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March by Adventist Young People in New York City Attracts Major Media Attention


April 1, 2013

Home News March

March by Adventist Young People in New York City Attracts Major Media Attention

Submitted: Mar 26, 2013

By Adventist Today News Team

More than 3,000 teens and young adults joined the march across the Brooklyn Bridge organized by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in New York City on Saturday afternoon (March 23). Crews from the ABC Television network, news Channel 12 on the New York cable television system, and the Telemundo national Spanish-language television network were present to cover the event, as well as reporters from three or four newspapers, Pastor Rohann Wellington, communication director for the denomination’s Greater New York Conference, told Adventist Today.

The demonstration was not about legislation, Wellington stated, although Congresswoman Yvette Clarke, member of the United States House of Representatives from New York’s 9th District, spoke at the event. She congratulated the Adventist Church for its anti-violence stance and its ministries of compassion, expressing the hope that this will become the norm for young people in New York, but she did not speak about gun control.

The march addressed “gun violence, not gun control,” said Wellington. As a pastor he has
“buried a lot of youngsters who have died from gun violence,” Wellington stated. He believes that the Church can make a difference simply by teaching God’s commandment, “Thou shalt not kill.”

“As Christians our lives are to be full of acts of compassion, not active violence. We want to show that you can live a better life. We often highlight when they do wrong, but this highlights the good they can do in their world.” Wellington pointed out the 35 community service projects that youth brought together by the Adventist Church completed over the weekend.

“This kind of demonstration is designed to influence young people in the community to see that they have a non-violent option; that they don’t have to join a gang or carry a gun or engage in violence,” a veteran youth worker told Adventist Today. “An inter-faith coalition of churches in Philadelphia has used the same approach for several years with some success among civic leaders in the inner city, although it is difficult to measure the impact of this kind of thing.”
Worship Renewal Continues in the Adventist Church at 10th Annual Event

Submitted: Mar 27, 2013

By Adventist Today News Team

The tenth yearly Adventist Worship and Music Conference was held March 7–9 at Andrews University (AU) and a reporter from Adventist Today observed and participated. Speakers included Dr. Pedrito Maynard-Reid, assistant to the president at Walla Walla University; Dr. Hyveth Williams, homiletics professor at the AU seminary; and Dr. Sigve Tonstad, theologian and medical school professor at Loma Linda University. Nicholas Zork, worship leader, composer, recording artist, and songwriter, coordinated the conference. Tanya Riches, well-known Australian worship leader, singer, and songwriter, helped lead worship at the event, as did the a cappella singing group Committed, season two champions of NBC television’s hit show, The Sing Off.

Twenty workshops on wide-ranging topics were included, though many were on some aspect of worship music. These included several about inclusiveness and diversity, including different styles, different languages, and “giving voice to the voiceless” by drawing in those who have been marginalized in the wider society and in our churches as well. Two of the workshops were in Spanish. One was about audio technology. Organ and choir music was included. And some were meant to encourage worship experiences that were biblically grounded and led to true, daily revival, not just “good feelings” while at church.
The Center for Youth Evangelism sponsored the event. Most general sessions and workshops were held in Seminary Hall, with some in the Howard Performing Arts Center, both on the Andrews campus. A total of 167 people participated, including graduate students, pastors and worship leaders from churches across North America and overseas. The make-up of the attendees was quite diverse. There seemed to be approximately an even number of men and women, no great majority of any one ethnicity, and conversations could be heard in several languages. The age of the group tended to be heavy at both ends—mostly young, with some older, perhaps retirees, and not as many in between.

Enthusiasm visibly ran high during the conference. The workshops generated animated and friendly discussion, and between sessions, attendees carried on earnest conversations about the highs and lows of the places where they serve, often as youth workers or worship leaders.

The evening sessions, besides presenting teaching about worship, presented opportunities to worship. Thursday evening, the first day of the conference, worship was led by a fascinating combination of organ, a praise team with guitarist, and a string quartet. The music was a combination of hymns and more contemporary praise music, and the musicians had practiced bridges that segued from one song to the next. The words were on song sheets handed out in the pews. Most people present raised hands, clapped, shouted “amen” and “alleluia,” and otherwise participated.

