Bible writers said this was another separation with Noah's sons each beginning a new tribe. The writers selected that tribe which was the "chosen" one and from which the Israelites came.

The Ten Commandments were never given to anyone but the Israelites, and were not required...
observe its laws, feasts, and festivals as they became Jewish tradition observed to this day.

David
3 days ago Reply

Exactly the humanity did not started with the Jews, there were humans before them, so the Sabbath was for all the men who lived before the Jews, " The Sabbath day was made for all the man from the beginning to the end

Uncledon
3 days ago Reply

Elaine, I enjoy keeping the 7th Day Sabbath and I am not a Jew by birth. It does say if I am Christ's then am I Abrahams seed and heir according to the promise.

Is there a command anywhere that forbids me keeping Sabbath?

In the earth made new all will be Sabbath keepers. uncledon.

Elaine Nelson
2 days ago Reply

Uncledon,

I am happy that you enjoy keeping the 7th day sabbath; and no, you do not have to be a jew. Anyone has the perfect liberty to observe any day of the week or year that he wishes, but I don't believe that religious liberty was the topic of the article.

There is no command in the Bible forbidding any day being observed. Only Paul says that no one should be judged about a day but should be convinced in his own mind. IOW, each individual should decide on this matter.

However, this is not the usual position of the SDA church, but rather that to "disobey" the fourth commandment makes one eligible for mark of the beast and the lake of fire. The usual SDA position is that all Christians must obey all of Moses' Law, including the fourth, although there was a change when Christ died and the new covenant was much simpler without the 613 laws which the Israelites were commanded to obey. As yet, no one has furnished a single NT text commanding CHRISTIANS to observe any day.

How can one observe the sabbath day in heaven where there is no night? The language in Isaiah about worshiping from one new moon to another and one sabbath to another was referring to the land in Palestine being restored to them again. The new moon and Sabbath are tied together, yet when will we worship on the new moon? When did we ever worship on the new moon? Has that part of the Bible been completely ignored?
Elaine, while there is no specific command in the Bible before Ex 16 to observe the Sabbath, God's purpose for setting aside the 7th day at the time of creation was surely more than just to provide a day of rest for Himself. Among other things, wasn't it time for Him to affirm the goodness of His finished work. But what was blessing and sanctifying the day all about? For whom was it blessed and sanctified, and why? Was it for God Himself? Or for the creatures He had created which, according to the commandment itself, not only included rest for human beings, but also for animals?

Was the Sabbath only for Jews? There were none when the day was set aside. It was "made for man." The commandment, when given, included foreigners. Further, Paul points out that Gentile Christianity was not a new entity, but a branch that had been grafted into the body of those called into a covenant relationship with God. Sabbath was one of the signs of a covenant relationship with Him based on trust in and love for Him.

Some good possible explanations have been given above as two why there are two versions of the Fourth Commandment. What has struck me is that many SDAs do not want to go to the Sabbath command in Deuteronomy, and many non-SDAs do not want to go it as given in Exodus. Both situations are unfortunate. Whatever the reasons might be for the two different versions, are they not completely compatible with and complementary to each other?

In the Old Testament, the Sabbath is quite often closely associated with care for the fatherless, the widows, the poor, etc. Isaiah 58 is one of the best examples. The theological message of the Sabbath is that God provided opportunity for us to enjoy both physical and spiritual rest based on trust in Him, and that we should do what we can to provide that rest for others. This is the spirit of the Sabbath. Observing the Sabbath one day a week without experiencing and practicing its spirit the other six days is meaningless, according to Isa 58 and other passages.

In Hebrews 4, the Sabbath is presented as a symbol of rest in Christ -- deliverance from sin and rest from works. As such, is it not as appropriate a symbol of a New Covenant relationship with God as it was of the Old? Even under the Old, was it given to be a "work" of righteousness, or a weekly reminder that we can trust in God, and rest in Him? Do not both versions of the command, one based on His creation and one on redemption point to the same thing?

The NT book of Hebrews explains that it is rest in Christ. When the creation was finished, God "rested" because his work had been completed; and since he came and in his resurrection, resurrected us from the sin which held us captive.

The Genesis creation story was written long afterward, when sabbath had been given (for those who believe that Moses wrote it), he correlated the fourth commandment with creation. But, because there is no command given for humans until Sinai, it should not be simply assumed that it was observed prior to that; especially since there is no record of anyone observing it before Sinai,
The covenant, including the Ten Commandments, were given to the Israelites, and there is no word in the Bible about it being given to, or expected by anyone other than Jews. Even when God addressed the Sabbath as being made for man, he was not addressing the Gentiles but only Jews who knew the commandment and its prohibitions. The Gentiles had no record of ever observing sabbath and there is no record of them being taught its importance to their salvation.

The Gentiles rejoice in the Resurrection, as do all Christians, something the Jews never even believed in nor accepted. While the first Christians were Jews, their attempt to make Gentiles become Judaized was roundly refuted and their requirements were minimal, as listed in several places in the NT: avoid food offered idols; no meat that had been strangled, and avoid fornication. Had they been expected to observe Sabbath, where is it found in the NT? All that has been stated has been based solely on assumptions, a very poor method to establish a rule if it cannot be written but only simply "assumed." The Law given the Jews was not left to their "assumptions.

What was the "new covenant" that Jeremiah foretold if it was the same as the old covenant? What were the changes?

We are now servants "of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit, for the letter kills, but the spirit give life. But if the ministry of death IN LETTERS ENGRAVED ON STONES CAME WITH GLORY...how shall the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory?" What is the ministry of death engraved on stones if not the the Decalogue?

Hi Elaine:

What were the changes? Good question. But can that be fully answered without asking a number of other questions?

WHY was a change needed, according to both Jer 31:31-34 and Heb 8:13?

WHAT LAW was Jeremiah talking about? Was it the Ceremonial Law? Was that the Law Israel had broken? Or was it primarily, if not entirely, the Ten Commandment Law that Israel had broken, not only by worshipping the golden calf, but repeatedly thereafter by worshipping other gods and in a multitude of other ways?

Would not Hebrews be talking about the SAME law as Jeremiah since it a direct quotation from Jeremiah?

If so, what was the problem with the Law? Was IT faulty (perhaps compare with Rom 8:3-4)?

Are a law and a covenant the same thing? If not, what is the difference? If there is a difference, how are covenantes related to law, and how are the two covenants related to the Ten Commandment Law?

What was the underlying problem with the Old Covenant (try looking at Deut 5:22-29), and how was
the problem resolved in the New? Was it by changing the Law? Would cancelling the Ten Commandments and bringing back in nine to make a new law solve the problem pointed out by both Jeremiah and Hebrews? (Are there really very many serious Christians who would quibble much about any of the ten except the fourth?)

What are the answers to these questions? Is it possible to give an adequate answer to the FIRST question (what changes were made) without answering these? What implications do the answers have on the answer to the first?

Elaine Nelson

Hebrews declares the first covenant to be faulty ("For if that first covenant had been faultless there would have been no occasion sought for a second" (Heb. 8:7). Yes, Jeremiah is referring to the First Covenant where he clearly states that in the future, God will make a NEW COVENANT. How can an old covenant be identical to a new? "He takes away the first in order to establish the second." "For where a covenant is there must be of necessity for the death of the one who made it; for the covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is is never in force while the one who made it lives." "Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant."

"But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound" (Rom 7:6).

"The Lord our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. The Lord did not make this covenant with our fathers" (Deut. 5:2).

The Decalogue was given in Deut. 5 with important differences:

"Observe the sabbath day to keep it holy, as the Lord you God commanded you....And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to observe the sabbath day" (Deut. 5:12-15).

Note the differences: in the Ex. 20 version the sabbath is to be remembered because in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth and rested on the seventh day; in the Deuteronomic version, creation is unmentioned, as they are to remember it because they were freed from slavery.

