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Candidate Who is an Adventist Comes Close to Being Elected President of Zambia

By AT News Team, Jan. 25, 2015: Last night Edgar Lungu was declared the winner of the presidential election in the central African nation of Zambia, according to the respected international news service Reuters. This means that his leading opponent, Hakainde Hichilema, an Adventist, one of the wealthiest men in the country and an economist by training, has lost the election.

Final results were 801,342 votes (51 percent) for Lungu and 762,861 for Hichilema (49 percent) stated Zambia Reports. There will likely be challenges to the election despite the fact that “observers said [it] was conducted in a fair manner,” according to Reuters. Hichilema met with the Electoral Commission of Zambia and told journalists after the meeting that he urged the commission to delay declaring final results “until all the outstanding issues raised in the meeting are addressed,” said Zambia Reports.

Lungu was the candidate of the Patriotic Front which is aligned with Robert Mugabe, the long-time dictator in neighboring Zimbabwe. Lungu also had the support of former Zambia President Rupiah Banda.

Only a third of the eligible voters turned out in a week plagued with massive rains. The election was scheduled for Tuesday (Jan. 20) and extended to Wednesday and Thursday because of the difficulty of getting ballots to some remote villages. It was a special election called after the death of former President Michael Sata in October to fill out the last year of his term. The new President Lungu has been serving as minister of defense and minister of justice in Sata’s cabinet while Guy Scott, a white settler who was elected as vice president with Sata, has been the interim president.

Hichilema has run for president in three previous elections. He came in third all three times, gaining 25 percent of the votes in 2006, 20 percent in 2008 and 18 percent in 2011. In 2006 he ran as the candidate of a coalition called the United Democratic Alliance, and in 2008 and 2011 he ran as the candidate of the United Party for National Development (UPND).

The UPND party has a symbol that includes an outstretched hand and some have made the allegation that it is related to the Masonic Order. This resulted in a negative reaction among some Adventists in Zambia. A letter by an “Elder Brown Bwalya Chofwe” who identified himself as “a baptized and fully committed member of [the] Seventh-day Adventist church” in the Lusaka Times appealed to Pastor Harrington Akombwa, the denomination’s top official in the country as president of the Zambia Union Conference, to stay out of the election campaign. The basis of the complaint, according to the writer, was news reports that “Adventists are offended” by allegations that Hichilema “is a Satanist.”

Chofwe wrote that he “found it gross that the whole church management spent its precious time … to get involved into issues of politics.” He also wrote that “the church has no legal right to prove that HH is not a Satanist or Masonic.” It is unclear if the writer’s use of the title “Elder” is a reference to a clergy role or that of a local elder. No one by that name is listed in the Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook but because that reference work no longer includes Licensed Ministers that is not complete proof as to the writer’s status.

Zambia Reports published an opinion piece on January 16 by a Zambian living and working New York City which stated that “the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Zambia is poised to drop … HH as an elder” because “some members believe that HH’s continued stay as an elder in the church whilst carrying an alleged satanic freemason tag will have severe repercussions on the Church and its outreach.”
The article pointed out that the Adventist faith “is one of the largest Churches in Zambia.” It also stated that “Zambians do not take satanism or Freemasonry easily, especially the Pentecostals who happen to be one of the strongest voting blocs.” It described Hichilema as “standing against the … Christian candidate … Lungu” and stated that he “has not come out in the open except to say that he doesn’t know who the freemasons are.”

The campaigns have been ongoing in Zambia since November 14 last year and evidently created considerable discussion among Adventists and about the Adventist connection of the man who ends up being the number two candidate. Adventists in the United States may be faced with a similar situation in 2016 if Dr. Ben Carson, an Adventist physician, is nominated by the Republican Party, although the issues will be entirely unlike those mentioned above.
Loma Linda Church Hosts Women’s Ordination Event

By AT News Team, Jan. 30, 2015:  The Loma Linda University Church (LLUC) of Seventh-day Adventists hosted a two-day event on January 23-24, 2015, titled, “Women’s Ordination: The Road to San Antonio.” Six speakers presented various arguments in favor of ordaining women as pastors within the Adventist Church. The event moderator, LLUC senior pastor, Randy Roberts, commented that other church media had carried the arguments opposing women’s ordination. Therefore, the LLUC was intended to provide “balance” by presenting evidence from the Bible and other sources touching on the ordination of women. Roberts also noted that the LLU church had long championed women in ministry in the Adventist denomination.