Friday night was the highlight of the conference for many. It was announced as a “Worship Concert: An evening of worship and music with the a cappella group Committed, Andrews University Singers, conducted by Stephen Zork; Deliverance; Tanya Riches; and other Conference presenters,” and was held at the Howard Performing Arts Center. The event required tickets, which were free, so that the room would not exceed capacity. Around 840 people packed the hall and joined in a deeply moving and emotionally charged experience. One young man was overheard to say afterward, “That was no concert—that was a worship experience!” A young woman echoed the thoughts of many when she said, “I was blown away!” One of the most emotional portions of the service was a powerfully rendered musical drama of Jesus’ death and resurrection, from the point of view of angels. This was written by local talent and performed by the Deliverance Massed Choir.

The event was, naturally, an example of what a large facility with high-tech equipment, experienced leaders, talented musicians, and practice, can offer. However, the depth of emotional response to God and His grace can be emulated by any smaller church or group.
Adventist Churches with Easter Events Increasing, Recognized by Official Media

Submitted: Mar 25, 2013

By Adventist Today News Team

A year ago Adventist Today reported the widespread special events in Seventh-day Adventist churches across North America celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ at the traditional Easter time observed in most Christian denominations. Within the living memory of many middle-aged and older Adventists this was not the practice, but it has evidently become common enough that this year the official Email newsletter of the North American Division—NAD NewsPoints—has published a listing of 40 such events in churches large and small, with reports from seven of the nine union conferences in the United States and Canada.

For local congregations that have not planned something recognizing this key date in the traditional Christian year, at least two of the denomination’s media ministries will provide programming that could be projected on a large screen. “The Seven Last Words of Christ” will be live-streamed from the Oakwood University Church on Friday evening (March 29), starting at 7 p.m. Central Time (8 p.m. Eastern, 6 p.m. Mountain and 5 p.m. Pacific). Seven preachers will each take one of the seven phrases that Jesus spoke from the cross as he died with music between the homilies by the university’s four choirs, including the Aeolians, winners of the global choral Olympics. Produced by the Breath of Life television ministry,
the event will be live-streamed at www.oucsda.org and more information is available at www.breathoflife.tv.

Hope Television, the denomination’s official global cable channel, will broadcast “He Is Risen,” a 45-minute special with Pastor Dan Jackson, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America, Connie Vandeman Jeffery from the Adventist Media Center, and the Family Reunion music group. It will be rebroadcast several times throughout the coming weekend. Local times can be found at www.hopetv.org and it will be live-streamed at that same web address.

The listing of events includes passion plays, Tenebrae services, Passover Seders, concerts and preaching services in churches from Baltimore, Maryland, to Alhambra, California. Included are Hispanic, historically African American and suburban and small-town white churches. The White Memorial Seventh-day Adventist Church in Los Angeles, built in memory of denominational cofounder Ellen G. White is among the listings.

“Adventists in many places, but especially in North America, Europe and Australia, are unashamedly identifying themselves as Christians,” a retired theologian told Adventist Today. “That is a good thing. I can remember a time when Protestant friends asked me if Adventists considered themselves Christian. It is a maturing of our faith to be able to joyfully express affirmation for the resurrection and join in that fundamental idea with all other Christians.”

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Organization and Religion: The Difference 150 Years Makes

Submitted: Mar 28, 2013

By Monte Sahlin

“Organization” was a big issue in 1863 when the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists was started and 150 years later it is still a major issue in different ways, but fundamentally the same. Because of the way they had been treated by their various denominations and local congregations when they became part of the Adventist movement through the efforts of William Miller and his allies, early Adventists saw organized religion as a kind of idolatry or apostasy from authentic Christian faith.

Throughout its history, the Adventist Church has been slow to develop rigid organizational rules. The Church Manual was not created until the 1930s and it was originally considered to be largely advisory, not a type of canon law. The official statement of Fundamental Beliefs was not adopted until 1980 and is still in a state of flux, much to the consternation of those who want to see it as a pristine statement of eternal truth.

Today the Adventist movement is increasingly affected by the major religious trend in America; the growing numbers among the population who prefer no religion, although they are not atheists and have a definite interest in spiritual questions. One in five American adults indicated this attitude in the 2012 General Social Survey (GSS), up from about one in 20 when the question was first asked by the GSS in 1972. Those with this view are growing
“at a nearly constant rate of 0.6 percentage points per year,” report three noted sociologists of religion in a report published two weeks ago (March 7) by the Institute for the Study of Societal Issues at the University of California.