The Decalogue was part of the old covenant. The new covenant was made following Christ's death and resurrection which inaugurated a completely new system, unlike Judaism. No longer were only the Jews to be the chosen people; no longer was circumcision the first ceremony in Judaism; no longer was the Law to be the center of their lives as it had been previously. Jesus replaced the Law as the center of the Gospel which is why no longer were all the various sacrifices necessary. No longer were the Gentiles to be pagans and the Jews could not even eat with them. There were many changes, most particularly that Jesus said that to Love your neighbor fulfilled the Law. There was no mention of love in the Decalogue, so this was a major change delivered by Jesus.
The apostles, after the Resurrection, gave instructions that no longer was circumcision to be imposed upon Christians; no longer was there to be separate tables, but "to eat anything that is set before you, without asking questions for conscience sake."

Paul's letter to the Galatians is the most profound of all his writings that delineate the relationship between the Law and the Gospel. It is amazing that it can be read (with a veil covering the head?) and not understand clearly that now that faith has come we are no longer under the Law but are all sons of God and in his letter to the Ephesians, there are no longer Jews and Gentiles, free and slave, male and female, we are all one in Christ Jesus.

The Old Covenant given at Sinai has no possibility of Christ. The Jews had no prophetic vision of a Messiah. This came hundreds of years later.

Israel was designed to be a theocracy. The only theocratic governments today are ones no one would prefer to live under. All the laws in civilized nations prohibit stealing, lying, murder, and there is no need for a religious law that would duplicate these laws that predate Sinai by nearly a millennium. The first four can only apply to a theocracy, and surely, no U.S. citizens, or in first world nations, would prefer to live under a theocracy that designated a day of worship.

Fortunately, in the U.S. and most nations of the civilized world do not, nor propose religious laws, for which we all should be most thankful. Citizens are free to worship as they wish as long as it impinges on no other citizens.

William Sandborn

As a physician I frequently worked on the Sabbath or if I didn't I was too tired to get real benefit from it. It was only after I retired that I realized how much I missed out.

Elaine Nelson

Retirement can be a time of reflection, but when life is busy there is often not the freedom to choose time off. Work gets in the way of many things. Is there another choice? Does a 5 or 6-day work week not offer at least one day off? If a person had an accident and was comatose for several days, he could not immediately know which day of the week it might be. Is there something specific about a particular calendar day that is so special?

How many people know that originally, there were no calendars, and the only indicators of seasons were the sun and moon? And the New moon was the "marker" for sabbaths? Each new moon started a new count of 7 days to the next sabbath, and by the 28th day, another sabbath, and it began all over again. It would be totally out of synch in less than two months of 28-30-and 31 days that we moderns adopted with the advent of the Babylonian calendar ca 360 A.D. Prior to that, all Jews calibrated a "seventh day" from "one new moon to another."
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.” David Lotz, *Ritschl and Luther*, Abingdon Press (1974), pp 35, 36.

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.

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

Glenn Hansen
1 week ago   Reply

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

Trevor Hammond

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

Elder Douglas:
Gailon Arthur Joy, a proud card carrying Tea Party Adventist
AURreporter

Ella M Rydzewski
1 week ago
Reply

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?

Bill Cork
1 week ago
Reply

This is Luther in the Smalcald Articles of 1537:

1. \textit{That Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, died for our sins, and was raised again for our justification, Rom. 4:25.}
2. \textit{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. \textit{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: \textit{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. \textit{For there is none other name under heaven, given among men whereby we must be saved,} says Peter, Acts 4:12. \textit{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 through 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
1 week ago Reply

Pat Travis
1 week ago Reply

Bill,

You are "undermining" Herb's theory by the "mere" facts of the JBF Luther so clearly taught. :>)

Glenn Hansen
1 week ago Reply

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
1 week ago Reply

"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."

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Glenn Hansen 1 week ago  Reply

Bill,

Wasn't Melanchthon was most villified for his roll in drafting the Leipzig interim? Contextually, Lutheranism was facing annihilation by CharlesV, flush with satisfaction, after the Protestant defeat at the Battle of Muhlberg. 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.
Pat Travis

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 its meaning. On other areas they varied but not "on that essential doctrine."

regards to both,
pat

Bill Cork

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

Pat Travis

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

Bill Cork

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**  
6 days ago  

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

**Pat Travis**  
6 days ago  

Bill,

I signed hubby by mistake as I was also sending my wife an email almost concurrently. :>)

pat

**Nathan Schilt**  
6 days ago  

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.

Nathan Schilt

Surely you jest, Elaine! You of all people can't possibly believe that an abstract consensus on MEANING is necessary before the Gospel can be effectively presented to the world. No one has generated more confusion about the Gospel than Christ did during His ministry on earth. Since the beginning of time, God's divine intervention has been confusing human understandings and pretensions. Few events in history have arisen out of and produced more confusion and consternation than Christ's lie, crucifixion, and resurrection. Yet the cognitive dissonance created by the experience of those events was the seedbed that enabled His followers to see and act with great clarity, conviction and power. It is the quality of our love in action, not the clarity of our thinking or definitions, where the Word becomes flesh, trumping confusion and constituting a most powerful witness to the Gospel.

Elaine, you frequently offer the Golden Rule as a definition of the Gospel, an aphorism with which no Christians, and few non-Christians, would take issue. But that principle, as an abstraction, is quite powerless to prevent abortions, genocide, and all manner of less barbaric coercive evils perpetrated for the betterment of humankind. You would view the free markets in which I believe as one of those coercive evils; I would view the welfare, regulatory state which you support as one of those evils. Perhaps we both are right and both wrong.
I submit that it is in voluntary personal acts of love and mercy, done in submission to, in the name and for the sake of, a crucified, resurrected, and living God, where confusion is transcended, the Gospel is clarified, and faith becomes a reality.

Elaine Nelson

Nathan, if the SDA church wishes to preach the Gospel, and if there is much confusion, what message will be presented? Let everyone simply preach it as he see it? Why not, how is it different from the official church which even then, cannot present a unified position on the meaning of the Gospel?

As for the Golden Rule, it is only as good as its observance. Of course it has never prevented evil, nor has biblical principle. That's the meaning of "principles," and principles can never be enforced unless they are incorporated into laws, which is exactly what the Israelites were given, and we know how that turned out. Evidently, God did not want to limit them to "voluntary acts."

Nathan Schilt

The message that will be presented is the message of surrendered lives. "Preach the Gospel at all times; if necessary, use words." Few have heard me articulate my views on marriage; nor do I have a developed philosophy of marriage that is worth sharing. But I have the good fortune to be in an amazing relationship with a woman who regularly takes my breath away. And countless people, including our children, have remarked on how our obvious love for each other gives them faith in marriage. Dee Dee and I are generally quite oblivious to the principles that would no doubt be distilled by a behavioral "scientist" observing our relationship. There is no external sanction or law keeping those principles in place. And if our relationship needed such sanctions to survive and grow, love would quickly wither and die. We seldom speak of marriage as an abstract principle; and probably, if you were to ask each of us separately, you would not find that we have what you might call a "unified" position on the meaning of marriage. Yet our lives, I believe, bear witness to the joys and possibilities of that marvelous institution.

Do you not see that a "unified position" on the meaning of anything can only be presented as principle? And when you observe that principles (a "unified position") can only be "enforced" when they are made into laws, are you not in essence saying that the meaning of the Gospel is law? Maybe you need to go back and read Romans again. You admit on the one hand that principles and abstractions are powerless to transform lives. But sadly, you implicitly deny the promise of Jeremiah that God will write His laws in our hearts and on our minds, where they can be observed in liberty and freedom.

Historically, God's commands have on occasion been accompanied by divine police action. But didn't Jesus come to overturn that perception of God? Isn't the essence of the gospel the good news that humans can choose to voluntarily submit, surrender, and serve without an omnipresent divine billy club? In the Gospel currency, God's "commands" are invitations to voluntarily place ourselves in alignment with His mind and heart in the context of a love.
relationship. "One commandment I give unto you...:" If you love me, keep my commandments..." "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples..." Without voluntariness, there is no love; without love, there is no Gospel.