The LLU Church sponsors a “mind and spirit” weekend each year in January to address a theme at the intersection of academia and the church. Until his recent retirement, Bernard Taylor, scholar in residence at LLUC, led out.

The six presenters at this year’s gathering were Darius Jankiewicz and Richard Davidson (professors at the Adventist Theological Seminary), John Brunt (pastor), Kessia Reyne Bennett (Ph.D. candidate at the Trinity Evangelical Divinity School), Jon Paulien (dean of the LLU School of Religion) and Dilys Brooks (LLU associate chaplain).

On Friday evening, Jankiewicz gave a presentation on the history of Christian ordination and Brunt spoke about women’s ordination in the New Testament.

Davidson’s Sabbath morning sermon, entitled “Egalitarian from the Start,” was based on the first two chapters of Genesis. Davidson sees in the Adventist Church today a standoff between the “egalitarians” and the “complementarians,” with the latter group seeing male headship and female subordination in Genesis 1 and 2. Davidson, who is an Old Testament scholar, does not see a “hint” of superiority in Genesis 1—both Adam and Eve were to take dominion.

Bennett also preached, and her sermon title was “Rights and Wrongs.” On Sabbath afternoon, Paulien spoke about how circumstances alter cases, and Brooks spoke about delays. To conclude the event, Roberts moderated a panel discussion.

Ordination, which is one of the most contentious issues confronting the Adventist Church, will be addressed at the July 2015 Seventh-day Adventist General Conference (GC) session in San Antonio, Texas. Delegates will vote to allow or forbid each Division of the world church to decide for themselves whether they will or will not ordain female pastors. During the panel discussion, a number of participants spoke cautiously about the potentially serious repercussions, especially in the North American Division (NAD), if the GC session fails to allow each Division the option of ordaining women.

In the panel discussion, Roberts read questions that audience members had written earlier. An AT news team member present at the event recorded the following questions and responses:

Q: If the GC session votes Yes, would this set a precedent for Divisions deciding other issues on their own? Brunt responded, “The die is already cast.” He explained that Divisions already handle certain issues differently, as witnessed in each having its own handbook. One handbook deals with polygamy, but the NAD handbook says nothing on polygamy.

Q: What do we do with Gen 3:16? Davidson took this seriously and made several points: “After sin came in, nature turned inward and one blamed the other…” and “marriage was at risk.” He referred to Patriarchs and Prophets, page 58, speaking of a remedial plan. Husbands were to be “servant leaders” and woman to respect. He referred back to
Paulien’s “circumstances alter cases.” Genesis 3:16 is not ideal, and it’s not quoted in the New Testament. He cited Song of Solomon as an illustration of a “reversing of the curse” because here we see man sexually desiring woman. Davidson cited Genesis 2 as the ideal.

Q: What are the consequences of keeping the status quo at the GC session? Brooks spoke passionately, saying that culture has changed; it’s post Christian. “We can’t afford to not make a decision, because it would hamper our ability to preach the gospel to today’s world.”

Q: Isn’t this the same question that came up in previous GC sessions? Paulien said that in 1990 the issue dealt with the whole church; in 1995 it dealt with the NAD; and in 2015 it deals with a decision that would treat all divisions the same.

In her closing remarks, Brooks said that if the GC says No, it’s just a church speaking—not God. She said: “Just listen to God’s call.”

Davidson said in his closing remarks that he sees big obstacles to a Yes vote, and he sees a few key leaders holding immense control. He says he prays three times a day that God will work on the “King’s heart.”

Brunt’s final words were, “Unity in purpose, diversity in practice.”

To conclude, Roberts addressed a complaint he had heard from some attendees that there was no representation from the other side of the ordination issue. He was unapologetic, calmly and pastorally stating that because of all that has been said from church leadership against women’s ordination, the LLUC event is providing the other side of the issue.