These data make it possible to project that by 2063, the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Adventist denomination, the majority of Americans will prefer no religion. In fact, a third of young adults have already adopted this position, and it is today the majority view of native-born, white young adults on the Pacific coast and in the Northeast. By the end of the current decade in 2020, the majority of white Americans will likely have moved to this view.

It is important to understand what is meant by “religion.” It is not the same thing as faith or values or ideology. Six out of seven of those who say they prefer no religion also say that they believe in God. There has been little change in this reality over the decades. In fact, historians generally believe that, although survey research had not yet been invented, more Americans were atheists or agnostics in the 19th century than today.

“Religion” is a social construct. It is sometimes more specifically labeled “organized religion,” and this is what large numbers of people have difficulty with. Growing numbers believe that faith is a private matter and reject the social structure that religion places around it.

In some ways this is a uniquely North American issue. The same trend toward private faith is well developed in Europe, but in a different context. Because Europe comes out of a tradition of state religions, faith has taken on the primary form of vast numbers who are nominally part of the established church but do not participate. In many ways Europe is both more secular and more religious than North America. Australia and New Zealand, on the other hand, are more like the most secular regions of North America, or perhaps a picture of the soon-to-arrive future in North America.

Except for a number of the former Soviet nations and very secular Japan—where ideologies much like a state church crashed and burned—the rest of the world is much more religious than North America. Across Africa, Asia and Latin America religious ferment is booming because there is widespread interest in religion. And the Adventist Church is increasingly defined by this reality as its membership grows rapidly in this context, already containing the overwhelming majority of Adventists.

Half of native-born Seventh-day Adventists in North America are age 60 or older. As the
Baby Boomers among the clergy retire, it will soon become true that the majority of the pastors in North America are immigrants or ethnic minorities. The trend toward “no religion” among North Americans is already depleting the Adventist Church, causing significant enrollment declines in Adventist schools. Surveys conducted by the Institute of Church Ministry at Andrews University show that volunteer ministries in local churches are also in significant decline.

How will Adventist faith and values function in a context where “no religion” becomes the norm? Is our faith dependent on organization for its existence? Or, will new networks of faithful believers emerge as a kind of informal, unorganized expression of what it means to be Adventist? Dr. Samir Selmanovic, an ordained Adventist minister and community activist in New York City, advocates responding to this trend with “disorganized religion.” He is part of an independent congregation, not formally affiliated with the denomination, but without any theological differences nor schismatic purpose. In fact, there are more than 70 local churches in the NYC metro area not affiliated with the denomination and probably about 500 across North America.

Almost all major metropolitan areas in North America now have at least one Adventist group that is a functioning, healthy fellowship of believers, but post-denominational in organization or a local church affiliated with a conference, but largely disengaged from that relationship. These are often the congregations that attract the significant numbers of the next generation. They have no mechanism for seeking publicity and often would rather be unknown than get into conflict with denominational representatives. They are most likely the future face of Adventist faith in North America, alongside vigorous immigrant churches and institutional communities like Collegedale, Tennessee; Berrien Springs, Michigan; and Loma Linda, California; where an attitude somewhat akin to the relationship Europeans have with the state church exists at a local level.

As these trends grow will “organization” become a testing truth for Adventists? There is already a kind of shunning of independent structures. The current discussions about ordination and whether or not there is a need to tighten up the statement on creation in the Fundamental Beliefs document may result in the global south clamping down on the North American need for more latitude. Will that escalate to the point where a proposal will be put forward to make belief in rigid structure a necessary part of being officially Adventist?