Are we saying something different, Elaine? Aren't these truths self-evident to all Christians? In the end, there is no "unified" meaning or position except that of active surrender and submission to the risen Lord within a faith community. The Word became flesh: Why do we insist that He be translated back into Word?

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.

T

Elaine Nelson

John 3:16-18 is the Gospel. Is there a better one?

Trevor Hammond

Most baptised Adventists will easily be able to give a good John 3:16 explanation of the Gospel contrary to what they have been accused of.

Mrs Nelson wrote: "Unless Adventism can clearly define the Gospel, how can they possibly present it to the world?"
Elaine Nelson  
4 days ago  Reply

If "most Adventists will easily be able to give a good John 3:16 explanation of the Gospel" why is that so many here have done little or nothing else than quote reams of EGW? Is that the best way one can explain the Gospel to a questioner? How helpful is that? Might as well give them a copy of GC and tell them that they will find it in there.

Glenn Hansen  
6 days ago  Reply

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?

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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

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

Hansen,

It was not a matter of tit for tat. You provided a lengthly 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

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 6 days 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 importatnt 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 / decieve. 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 Armeniamism (setting aside each positions 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 6 days 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 believers life...they just don't justify meaning they remain inadequate.

regards,
pat

laffal 6 days 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**  
6 days 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**  
6 days 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 though 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

"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

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

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**Glenn Hansen**

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.

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**Elaine Nelson**

Nathan, could you find the Gospel in Ted Wilson's latest message? Can you find the Gospel in the evangelists who focus on the Mark of the Beast or risk damnation?

If official Adventism were only preaching the Gospel it would be a breath-taking change.

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**Nathan Schilt**

No, Elaine, I am quite confident that, had I read or heard Wilson's latest message, his usual overlay of institutional priorities, which he tends to conflate with the Gospel, would have made the heart of...
the Gospel difficult to feel. And certainly, the traditional SDA explication of time charts, superimposing a sectarian eschatology on history and current events makes me cringe. I am deeply grateful that my grandparents were led to Christ through these kinds of messages. But I think Christ has, for the most part, left that stage, and today the black lights mostly expose a counterfeit Gospel.

I think we expect too much of preaching, at least in the kerygmatic sense. Preaching can only point towards the Gospel. It should not be confused with the Gospel. Paul Tillich observed that the greatest challenge to Christian ministers and teachers is to present Christ in such a clear and unadulterated way that people will be forced to either accept Him or reject Him as He is - not as a human theological construct. Sadly, much of our "Gospel" preaching, and much of SDA "Gospel" living is theological, legalistic, and hypocritical. It is served with propositional certitude rather than relational conviction. And thus, no matter what we say or do, people are free to reject or ignore a Christ they never saw, heard or felt.

The notion of official Adventism preaching the Gospel seems as oxymoronic to me as the idea of Government providing charity. An institution can at most be a facilitator of movements within it which preach the Gospel. Institutions are constitutionally and definitionally incapable of the personal passion from which the Gospel, as I understand it, must emanate.

Ervin Taylor

The first time I read this blog of Herb I missed the following: “Everywhere we turn, it is important to know what faith is — if we really want certitude.”

I would assume that we all would agree about the importance of knowing the meaning(s) of words like “faith,” but why is it necessary to have “certitude” about theological constructs? I would posit that there is no such thing as “certitude” in theology because all theologies are, by definition, human constructs. Might I respectfully ask Herb if he would be so kind as to explain why we need “certitude” on this subject?

Nathan Schilt

Erv, you have, perhaps unwittingly, really struck at the heart of the faith matter. Theological constructs, like scientific constructs, can never be Truth, at least not in a propositional sense, unless one believes that there is no intelligent, creative reality beyond human understanding, an untenable proposition for Christians.

We can have common understandings about the meaning of words without having certitude about them. And we can have certitude, as well as a common experience of the reality towards which words point, without having a theological construct or common understanding of the meaning of the words which are used to describe that experience.
If Herb is talking about a definitional understanding or a theological construct of faith, his quest for certitude strikes me as chasing his tail. If, on the other hand, he is talking about the relationship of faith, then I'm not sure why we have to baptize our terminology in order to sanctify our experience.

Speaking of which... I learned last evening that one of the young members of our Church, heavily into the GYC movement, was recently at some ASI meeting where they insisted that he, along with 18 -20 other Adventist youth who were at the meeting, undergo baptism by them, even though he had been baptized by our SDA Church pastor only a couple of years ago. Amazing!

Bill Cork  
Whatever happened to "one Lord, one faith, one baptism"?

Glenn Hansen  
http://www.bookofconcord.org/historical-4.php  
Interesting article regarding Melanchthon's changes to the Augsburg Confession. More authoritative than anything I scribbled.

Trevor Hammond  
Well, I still like the 'Pauline Confession' better. ; )

"Heb 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.  
Heb 11:2 For by it the people of old received their commendation.  
Heb 11:3 By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible."

In Faith  
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Seminary Student  
Pat , Travis . Thank you for the " open letter " from Wilson letter . Now , I understand why we have so much confusion . That letter sounded like the " inquisition ". It is funny that at the Adventist book center , they are selling a book about , Neal Wilson" leadership " . Do we want the new leaders to be like him ? so sad to see that a leader who said believed in Ellen White , and the bible could act in such a way.

Bill Cork  
4 days ago Reply
Seminary Student, perhaps you should read the letter first before pronouncing that sort of judgment.


Pat Travis

Bill,
I do not know your background...whether you left the church in the past and came back or you are a new member. I respect greatly your informed positions on Luther and the Reformation meaning of JBF "alone."

As one who is a 5th generation SDA and a product of education in many parts of the SDA system and present at the time, I SUGGEST, what Seminary Student was referring to on pp.10,11 was this statement.

"We are requesting that we refrain from involving ourselves in public presentations of the fine points and the controversial aspects of the theology of righteousness by faith." pp.10.

Bill, the conversation did stop with church officials and workers...thus my premise that the meaning of "JBF alone" was aborted by him.

Bill what was the outcome of the "study committee" promised? Did they find the Reformation meaning OR is it adequate to put all the views under "Salvation by Grace" including Herb's?

regards,
pat

PS. Bill can you present us that committee report? Can you show us how it enlightens us on the position of JBF held by Luther...and Calvin?

How does that relate to the issue we are yet discussing today with Herb....when present?

Have you herd Ted use the term "JBF "alone"?
I think it quite apparent that "Seminary Student" didn't read the letter.

As for me, I've mentioned my background in comments and in the articles I have written here. I left the SDA church in 1983 when a college student, enamored of RDB and DF. I started my graduate studies at Loma Linda, then transferred to Gettysburg Lutheran Seminary where I got a couple of degrees. Started in ministry in the ELCA, which did a liberal nose dive in the first few years of its existence. Did lay ministry in the Catholic church for fourteen years. Returned to the SDA church four years ago. So, been around the block.

And I remember those days in the 70s and 80s. Some suggested that the majority of partisans really believed in "righteousness by tape." You had liberal publications, and tape cassette "ministries," and the Standishes, etc., etc. Lots of acrimony--little charity. It seems clear from Wilson's letter that this was his primary concern. Have things changed on this regard ...

Blessings Seminary student. No one is all bad...senior Wilson perhaps was a good administrator but lacking theologian. He avoided "for peace" any Biblical issue that challenged the status quo...it was not allowed. Des Ford and Members of Southern University (SAU) of the time are the visible results.

A thought also for you. As to "finer points." The church wrote 1000 pp. on Daniel defending 8:14. Yet determining the meaning of "JBF alone" held by the Reformers that formed Protestantism is somehow an extreme finer point! To this foolish reasoning, I object.

I'm reminded of what Bill Cosby once said about disputes between children--parents are not interested in justice, they are interested in quiet. I think the same thing holds true for most administrators.