If such a proposal becomes a center of debate how will it be greeted by a generation of young adults already heavily influenced by the “no religion” attitude? How would we avoid
substituting “organization” for the basic Bible truths that launched our movement; the Second Advent, the Sabbath, the State of the Dead, etc.? In other words, how would we seek to avoid what happened to the church of Paul and Peter and John in the second, third and fourth centuries? I do not believe that anyone intends to get to that point, but there is a slippery slope already under our feet.
One of my Seminary classes dealt with the theology of a large Christian denomination. We were regularly assigned to read chapters in a book by a writer of that denomination. Our professor would then spend a day or two explaining one of that denomination’s teachings (which we’d just read about) in a way that made it sound quite logical and reasonable. Then he’d turn around and show why we disagreed with them on that point. But he told us that the earlier part of some of his presentations would occasionally lead a student to worry, “Are they right on this point?” I was intrigued as I saw doctrines that I had always understood to be unbiblical presented in a way that made them seem logical. I could actually understand how or why someone might believe such a teaching. Contrast my teacher’s presentations with those of “progressive” or right-wing radio stations. If there’s good about the other side, don’t expect to hear it from those stations. They “take no prisoners.” The logic, the motives, and the integrity of people with a differing point of view are all skewered mercilessly. Being gracious to the other side is out-of-bounds. Karen Armstrong describes the situation for many: “All too often people impose their own experience and beliefs on acquaintances and events, making hurtful, inaccurate, and dismissive snap judgments, not only about individuals but about whole cultures. It often becomes clear, when questioned more closely, that their actual knowledge of the topic under discussion could comfortably be contained on a small postcard” (Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life, page 117).

Are you more like my professor or a political radio station? How easy is it for you to disagree without being disagreeable? To hold your convictions firmly, but respect the
honesty and intelligence of those who hold different convictions? Do you view being willing to allow other beliefs and different views as too compromising and dangerous?

In Blind Spots: Why Smart People Do Dumb Things, Madeleine Van Hecke relates that she assigns students to write a “poles-apart” paper. For the paper they are “to investigate a way of life, an attitude, or a set of beliefs that is poles apart from their own.” So, “a public school teacher discussed home schooling, a born-again Christian explored Scientology, . . . [and] a staunch supporter of President George W. Bush’s decision to wage war on Iraq considered the opposing views of Quakers” (page 123).

The first time Van Hecke assigned the paper, she was shocked at the resistance of the students. She knew that the assignment was different from the usual evaluations or critiques: “(t)he primary goal of learning about the opposite pole was not to evaluate it in an analytical way, but to try to grasp how it was possible to see the world so differently; . . . the aim of the paper was not to create a debate that one or the other side could ostensibly win, but to search for ways to understand how someone very different from oneself views the world” (pages 123,124).

Apparently the students were recognizing risk in warming up to “the other side” in any way. “If we actually succeed in understanding how someone else could believe, think, live in ways that are deplorable or offensive to us, what will that do to the values that led us to pass judgment on these opposite poles in the first place? If their perspective actually makes us realize that we have been somewhat off in how we have seen the world, what else will that realization call into question?” The students “had the intuition that the more clearly they were able to grasp the pole apart, the more difficult it might be for them to judge that perspective as wrong” (page 124).

As Adventists, many of us understand that our set of beliefs is closer to reality and ideal than the set of any other religion or denomination. As Adventist Today readers, many of us feel that our perspective is more informed or less naïve or “infected” or compromised or (you fill in the blank). So why risk learning about others’ error-filled or dangerous views? I’ve heard the situation compared to the work of a Secret Service agent whose job is to detect counterfeit currency. The agent does not need to study the counterfeit; learning the genuine currency will show up the counterfeit automatically. So if we know what’s right, we don’t need to study what’s wrong. Why take the risk? Why lose the ability to call sin by its right name?
In *Faith in: How an Atheist Found Common Ground with the Religious*, Chris Stedman relates his experience in becoming an atheist and eagerly collecting all the bad stories about religion that he could find. He sought out any opportunity to point to religion and say, "See! Look how bad it is." When you’re looking for garbage, you’ll find it. It became easy to notice the flaws and miss the merits" (page 84). But as he worked side-by-side with those not-so-smart religious people in various projects he couldn’t help but realize their good side and that their religious motivations were motivating them to be helpful to humanity.

Ellen White’s quote gets dragged out to defend all kinds of odd (or unique) views, but probably most of us have read or heard many times that “[w]e have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. . . Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed” (Testimonies to Ministers, page 30). But sometimes we act as if we’re going to disprove that statement, or at least not have it apply to us in the future. Now that we know so much, why waste time on the inferior beliefs of others?

I submit that it’s worth it to be willing to listen to differing viewpoints. Whether from reading or from associating with others, we can gain in more ways than one. As Stedman discovered, people whose beliefs were quite different from his atheism were more inclined to listen to him when they found that he was willing to show an interest in them. He sheepishly relates the story of attending a birthday party for Alex, his cousin, who ran up to him and asked if the birthday ice cream was good? “Without pausing, I said matter-of-factly: ‘It isn’t ice cream, Alex. It is sherbet.’ . . . “In my youth, being ‘right’ held ultimacy. I valued precision and accuracy, and was sure to correct anyone I felt was ‘wrong.’ I thought I was doing people a favor by correcting them. Now, I strive to lead with listening instead of lecturing” (page 180).

Smugly explaining that we know nothing about someone else’s viewpoint and making it plain that we have no interest in learning about it closes doors in more ways than one. Like Alex, we may discover that we’ll end up getting our ideas across better as we listen to others. We may communicate our thoughts better because we understand more about our audience. They may be poles-apart from us, and maybe there’s no way we’ll ever see things the way they do. But if we show them the respect of listening to them as human beings, we may be surprised at what we learn.
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Pray!

Submitted: Mar 27, 2013

By Debonnaire Kovacs

This week in our “monastery of the heart,” we are concentrating on prayer. The chapter abounds in eternal and unarguable truths:

Benedictine spirituality is rooted in the timelessness of scripture.
It is the story of God’s way with the world.

And... 

Benedictine prayer, the heartbeat of Benedictine spirituality, is always about the presence of God in time—this time, our time, my time.

And... 

Prayer... heals the wounds of the day and reminds us who we want to be at the deepest, truest part of us.

Honestly, it’s such a beautiful and enriching chapter, such an encouragement to rededicate
myself to deep and constant prayer, that it’s hard to choose quotes to share. Get the book! Read it! Some parts you’ll read over and over. But in the end, it’s not reading this or any book that matters.

Pray.
Pray hard.
Pray unceasingly.
Pray your praise and thanks.
Pray your laments and cries of sorrow.
Pray your doubts. Who else can you ask but God’s own self??
Pray.

What counts, says Chittister, “is not the sum of prayers we pray. . . It is the way our prayer life changes our own hearts and lives—the way it makes us more centered in God, the way it makes us more aware of our own limitations—that determines its quality.”

Amen!

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As I finish these 13 comments on the ORIGINS Sabbath School Lessons, there is a Young Earth Chronology “elephant in the room” that author Dr. James Gibson and his editor Clifford Goldstein have left relatively unexplored during these past 13 Sabbaths, and that is the key YEC concept of a single, massive, recent, worldwide Noah’s Flood.

Accounting for the huge number of fossils found across the world, including massive dinosaurs only 2,000 years from a perfect creation, requires of Young Earth Creationists a very large flood, very recently in history.

Young Earth Chronology doesn’t give much time to bury deep in the earth the worldwide coal formations from plant bogs, or the crude oil from massive amounts of dying diatoms and desmids—zooplankton that fuel our cars and trucks and many of our electric conveniences. Modern life is not possible without the fossil fuels so kindly prepared for us by past fossilization events.

I take it that avoiding of the flood issues in these lessons suggests that silence may be golden on a difficult-to-support aspect of YEC theory?GC Theologian Decides the Flood was Global

But it appears that former General Conference official theologian, Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, unlike our more cautious scientists, doesn’t seem very concerned about the difficulties
suggested that the entire globe was uniformly covered by 22 feet of water above the tallest mountains. Elder Rodríguez recently tackled the flood with his theological points of view for the worldwide SDA audience of a recent Adventist World magazine. (1.)

Our world church membership is asked by our theologian to accept a 19th-century version of Noah’s Flood, instead of a more realistic and plausible version. There is a lot of evidence supporting the likelihood of a real Noah and a real flood event. Noah’s Flood is known to many ancient cultures, which all came through the Middle East during the migration of modern humans across this planet during the last 60,000 years. (5.)

DNA Supports a Male Genetic Bottleneck That Could be Noah

DNA genetic studies support a single “Eve” timed 10 or 40 thousand years older by genetic clocks than the single male (called “Adam,” but more likely a Noah) from whom all males have descended. This supports a genetic bottleneck where one man with three sons survives extinction, along with four unrelated females, whose ancestry can be traced back to an earlier female progenitor, an Eve.