Thanks for your comments and background. I liked "Present Truth" mag by the rehablilitated RB. I saw difficulties when I heard him speak in Chattanooga and he started with "Verdict" mag.
You are correct that most administrators simply want quite and no "ripples"...while in SDA administrators don't mind creating ripples for other churches by our evangelistic meetings. You see for a long time as a youth I was under the illusion that we could by sola scriptura defend any of our positions openly and without fear. That did not occur of JBF "alone" nor the "sanctuary" in the 70-80's.

Have you ever seen a committee report promised by Neal on "RBF" other than it is simply "Salvation by Grace" and the finer points need not be explored even though Luther and Calvin put their lives on the line for "the finer meaning" of salvation.

Blessings to you Bill...I simply am becoming more and more weary with the hypocrisy of double standards and lack of informed historical understanding...and I will not shut up. Seminary student would dare to be a Daniel to note the hypocrisy but prudent at this stage of his life to recognize the dangers.

blessings Bill,

pat

Pat Travis

PS. Bill, I practiced Dentistry for 25 yrs. including towards the end for the church for 6mos. in Bangladesh and 3 yrs. at HKAH plus 3 yrs. in private practice in HK.

In 1997 I began an M.Div. program at RTS in Orlando to "see what the Reformers" really taught for myself.

I am offended by Herb's and Sr. Gane among others who so distort what they stood for regarding JBF by revisionism. It is not an out of line analogy for the "pope to describe SDA theology" for the validity of Herb and Gane to describe the Reformers view on Justification!

Bill Cork

No, I haven't seen that document. :-) As a result, there are as many "conflicting concepts" today, if not more. There are those who believe the Reformers had it. There are others preaching pure old-fashioned 19th century liberalism. There are some pushing the moral influence theory. There are old school Andreasen perfectionists, and 1888-ists (of various stripes), and a few quiet types who think RDB had the right mix in the 60s. There are some who push for a social gospel and a mystical spirituality. There are adoptionists and Arians and Tritheists and some orthodox Trinitarians, associated in different ways with the differing positions above. What does 1844 mean? Different answers from each of those groups. How should we pray? How should we worship? Same thing. We see it in the discussions here and at Spectrum and other places on the web. Did the call for a moratorium on debate and a call for quiet study get us anywhere? It doesn't look that way. And I haven't even mentioned the fact that most Adventists probably are more likely to listen to Christian radio, and read what's sold at the local Christian bookstore, and watch Joel Osteen and other TV preachers than they are to pay attention to Standish or Sequiera or Ford or Wieland or anyone at the seminary. That's the reality. And so they have imbibed all the muddled versions of the gospel that are
present in contemporary evangelicalism. And that's why I think we need to be clear where scripture is clear. We need to hold fast to the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints, and judge all later teachings by its clarity, not revise our understanding of Scripture to make it agree with later theories, keeping in mind Paul's warning to the Galatians about "another gospel."

More about my personal path here: http://wquercus.com/faith/sermon_6-16-07.htm

That was written as a sermon for a church, and I couldn't get into all issues. One issue that was important was justification. I went to Gettysburg seminary at the encouragement of Paul Landa at Loma Linda, who urged me to study with Eric Gritsch and Robert Jenson. In their book on the Lutheran confessions, they argue that Luther didn't intend to break away, but wanted to reform from within on the basis of justification by faith alone. If the pope will allow the preaching of the gospel, we should seek unity, they argued (along with folks like Richard John Neuhaus). The various US and LWF/Vatican dialogues on justification seemed to suggest that Rome now allowed the Lutheran option. Folks like Neuhaus argued that in becoming Catholic they were not giving up justification by faith alone, merely rejoicing that Rome now said one could accept it and be Catholic. I went in with rose-colored glasses. But Rome hadn't changed. It still said, "yes, but." It still preaches indulgences and satisfactions and merit--all the issues against which the Reformers prevailed. And the continuity of Catholic faith and practice has been underscored in the pontificates of John Paul II and Benedict XVI. You could read liberal Catholics in the 70s and 80s and think a lot had changed--but you read the official statements, and read the writings of the popes, and follow the discussions on liturgy, and the revisions of the mass, and the celebrations of jubilees with the offering of indulgences--and you see that the dreams of the liberals never took root. Rome is still the same. Justification isn't preached--not even the version in the dialogues. It sits on the shelf, while most priests preach pablum, some preach liberal social activism, and others preach traditional morality and theology and spirituality.

So this remains the question, posed by Paul, and the Reformers, and reechoed today: will the gospel's message of God's gracious gift in Christ, received by faith alone, will that be the "chief article" which stands in judgment on everything else, or will it just be one option among many? Will it be a doctrine, of the head, or will it give us comfort and encouragement in our daily struggles?

Pat Travis 4 days ago

>>So this remains the question, posed by Paul, and the Reformers, and reechoed today: will the gospel's message of God's gracious gift in Christ, received by faith alone, will that be the "chief article" which stands in judgment on everything else, or will it just be one option among many? Will it be a doctrine, of the head, or will it give us comfort and encouragement in our daily struggles?<<

Amen Bill.

Herbert Douglass 4 days ago

I rejoice as I reviewed all these honest comments. Truly, I simply must say that no other topic exists today more important than the meaning of "faith." Getting faith right helps us understand why
intelligent people quarrel over such issues as predestination or even what is meant by RBF! Or why some prefer to use JBF rather than RBF.

It seems to me that a restful understanding of faith drives us to biblical definitions of "being born again," or "repentance," or "conversion," or "a new heart," or "overcomers," etc—definitions that are virtually interchangeable. Slippery definitions of faith open the door to theological dead-ends and endless arguments.

All God is interested in is for all Prodigals to come home. The first item on God's agenda is His plan to prove that His way of life is far better than any other model—and He wins the argument by pointing to those who are His examples, beginning with the Life and Death of Jesus. All He wants from His world-full of His children is our heads-up amidst all the pain and bleakness of living life by other plans than His own.

He has many ways to get our attention and our willingness to give Him the opportunity for Him to move in and help us "to will" His New Plan. He even says that He will live within us, to give us the encouragement and the inner strength to resist Evil in all its forms! Some deal!

Instead of self-oriented decisions and actions, we now find joy and power in making God's Plan and the well-being of others our chief concerns. All this life-change builds on known duty that becomes fresher and more demanding as life rolls on.

For me, this is what Paul meant when he uses the phrase, "from faith to faith" (Rom 1:17). Understanding faith in this way grows when understanding the Big Picture of what God wants to do for all of us with the gospel. Faith is not something punciliar, nor is faith, plus something else. Faith is the word that encompasses all that God wants to do for those loyal to Him.

We today stand like Luther did amidst the confusion of the Catholic church. He didn't build his response on the testimony of others. We today must also, amidst a greater confusion than Luther faced, listen again to the wooing voice of Jesus through Scripture. Cheers, Herb

Ervin Taylor

Herb—I wonder if you might help me understand a sentence in your last post and one in an earlier post.

The recent one is “Instead of self-oriented decisions and actions, we now find joy and power in making God's Plan and the well-being of others our chief concerns.” I'm sure that we can all go with the well-being of others [as being] our chief concerns.

However, I don’t understand your comment about “God’s Plan.” Which one? Would it be his plan for Buddhists, for Hindus, for those of Islamic faith, or for Christians? And if for Christians, are we talking about our Catholic friends, or members of the Orthodox traditions, or some other Christian faith tradition? Or does God have only one plan for everyone? If so, could you please be a little more specific?
Also, might I ask again about an earlier suggestion of yours that we need “certitude” on this subject? Why is that?

Regards,

Erv

Kevin Riley 4 days ago  Reply

I was told by someone who should have known that the greatest fear the church leaders had was that the church would split. It was obvious to them - and many others - that, whichever way the final vote went on RBF, you were looking at the loss of a considerable percentage of the church leaders and members. I was quoted 30-40% if the right won, maybe as high as 50% if the left won. The interesting thing is that in the end we probably lost more than that in the Western church, despite avoiding any official argument. Perhaps in the long run a split in the 80's would have been better for both sides of the church, as each could have gotten on with preaching their brand of the gospel without wasting all their energy on sniping at and out-manoeuvering the other side. Now, as Bill points out, there are so many 'sides' - with many of them not sure why they believe what they believe - that chaos is the result.

Ervin Taylor 4 days ago  Reply

While waiting for Herb to comment or respond to my questions (assuming that he will respond), I’d like to respond to Nate’s comment about the “heart of faith matter.” If I understand correctly, his point is summarized in his question “why [do] we have to baptize our terminology in order to sanctify our experience.”

Perhaps I’m getting his point wrong, but I assume that the same point would also be made by asking “Why do we have to baptize our terminology with some theological system in order to validate the reality of our experience.” If that is what Nate is saying, I could not agree more.

I have never quite understood the interest in seeking detailed or doctrinal agreement except as a means of symbolizing who controls an ecclesiastical institution. In such an institution, control usually means controlling access to resources, i.e., money, collected in the name of the ecclesiastical system. Access to resources facilitates control. The ability to dictate theological orthodoxy functions as a symbol that some faction or group exercises control of the institution.

For example, from a political perspective, the efforts of Ted Wilson and his supporters on the right wing of the Adventist Church to change the wording of Fundamental Belief 6 to reflect a fundamentalist understanding of Genesis is primarily about power and control and only incidentally about theology. He and his supporters want to change it to show that they have the power to do so. Holy language will be used to provide a theological justification for their intended action. The theological language that will be used will be an effective cover for the exercise of political power and authority.
In this analysis, I’m not questioning the sincerity of Dr. Wilson or his supporters in that he and they actually believe in the theology that they think changing the wording of Fundamental Belief 6 will advance. But the actions they will take to get the changes they want will be the actions of ecclesiastical politicians exercising their power and authority. In the quality and motivation of their actions, it will not that much different from the motivations of several Popes who opposed Martin Luther. I’m told by a medieval scholar that their opposition was primarily an effort to maintain the effective operation of the ecclesiastical machinery which was obtaining funds from various German states for the construction of the new St. Peters in Rome. Luther was tampering with that operation and he had to be stopped. Some things about religious institutions never change.

Nathan Schilt
3 days ago  Reply

On this point, Erv, we find ourselves in heated agreement. You have very appropriately pointed out how institutional refusal to distinguish itself from its constituent diverse movements and faith communities leads it to conscript words in order to create theological constructs that fence in rather than empower God's Spirit.

Stephen Foster
3 days ago  Reply

Frankly, as I think about it (which is always dangerous and dubious), it doesn’t matter if our church operates similarly to the RCC—or not. Both of them are churches, or ecclesiastical institutions, after all. So what if Wilson acts to enforce, or reinforce, doctrine in a similar fashion to that of an archbishop or pope? It is not necessarily how the RCC internally disciplines a doctrinal belief that is problematic to Protestants as much as it is what doctrinal beliefs they are disciplining.

What matters—to me anyway—is WHAT doctrine is Wilson enforcing, or reinforcing. What the church believes and teaches is, to my way of “thinking,” all that matters.

Elaine Nelson
3 days ago  Reply

Money has always meant power, and he who controls the purse has the power. Similarly, with money comes the power to control the press and that becomes a double whammy. We are already seeing how it works.

Pat Travis
3 days ago  Reply

Stephen,

If I am understanding "your thinking" then in maintaining the "doctrinal status quo" the RCC and the SDA church led of Wilson, "all that is important" is enforcing or reinforcing what the church "traditionally believes."

Thus it was legitimate that the RCC could not be "reformed" by Luther or any SDA position
"reformed" by "scripture alone?"

N. Wilson squashed any opportunity of "reformation" in the SDA church...regardless of his motives, similar to the cardinals and pope of Luther's day. "Traditional understanding" is more important than "growing scriptural understanding."

That is what I hear your "thinking" saying.

regards,
pat

Stephen Foster

Pat,

I’m glad that you qualified your summary interpretation of what I am “thinking” by saying “that is what [you] hear [my] ‘thinking’ saying.”

If what we believed was blasphemous, then we’d certainly need reformation; and of course we’d need a Luther.

There is, in my view, a significant difference between what we “traditionally believe” as you put it, and what we have historically believed. Traditions are not doctrines, although the two are often confused (Matthew 15:9). To the extent that we have man-made traditions that are taught as doctrines, and have morphed into “commandments of men,” again we need a Reformation and a Luther.

Some of Wilson’s detractors however have more of a problem believing the Bible than they do with Wilson’s enforcement, or reinforcement, of historical doctrinal beliefs, in my opinion.

Herbert Douglass

Erv: Of course, I can only restate what I meant by "certitude" in the faith experience. For me, NT faith combines the conviction of objective truth and the certitude of subjective truth. For the peace and joy of faith, even amidst tough times, we can't or shouldn't separate these two sides of the window pane. I know what it is like when I have tried in the past, and I surely have helped people who have not realized that they did not hang on to both--when some part of life tumbled in.

When you ask what I meant by God's Plan, it is simply the Gen to Rev story that unfolds God's plan that is wrapped around our Lord Jesus. It is a plan that includes every man and woman regardless of nationality or birthplace. We are all his sons and daughters, either in "far" countries or back "home." In fact, in the few paragraphs of that submission, I was outlining what I think the Bible is saying God's Plan is. No doubt I can always be clearer so thanks for your question.

I suddenly remembered that Pat was "offended" by my reference to "revisionist historians." I merely was referring to those who rewrite Adventist history. One of the latest studies on how this has
affected Adventist thinking in the last 60 years or so, is Duffield's THE RETURN OF THE LATTER RAIN--a worthy read. Cheers, Herb

Elaine Nelson  
3 days ago  Reply

All history has been rewritten and revised. Each writer takes the liberty to ferret out what may not have been mentioned, or what was not previously covered.

If there is such a thing as "present truth" should it not be expected that truth will be progressive which implies eliminating former errors? Adventism, no less than any institution has gone down wrong paths and reversed itself and writers or tempted to either eliminate or magnify positions depending on their biases, which all writers have.

Pat Travis  
3 days ago  Reply

Stephen,

I was attempting to stay on topic...the topic of RBF and how Wilson thwarted the issue in 6/79. It was "rocking the boat in adventism" between those who believed in the Reformed doctrine of RBF "alone" and those who do not and yes some who were along for the ride.

A committee, the usual administration promise was to be formed, the results or actual appearance of being unknown to me. Traditions and "peace" were priority in the 70-80's.

regards,
pat

Pat Travis  
3 days ago  Reply

Herb,

My offense of "revisionist historians" has to do with the repainting of Luther's position on JBF "alone."

The details of which Glenn, Bill, and Myself have pointed out to you.

Bill is correct. It is the "liberal theologians" that seem to most discredit Luther's doctrine...generally with ecumenical and secular goals in mind...or in the case of others "to make righteous" in agreement with the RCC. Of course others prefer, from the humanist stand point, to appear to be morally righteous and adequate of themselves. All these scoff at simul justus et peccator.
regards,
pat

Glenn Hansen
3 days ago  Reply

http://www.stpaulsirvine.org/html/Justification.htm

Herbert Douglass
2 days ago  Reply

Pat: Perhaps, for the foreseeable future, you and I will continue what you describe as the battles of the 70s-80s. Your analysis of President Wilson's plea for "peace" was exactly right and it did not settle anything. The Review published amazing, one-sided editorials, for example, even when it should have been "silent" and "peaceful." My simple response is an appeal to look hard at *pistis.* When we agree on the definition, and not on the several interpretations of what *pisis (Faith)* means, we shall both walk on higher ground. You know that I value your friendship and honesty. Cheers,
Herb

Ervin Taylor
2 days ago  Reply

I do thank Herb for his clarification that “NT faith combines the conviction of objective truth and the certitude of subjective truth.” I guess it’s just me, but I get very nervous when someone combines “faith” with “objective truth.” It gets worse when someone talks about “subjective truth” without adding “for me.”