Is God trying to reveal the truth to us through modern science? The same month that Ángel Rodríguez wrote his article, news organizations were promoting oceanographer Robert Ballard’s findings of evidence supporting the fact that there was a huge flood of biblical proportions in the Mesopotamian world. Science is supporting, not denying, the possibility of a real Noah and a real huge flood (3).

But instead of proudly claiming that good science now offers more evidence supporting the Bible our official church organ says, no, there had to be a Universal flood involving Australia, China, Greenland, South America, the Himalayas, Denali, Mt. Whitney, the North and South Poles, and 16,854-ft. Mount Ararat under 15 cubits (22.5 feet) of water at the same time?

Geology Supports a Local Noah Flood

Christian geologists point out that there is not enough water in the oceans and ice caps to accomplish that. And many, many areas show geological events not explicable by a one-year flood event. Of course there have been many floods many places, but not at the same time, and not simultaneously, but sequentially with large volcanoes and ice sculpturing events in-between. (6.)
What if our theologians instead of homing in only on the words, tenses, and genders of the Bible text while ignoring the physical realities in the world about them, could talk to our Adventist geologists and geographers about what is possible, and then restudy the Bible texts to understand what they might be telling us? What if biblical interpretation was given balance and credibility with balanced and credible scientific evidence? Why we might end up with a biblical understanding that was both inspiring and true! Imagine that!

The Dove Flew Over “All the Surface of the Earth” (Genesis 8:9)

Since the General Conference theologians make their arguments for a worldwide flood based not on physical evidence, but on Bible-interpretation arguments, let me offer biblical evidence of a localized flood, based on aerial reconnaissance.

We can easily accept that Noah’s Flood is no myth but describes real events happening to real people. The point of view in Genesis 7 then is that of Noah and his family. Everything within the range of human observation was covered with water, all the animals, and all the humans within their range of observation died.

The modern reader easily rushes to the conclusion that “everything under the heavens” (Genesis 7:19) means the entire round globe was covered with this huge flood. But the globe is not “under” the heavens; earth is in space, not under it. Only the part of the world an observer stands on was Noah’s world, “under the sky” the observer could see. “Under the entire sky” would mean as far as you could see, the earth from horizon to horizon was water covered.

“The face of the earth”; “Every Living Creature that I have made”; “Every wild animal”; “all the high mountains”; “every living thing on the face of the earth” – all these things are delineated as “under the entire sky.”

To know how big Noah’s earth was, and to know how big Noah’s flood was, and to know where every wild animal and every living thing on the surface of the earth, under the entire sky, was, we need to know how big Noah’s sky was? Did Noah’s sky run to Mt. Everest, and Denali, to Australia, and the Sahara?

Well happily the size of Noah’s earth and sky is described in the Bible, because Noah used a drone to measure it. In fact he had two separate aerial reconnaissance runs to check it out. He sent out a raven, and he sent out a dove. And the Bible clearly states the dove “could find no place to set its feet because there was water over all the surface of the earth”
How Big Was “all the surface of the earth?”

As far as a dove could fly in one day.

A week later the dove went out again, and this time brought back a fresh olive leaf. Then the text says, “Then Noah knew that the water had receded from the earth.” “The earth” is everything Noah could see, and everything that a dove could fly over in one day. “All the surface of the earth” was everything a dove could fly over in one day.

All the birds, all the creatures that move along the ground, everything that moves on the earth, was Noah’s earth. The earth as big or bigger than as far as Noah and his family could see—as far as a raven and a dove could fly in one day.

No one in Noah’s day, no one in Moses’ day, no one in the University of Egypt, no one in Canaan, or Sinai, and no one anywhere for 1,000 years would know that the earth was a globe. “The earth” to them meant the land under their feet, the land that ended at the ocean’s shore; their earth was a flat disc surrounded by oceans. All the earth, all the animals, all the people were all they could see, to the limits of their observation. As far as a raven could fly or a dove in one day, and perhaps much farther…but not necessarily Everest!

The Bible tells what a real Noah could have seen. The sky is above him. All the mountains that he can see in any direction are under it. All these mountains were covered with 15 cubits of water in one form or another. For a distance more than a bird could fly in one day.

The Bible simply does not say whether the flood covered the entire globe or not, for it knew nothing of a globe at that time.

Didn’t Noah’s Flood Cover the Whole Earth?

Perhaps it did. But you can’t use the Bible to prove it.

This is a wonderful question for earth sciences to study. Floods leave evidences. Check it out, and decide, based on the scientific evidence. (3.) (4.)

You can argue that the Flood was real from the Bible, but you can’t argue about its extent beyond Noah’s world from the Bible. Careful interpreters of the Bible have recognized the
ordinariness of God’s descriptions of the created world. John Calvin on *Genesis 1:14* said:

“It must be remembered that Moses does not speak with scientific acuteness on secret mysteries, but relates those things which are everywhere observed, even by the uncultivated, and which are in common use.”

God was not providing the Israelites with technical information about planetary relationships, the shape of the globe, or the extent of Noah’s Flood. Inspiration spared the Israelites from technical details they did not need to know and would not understand.

As we study how the Creator made the earth, when the Creator created, and how long His Days were; as we study what the extent of Noah’s flood was and how much or how little of earth’s geology, fossils, and crude oil it explains, let us remember this wise counsel of the mature Ellen White: (Ministry of Healing, 483)

“Every association of life calls for the exercise of self-control, forbearance, and sympathy. We differ so widely in disposition, habits, education, that our ways of looking at things vary. We judge differently. Our understanding of truth, our ideas in regard to the conduct of life, are not in all respects the same... So frail, so ignorant, so liable to misconception is human nature, that each should be careful in the estimate he places upon another.”

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Oakwood University “sneak previews” student composers at 2nd Composition Festival

Submitted: Mar 27, 2013
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Oakwood University reaffirmed its claim as the “Julliard of the South: the small school with the BIG MOUTH,” by featuring five student composers in its Encore II Festival of Composition on March 23, at co-host OU SDA Church.


The featured composers and works were:

- Anne-Laure Cesarin, “Soon We Will Be Home”;
- Aaron Manswell, “Again”;
- Devin J. Morrison, “Jerusalem is Here”;
- Stephen Murphy, “Oh So Long”; and
- Jason D. Sellars, “When We All Get to Heaven.”

“The Levites wrote music to glorify God; Psalms featured poems, songs and prayers written by King David, Asaph, the sons of Korah, Solomon, etc. – the contemporary songwriters/composers of that period,” explained Perera, the Uruguayan-born co-author for 2013 Pacific Press’ music and worship book, En Espíritu y en Verdad.

The young composers receive mentorship to write, edit and orchestrate their musical ideas, and receive feedback from the choir and orchestra conductors.

“Encore gives our majors another 'outlet' to compose for a performing ensemble -- outside of their major requirements. If their composition is chosen, they also receive a scholarship. As an aspiring composer, it is always a great privilege and honor to have your work recognized and performed publicly,” added department chair, Dr. Wayne Bucknor whose own composition, “Great and Marvelous,” closed the Festival.

Murphy: “Songwriting, producing was something I knew I wanted to do since age 9; but I knew this was something I could actually do at age 13, when I sat down and learned all six parts to every song on Take 6’s album, "So Much 2 Say"!

“‘Oh So Long’ was inspired by my life in general. And even though I am only 23 years old, it has been a long journey spiritually, and even when things look their worst, I know Christ is returning to save us. As of right now, all I see is producing and arranging music. And of course a
wife and 3 kids lol."

“We believe that this is a unique experience that better prepares them to be leaders in music ministry,” Perera concluded, referencing the likes of Oakwood-birthed:

- Take 6, the most-awarded vocal group in music industry history, [www.Take6.com](http://www.Take6.com);
- The 2012 World Choir Games three-time gold medalists/Spirituals Champion Aeolians Choir, [http://www.al.com/living/index.ssf/2012/07/oakwoods_aeolians_world_champi.html](http://www.al.com/living/index.ssf/2012/07/oakwoods_aeolians_world_champi.html); and
I attended the Andrews University Music and Worship Conference [www.cye.org/mwc/] this March in two capacities. Mostly, I went because I wanted to go but I also agreed to write up a review for the Adventist Today news team. One of the things that impressed me was the youth, energy, and diversity I saw there. It seemed to me that there were about as many women as men, no particular majority of any one ethnicity, and lots of enthusiastic young adults. Naturally, this was a college campus, and many of the attendees were coming for credit, but I didn’t get a sense of anyone “having to be there,” though of course there may have been some who felt that way. There were people from the university and environs, other parts of the state and country, and even from other countries.