But here we are back to that word “faith.” It seems to me that when one talks about “NT faith” and one's own personal faith as automatically being the same thing, we get into dangerous waters.

May I suggest that dialogue on this topic would be helped if one might write “My faith combines the conviction of objective truth and the certitude of subjective truth.” Herb, would you be happy with that way of saying it?

Pat Travis
2 days ago  Reply

Herb,

As you, none of our discussion is personal. I find you a likeable person. The differences are over "the historic Protestant meaning of RBF/JBF "alone." SDA's claim to be in that tradition. If Mormons or RCC followers, agnostics, humanist etc. have a problem with the "historic position" that is fine with me. I only seek integrity from those who so loudly profess to follow the "reformers" light...including the justification so clearly taught by Luther."

As you recall the issues had been discussed at Palmdale and reported in the May 27,1976 R&H in
which it said "We agree when righteousness and faith are joined by "of or by" it refers to Justification." The debate was ongoing and as you say from the opposing view, Wilson accomplished nothing...but may I suggest upholding traditional confusion on the issue.

Bill provided an excellent appraisal of your view shared by others in the Article by Clark, WTS. You see to feign from replying to those historic thoughts.

Bill was also correct in that this ultimately deals with a daily walk more than "simply the head." However, sound theology is of the head that affects our assurance thus I can walk daily in full knowledge of acceptance in Christ's merits rather than my own...and until the end. That was a scriptural hope unknown to me until the sweet breeze of the reformers view was graciously granted to me by the HS. I find so many opposers to "that good news" and I suggest their is no other good news out there...but bondage to some inward accomplishment that will be acceptable to our Righteous and Holy God.

Regards Herb,

pat

Herbert Douglass

Erv: How could anyone say it any better and why should anyone be troubled with your statement? One could also say that my faith conviction is grounded in the Written Word (Bible) and my faith certitude is grounded in the Living Word (Holy Spirit). Or my mental conviction is grounded in the Bible and my experiential certitude is grounded in the Holy Spirit. But the conviction always must come first or we would have all kinds of irrational stuff that the Christian church has always had to contend with.

Pat: May only thought that would differ from your position is that when we say Reformers, you seem to limit that to Luther or Calvin. The Baptists surely have a stake in the Arminians and as well as the Wesleys. And I still think that there is plenty of evidence that Calvin and Luther did not agree on certain key issues. I for one hold Luther in a place special only to the very few in earth's history who have really stood at the pass without wavering. Cheers, Herb

Pat Travis

Herb,

Thanks for your reply. Calvin and Luther most certainly did differ on some key issues...BUT JBF/RBF "alone" was not one of them and that common held view on that "doctrine" is my total objective to point out...for on that "the 'church' stands or falls" in their opinion.

Have a blessed weekend,

pat
Herbert Douglass

Pat: I want to be unambiguous: although "faith alone" is not a biblical phrase, Luther could not have made his point any clearer when contending with the predominant church that had fogged the Christian world generally into believing that "their" concept of faith included the sacraments, all of them, whereby with all that doing they had forgiveness from God. Not so, said Luther, we have direct access to God without going through an earthly priesthood. The NT faith is different than the Catholic faith with its many "duties," etc. And that is why he said those immortal words, "the church stands or falls" on righteousness/justification by faith ALONE. I truly agree with you. Courage and peace, Herb

Bill Cork

Luther's understanding of "faith alone" did not mean faith apart from the sacraments. As he makes clear in the Large Catechism:

Our know-it-alls, the new spirits [the Reformed and Anabaptists] assert that faith alone saves and that works and external things contribute nothing to this end. We answer: It is true, nothing that is in us does it but faith, as we shall hear later on. But these leaders of the blind are unwilling to see that faith must have something to believe—something to which it may cling and upon which it may stand. Thus faith clings to the water and believes it to be Baptism in which there is sheer salvation and life . . . Now, these people are so foolish as to separate faith from the object to which faith is attached and bound on the ground that the object is something external. Yes, it must be external so that it can be perceived and grasped by the senses and thus brought into the heart, just as the entire Gospel is an external, oral proclamation. In short, whatever God effects in us he does through such external ordinances. No matter where he speaks—indeed, no matter for what purpose or by what means he speaks—there faith must look and to it faith must hold....To appreciate and use Baptism aright, we must draw strength and comfort from it when our sins or conscience oppress us, and we must retort, 'But I am baptized! And if I am baptized, I have the promise that I shall be saved and have eternal life, both in soul and body.'

Nor does it mean that the office of the ministry is unimportant. To the contrary! The Confessio Augustana follows the article about justificatin (Art. 4) with one about the office of the ministry (Art. 5):

That we may obtain this faith, the Ministry of Teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith; where and when it pleases God, in them that hear the Gospel, to wit, that God, not for our own merits, but for Christ's sake, justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ's sake. They condemn the Anabaptists and others who think that the Holy Ghost comes to men without the external Word, through their own preparations and works.

The issue was whether our works play a role in our justification. Do we bring something to the table? Do we ascend to God, or did he descend to us? Do we have to make satisfaction, or does his sacrifice make complete satisfaction? Do we have any merit, or do Christ's merits supply all? In short, can we believe the good news, or will we constantly doubt?
Thus the "chief article," as laid out in the Smalcald Articles:

*That Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, died for our sins, and was raised again for our justification, Rom. 4:25. 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. 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* 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. 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.

Bill Cork

By way of contrast, here's how Catholicism defines faith:

http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p1s1c3a1.htm

143 *By faith, man completely submits his intellect and his will to God.2 With his whole being man gives his assent to God the revealer. Sacred Scripture calls this human response to God, the author of revelation, "the obedience of faith".3*

144 *To obey (from the Latin ob-audire, to "hear or listen to") in faith is to submit freely to the word that has been heard, because its truth is guaranteed by God, who is Truth itself. Abraham is the model of such obedience offered us by Sacred Scripture. The Virgin Mary is its most perfect embodiment. ...*

150 *Faith is first of all a personal adherence of man to God. At the same time, and inseparably, it is a free assent to the whole truth that God has revealed. As personal adherence to God and assent to his truth, Christian faith differs from our faith in any human person. It is right and just to entrust oneself wholly to God and to believe absolutely what he says. It would be futile and false to place such faith in a creature.17 ...*

154 *Believing is possible only by grace and the interior helps of the Holy Spirit. But it is no less true that believing is an authentically human act. Trusting in God and cleaving to the truths he has revealed is contrary neither to human freedom nor to human reason. Even in human relations it is not contrary to our dignity to believe what other persons tell us about themselves and their intentions, or to trust their promises (for example, when a man and a woman marry) to share a communion of life with one another. If this is so, still less is it contrary to our dignity to "yield by faith the full submission of. . . intellect and will to God who reveals",26 and to share in an interior
communion with him.

155 In faith, the human intellect and will cooperate with divine grace: "Believing is an act of the intellect assenting to the divine truth by command of the will moved by God through grace."27
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 2 weeks 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 2 weeks 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
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, one 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

Preston Foster

Elaine, that last line should begin, "In my mind, one cannot possibly . . . "

My apologies.

Elaine Nelson

There have been church board meetings where a pastor stands up and says, "I prayed about this situation, and the Holy Spirit directed me to---"

Now, who is prepared to argue with such a premise? Even though it may make little sense in the situation? It's like refusing to accept the Holy Spirit's direction.

Question: when there is a group deciding a church matter, isn't this abuse of the Holy Spirit to claim that only one person has the Holy Spirit on his side?

laffal

Elaine,

I too share your concern in the stated example. First of all there is no such thing, as a rule, that one person has the Holy Spirit, and others don't. Personally, red flags start to fly when folks will evoke the Holy Spirit as being the source of "said" inspiration on any plan / idea.