One who represented both was a man who asked that his name not be printed. He is from India, and has been a medical doctor for years, but is now a seminary student at Andrews. He described the conference as “great for me! It was a great support for all the students, especially for seminary students. When we leave this place we have an idea how to organize a worship service. It will be a great help!”

When asked why he had decided to lay aside medicine and come to seminary, he said, “God has done many things in my life, and He put the desire to serve Him in my heart.” He went on to tell some miracle stories of health issues, his own and others’ which “God solved without medicine.” He wants to share the story and the love of this healing God with others, and said simply, “Now I want to be an evangelist.”

The young people to whom I spoke also seemed to be enjoying the conference, and felt that they were learning important things. They especially loved the music, which, of course, was ubiquitous. I was fascinated by the Thursday-night combination of contemporary praise team with guitar, string quartet, and organ. I had not seen those types of music combined before, and the effect was wonderful, in my opinion, and given their reaction, the opinion of other attendees as well.

The a cappella group, Committed, not only sang, but also led two workshops. I was only able to attend one of these, but I heard a lot of excitement. The one I did attend was about the importance of music in the African American experience, and featured one or more of the young men breaking into a Negro spiritual now and then, with not only pure and heart-stopping harmony, but also clear and present emotion. None of us there that day had been literal slaves in chains, but all of us recognized the feeling and the longing for liberation. In essence, that’s what
worship is all about.

On the other hand, some young people told me they had hoped for what they called “more practical, hands-on stuff.”

For example, I spoke to three young people who came all the way from Norway for this conference. Melinda Broome, a pre-med student at the University of Oslo and worship leader at her church, Kari-Mette Lisle, a nurse and music leader, and Olav Saerheim, a teacher at the equivalent of American high school level, were all sent by their youth departments. I had a chance to talk with each of these three and ask for their responses to the worship conference. All three, when asked if they were glad they came, replied with an enthusiastic “Yes!”

Broome said, “It’s been very nice getting to know people working with the same things and facing the same struggles. And the music [especially the Friday night concert] was incredible! I was just blown away!”

Saerheim reported that he had enjoyed the conference —“I liked it—I’ve been inspired and felt a meeting with God, especially in the worship concert yesterday—it was more than a concert, it was a worship experience!”

However, each also had suggestions. Both Broome and Lisle told me they had expected more practical instruction. “I struggle with things in my church and I was hoping to get some advice on how to make it better,” said Lisle.

Broome added that the conference had been “really inspiring, but it was more theory. . . I didn’t experience it to be very practical.”

They all agreed that the theory had been essential. In fact, in the case of one workshop they had expected to be about on-the-ground specifics of running a youth ministry, they had very much enjoyed what they had learned, which was about creating relationships. However, it simply had not been what they expected.

Saerheim suggested, and the others agreed, that part of the problem might have been a translation issue. He said, “When I think of the word ‘worship’ I think praise songs. I guess here you use the word ‘worship’ also to mean a service?” I nodded, and he said, “I misunderstood—I think of worship as praising God, not hearing about him in a speech.”

I assured them that this “translation issue” is just as much an issue within North American culture, often divided along age lines. Some of the workshops I had attended myself were about that very thing—one could say that the theme of the entire conference had been about learning to
think of and portray worship as an act of devotion to God, rather than as a lecture. In fact, in the opening session, Dr. Pedrito Maynard-Reid had declared quite passionately, “Pastors should be able to exegete, but the pulpit should not be used for exegetical lectures, or for oratorical lectures, either! The Biblical text is a starting point for a sermon that is relevant to the people’s daily lives.”

For myself, I look forward to the possibility of more hands-on workshops on other arts, as well as music. As conference director, Nicholas Zork, reminded me, this was a music and worship conference, and it was wonderful as such. My opinion is that it is a huge blessing as it is, a credit to those many who work so hard to bring it together, and that it can grow to include more, as well.