In setting of a board, it's the right of each member to question any proposal, no matter how many
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.

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Elaine Nelson

laffal,

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

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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.

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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.

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Elaine Nelson

Some take longer in their evolving--notably those in the hinterlands.

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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

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

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

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

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 millenia 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

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

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

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

1 week ago

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 anything 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
1 week 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
1 week 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 excorcism! If I heard voices I would immediately seek psychiatric help.

Preston Foster
1 week 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
1 week 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

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. 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

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

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

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.

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.

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.

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

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William Noel

1 week ago

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.

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Trevor Hammond

1 week ago

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

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William Noel

2 days ago

Trevor,

So, what are you doing with the gift of the Holy Spirit? How are you allowing God to work, both IN you and THROUGH you?

Many times people are fearful of doing the things God wants them to do because they feel unworthy, or that it is not possible for God to show His love or demonstrate His power through a person who still battles sin. If that's not believing a lie, I haven't met one! The amazing thing is that God is willing and able to work through us and that working both
changes and strengthens us in our battle with sin. In time we quit focusing on the battle and start focusing on the pleasure that comes with watching what God does through us in spite of our imperfections.

I lead a ministry team at my church called the Angel Team. We focus on doing home repairs and other things that improve lives by improving how people live. This evening I'm savoring the blessing of seeing an elderly woman moving from a living situation of incredible filth in a house that was becoming too dangerous to live in, to a clean apartment in an assisted-living community for seniors. We've done a lot of different tasks in a wide variety of situations, but this one has to be the most dramatic of all so far. It happened because I allowed the Holy Spirit to work through me.

My prayer is that you will soon be enjoying similar blessings.

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**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!

Preston Foster

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.

Elaine Nelson

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."

Douglas Cooper

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.

Preston Foster

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

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.
Praise God. Thanks for the encouragement, Toby!
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 whiny 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

---

Ron Corson
1 week agoReply

"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
1 week agoReply

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. "

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.
### Adam Hendron 1 week ago

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? Christs! His Spirit testified through the human agency.

### Elaine Nelson 1 week ago

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?

### Adam Hendron 1 week ago

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?

### Elaine Nelson 1 week ago

Too many eggwhites is bad for the system.

### Patrick Jack 1 week ago

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 your 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
34:26). These last days also present a questionable context, in the way dairy is produced. Jesus sent His messenger to attest of such.

Elaine Nelson
1 week ago Reply

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
1 week ago Reply

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
1 week ago Reply

"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 1 week 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 1 week 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 1 week 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 1 week 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 1 week ago Reply
Some have made a god of diet.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adam Hendron</th>
<th>1 week ago</th>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;...whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things&quot; Ph'p 3:19.</td>
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<th>Doctorf Doctorf1</th>
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<td>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.</td>
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<th>Adam Hendron</th>
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<td>I'll go with the testimony of Jesus, Doctor. &quot;Cheese should never be introduced into the stomach&quot; CD 368. How's that for moderation?</td>
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<th>William Noel</th>
<th>1 week ago</th>
<th>Reply</th>
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| 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. |

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<th>Adam Hendron</th>
<th>1 week ago</th>
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| 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, do you like the writings of Ellen White? |

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<th>William Noel</th>
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| 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 never base any doctrine or teaching on her writings because we should be using the Bible and the Bible only as our supreme authority.

Ymous

1 week ago

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

1 week ago

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

1 week ago

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

1 week ago

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.

Adam Hendron  

1. Jesus said, "The Father is GREATER than I." Does this make the "red letters" less authoritative than the rest of the Bible?

2. Is it the Testimony of Jesus, or isn't it? Are you charging God with error for sending the gift of prophecy? You misquoted His messenger. Here is the Estate's response: **A careful look at the whole letter (and her total writings on child guidance) suggests strongly that when Ellen White wrote that "wicked children God does not love," she meant that ultimately children who continue to be "wicked" will not be taken to heaven. (The Bible contains far mor "scandalous" statements than this.)**

3. The Bible would appear to be more "preoccupied with exterior behavior" than the writings of Ellen White.

4. Are you disturbed because a conservative doesn't behave as you would like; because someone outside your camp is not in your camp?!? The Scriptures I have cited suffice. The
The rest is there because some do not see that.

Elaine Nelson
1 week ago Reply

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
1 week ago Reply

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

Ella M Rydzewski
1 week ago Reply

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
1 week ago Reply

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 unfit the user for communion with God, unfit 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 certianly now, as even many nonAdventists 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

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

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

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 the one to tell us that, as the 28 Fundamentals seem to suggest, though she does.

Adam Hendron
Reply 1 week ago

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 occasionally. 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
Reply 1 week ago

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 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  
1 week ago  Reply

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  
1 week ago  Reply

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  
1 week ago  Reply

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  
1 week ago  Reply

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 1 week ago Reply

Check out those egregious videos showing extreme views of the vegan industry.

John Andrews 1 week ago Reply

"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 suddently 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)

Adam Hendron 1 week ago Reply

...a little more grease

Connie Severin 1 week ago Reply

Adam, the software at present is refusing to let me reply directly to your post beneath mine. Regarding the "alarming implications" regarding our children, they turned out very well. Both are active church members, our son holding several postions from choir director every week to deacon to sound board manager, pianist, and organist on a rotating basis. They are very healthy
and to my knowledge are not the least interested in "fornication" despite active social lives. They attended Christian-sponsored schools, not SDA other than 2 rather unfortunate years, and State Universities. And yes, they occasionally eat meat. Despite this horrible lapse by us, their parents, they have stayed faithful.

The reactions to this article indicate the extent that our appetites control our actions.

Little David!

Interesting article. Vegans, with B-12 supplementation, can have a healthful diet where fruits and vegetables are available. While I know few professed vegans personally the ones I do know say little 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.

...maybe hiding like Guideon. No wonder, seeing these comments.

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

Will you show me where the prophet changed her position on unclean meats?

Preston Foster

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

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

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

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 "everthing that moves" knowing that "everthing" 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

http://www.atoday.org/article.php?id=802&action=print
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 1 week 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 1 week 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 1 week ago Reply

You speak of Jesus as though He were dead and gone.

Trevor Hammond 1 week ago Reply

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 1 week ago Reply

Don't confuse us with the big picture, brother. Let's keep it narrow and "in house." ;)

Adventist Today : Annoying Vegans
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 the [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

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

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, in 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
1 week ago

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
1 week 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
1 week 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**

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

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 alloted from the sacrificial service.

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**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 1 week ago  Reply

Forks Over Knives makes a great case for the vegan diet.  http://forksoverknives.com/

Pat Travis 1 week ago  Reply

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 week 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 1 week 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 week ago  Reply

You must be on a level with God, to know the hearts of men.
Rom 2:1
Timo Onjukka

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.
Okay, now whose going to take a pot-shot at this guy? (God bless you, Sir.)

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.

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?

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 week ago  
Do you take pride in annoying vegans?

austudent 1 week ago  
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 each 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 1 week ago  
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 1 week ago  
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 1 week ago  
Amen! (on both counts)

Elaine Nelson 1 week ago  
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 1 week ago Reply

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 6 days ago Reply

...God bless you too, Ma'am.

Elaine Nelson 1 week ago Reply

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 week 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 week 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 week 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

"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

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
1 week ago

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

Preston Foster
1 week ago

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
6 days ago

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. It is great not to eat cheese. But it is not great grab a sentence from Ellen White's writings out of context to thump over the head those Adventists who are cheesier than thou.

Ervin Taylor
1 week ago

Adventist Today : Annoying Vegans

http://www.atoday.org/article.php?id=802&action=print
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.

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)

"Unclean! Unclean!"

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.

Jack Hoehn,

Thank you for illuminating that statement about cheese.

Illumination vs Inspiration. Explain it away...
Timo Onjukka

More fun than fondue, this thing called cheese!
Covering a multitude of gastronomicsins 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

...cries "Foul!"

Bill Cork

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

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.
"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.
Adam Hendron

I did read this story, at school. Of course, the rebellion we are addressing now has little to do with this, for such situations hardly exist any more. (How's that, for "time and place"?)

Bill Cork

"Rebellion"? Eating cheese? Understanding when she wrote it and why? The issue here is simply this--you can't take statements from Ellen White out of context, treat each dictum as verbally inspired, and make it a test of faith in every place. That is completely contrary to everything she ever wrote herself. It is contrary to everything Jesus taught and practiced.

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.

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 to review satire take a look. http://cafesda.blogspot.com/2010/07/time-to-take-back-adventist-church.html

Elaine Nelson

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.

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 a 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 6 days ago  Reply

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 6 days ago  Reply

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 6 days ago  Reply

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 6 days ago  Reply

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  6 days ago  Reply

Really? What biography of Kellogg did "Josh Clark" write?

Connie Severin  6 days ago  Reply

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  6 days ago  Reply

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  6 days ago  Reply

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 definately 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

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 grosly out of context. My grandmother believes that even Ellen White never gave up cheese and eggs. Her children, the W.C. Whites at least, definietly 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

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
Lukenemia, 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, shame 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, tolernt 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 anf 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, adicts,
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 dieing world than argue about
stupid and meaningless minutiae designed only to "make the peculiar church loook better in her
"Thank you 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"

“Thank you 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”

“Thank you 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”

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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.

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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 forget, 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...

Where are you? Get off the cheese and get on your knees.
People just outside your door, are hungry;
needing 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

Trevor Hammond

Oops - spelling mistake:
It should be - Mr Hendron

Preston Foster

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
6 days ago

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
6 days ago

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...."

Elaine Nelson
5 days ago

I wish to second Heidi's comment:

"Ellen White is being quoted as Jesus, this is heresy, and a serious apology and retraction needs to be made."

Ervin Taylor
5 days ago

I too would like to third Heidi's comment:
"Ellen White is being quoted as Jesus, this is heresy, and a serious apology and retraction needs to be made."

I agree but I'm afraid that the individual(s) who make these kind of statements are in no mood to retract them. Let's apologize for them.

Elaine Nelson
5 days ago

No where but AToday would such comments "Ellen White quoted as Jesus" be acceptable in any official SDA publication. I will stand corrected when there is proof otherwise.

Trevor Hammond
5 days ago

Mrs Nelson says: "No where but AToday would such comments "Ellen White quoted as Jesus" be acceptable in any official SDA publication."

-----

Question is: "Is AToday really an Adventist publication?" "An official one at that?" Here we go comparing apples with oranges...

Trevor Hammond
5 days ago

Surprising how some of the anti-Ellen White ‘heavies’ who regularly denigrate, mock and insult her, together with the inspired writings of her pen, should be found at pole position to second and third the concerns expressed by her descendant.

I am sure Mr Hendron is quite able to explain his usage of language in the queried statement; however, logically, his statement is correct and cannot be heresy, if one is a believer that it was Jesus who inspired her writings through the working of the Holy Spirit. In other word was it not Jesus speaking through her writings via the Holy Spirit? Is not the testimony of Jesus Christ the Spirit of Prophecy which Ellen White received as the Gift of Prophecy? After all, it is clear that Ellen White was indeed a Messenger of the Lord. (Just my humble opinion)...

Trevor Hammond
5 days ago

Please keep in mind too that the health REFORM message was not only for those in her time but also for those in the future when diseases from animals will bring sickness on humans. Heard of Mad Cows disease, Bird Flu, Swine Flu, Tape Worm infection? Some through contact and some through eating. I have even seen articles on how SIV in monkeys could have passed on to humans when eating these animals thereby infecting them with HIV. So the messages on health reform weren't only for our pioneers and they equally should admonish us. Can I get an Amen out there? ; )
Nic Samojluk

Reply 5 days ago

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.”

*********

Are you suggesting that all the animals they kept were used exclusively for their sacrificial system?

LaffAL

Reply 4 days ago

Nic,

That's about the size of it. That's what the Bible says. Unless you can find any other evidence.

Ervin Taylor

Reply 3 days ago

I would appreciate it if Mr. Hammond would please point out a statement on the AT web site which supports his assertion that:” some of the anti-Ellen White ‘heavies’... regularly denigrate, mock and insult her [Ellen White] “

LaffAL

Reply 3 days ago

Say Erv,

I believe Mr. T has been biting off more then he can chew. There's no way anybody can defend the SDA church, EGW, and all things Adventist, even if he lived as long as Methusalah. I understand what he's trying to do, but he seems to continue to tie himself in his own knots tighter, and tighter.

Elaine Nelson

Reply 3 days ago

Trevor, you have misunderstood AToday. It has never been an SDA publication, but has always been a private, independent venue for allowing wide-range Adventist discussions; something that NO
official SDA publication today allows. You have been allowed the privilege of participating here, something that no SDA publication allows and heavily censors any "letters to the editor."

The old saying: "Don't bite the hand that is feeding you" is most appropriate. To complain of the very site that allows one and all to post here is the same thing.

Trevor Hammond

It is the hand of God that feeds us Sister: NOT the publication!  

[**Matt 6:26**] Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

T

Elaine Nelson

Mr. T. your statements sound a mite unstable, and often with no relevance to the subject under discussion or even a recent comment.

Perhaps a clearly explanation if "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen." If you are unhappy with AToday and the comments posted here, no one is forcing you to read or comment.

Trevor Hammond

Mrs Nelson
Ma'am, in your last statement you say "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen" together with a few lousy remarks in the lines above that - which I have been tempted to respond to: however, I have opted for 'discretion is the better part of valor' - for now.

T

Posting as

Subscribe to comments

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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... 

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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

---

Vernon P. Wagner 1 week ago Reply

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 patricular 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?
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
2 weeks ago Reply

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
2 weeks ago Reply

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**  
2 weeks ago  

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

---

**Markham**  
2 weeks ago  

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**  
2 weeks ago  

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**  
2 weeks ago  

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

---

**Elaine Nelson**  
2 weeks ago  

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
2 weeks 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
2 weeks 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??
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

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

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

??

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 your trying to prove?"

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

Pauli

Trevor Hammond

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

T

Elaine Nelson

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?
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.

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.

That's been my pattern for many yeas.

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.

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.
Elaine Nelson  

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

AULeporter

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
Ranald McLeish

Vernon P Wagner has hit the nail on the head when he said "If the three faculty members were dismissed without legal process, they deserve recourse".

As the theological issue and the dismissal issue are entirely different issues, they need to be treated separately.

As the church manual do not specifically grant the right of appeal, unless a member has been disfellowshipped, it appears these men may have no other option.

Elaine Nelson

No religious institution is above the law. This is why the suit has traction.

Darrell Corbel

The issue isn't the scientists' view on creation (though some feel this is really the underlying issue with their dismissal), the issue is them being pressured to resign. It is easy for many to say, 'They were given the choice, they chose to resign'. Anybody who has worked for the church where business and religion mix know it is not that cut and dried. Many of us have seen the abuse of power and the 'island unto itself' mentality where we think we can do what we want without any legal recourse. This view plagues many of our churches and institutions.

If the profs were coerced in any way, their dismissal is not valid. Especially if they were threatened to have their 'sins' made public. The decision to change your mind and claim 'unfair' should not be questioned when the choice to resign has occurred under such conditions. Such tactics should be beyond God's church. The church needs to realize that it is not it's own church/state combined entity with no responsibilities, to allow beliefs to trump one's legal rights. There are rules and laws that need to be followed. If we want to act like the midieval Catholic Church in our tactics, we should have stayed in the organization instead of protesting against it.

Kevin Riley

Many of these problems could be avoided if the church only followed its own policies and rules. We often change rules and policies to try to protect the church, but if they are not followed, then, no matter how good they are, they are no protection.