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Noted Preacher John Loor Sr. is Dead at 87

By AT News Team, Jan. 23, 2015: The well known and widely beloved Adventist preacher, Pastor John R. Loor, Sr. passed to his rest last week. Loor stirred the hearts of crowds as large as 16,000 from the 1960s into the 1990s and was widely respected as a very spiritual leader.

Serving as pastor of a number of the largest Adventist congregations in the United States, Loor stated his ministry in 1954 and soon became pastor of the congregation in the Hyattsville, Maryland, suburb of Washington DC where his mother and grandparents were baptized as Adventists when he was a baby. In 1960 he became senior pastor at the Dallas (Texas) Central Adventist Church and over the next dozen years went on to be senior pastor at the Riverside (California) congregation and the Collegedale (Tennessee) congregation, both near Adventist colleges.

“He preached with power, cogency and appeal,” wrote Pastor F. D. Nichol, the legendary editor of the Adventist Review. “I wish I had five dollars for everyone who has come to me and said, ‘I remember the week of prayer your dad held at my academy or college,’” his son, Pastor John R. Loor, Jr., told the Adventist Review yesterday. “I don’t believe we will really know until heaven how many lives my dad touched for Jesus.”

Loor had a tangible authenticity sensed by large numbers of Adventists who heard him preach, a simple faith in God infused with a rich and sustaining spirituality. He was often invited to speak at camp meetings and convocations, many times as a stand-by for the famous Adventist evangelist Pastor H. M. S. Richards. He wrote a small paperback on the subject of personal devotions entitled Pack Your Life With Power, now out of print.

Like many in his generation of Adventists in America, Loor was born into a Blue Collar home of limited means during the Great Depression. His mother and grandparents were converted to the Adventist faith through public evangelism and baptized into a new church plant. His pastor encouraged church members to raise the money necessary to see that Loor attended all eight grades of church school and he was helped to get a college education at Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Maryland.

In 1973, Loor became ministerial director for the denomination’s Michigan Conference and went on to a career as a church administrator. He was elected president of the Indiana Conference in 1986 and later served as president of the Northern New England Conference which includes the states of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont.

“Loor died surrounded by family in his home in Hendersonville, North Carolina, on Jan. 13,” the Adventist Review reported yesterday. He “is survived by his wife, June; his son, John Jr. [executive secretary of the denomination’s North Pacific Union Conference], and wife, Susan; his daughter, Jane, and her husband, Jim; five grandchildren, Cindy, Jimmy, Ryan, Rob and Jeremy; and two great grandchildren, Iris and Ellison. A memorial service will be held at 4 p.m. on Jan. 31 at the Fletcher Seventh-day Adventist Church.”
Wilson to Inaugurate $7.3 Million in Projects in Rwanda During February Trip

By AT News Team, Jan. 30, 2015: A nine-story national denominational headquarters and a university science and technology center will be officially opened during a trip to Rwanda by Pastor Ted Wilson, president of the General Conference (GC) of Seventh day. The new construction is valued at 5 billion Rwandan francs ($7.3 million) the report stated.

The office building for the denomination’s Rwanda Union Mission is located in the Kigali city center. The science and technology center is on the new Gishushu Campus of the Adventist University of Central Africa which serves 11 nations in the Great Lakes region of Africa. Ceremonies at the two new projects will be February 10 and 11.

Wilson will also participate in the ground-breaking ceremony for the Adventist Regional Medical School in Masoro, the newspaper stated. Prof. Sebahashy N. Abel, rector of the university, told the newspaper that “the new science and technology campus will … help boost the national vision of having an IT-led economy.” He stated that the Adventist Church “does not only preach the gospel … but also promotes education, health and community development.”

During his last visit to Rwanda, Wilson “said the Adventist Church was committed to supporting Rwanda’s education, health and spiritual programs,” the newspaper recalled. The office tower and the science and technology center are part of the fulfillment of that commitment, it reported, as will be the new medical school.

The Adventist faith is the largest Protestant denomination in the country that was ravaged with genocidal violence between the two major ethnic groups in the early 1990s. Among Rwanda’s 11 million population, about one in ten individuals is an Adventist adherent (including children from birth).

The denomination has about 2,300 congregations in the country with a total current membership of 625,510 and nearly 300 clergy. In addition to the university, the denomination operates three secondary schools, Mugonero Hospital and six community health centers. More than 43,000 new members were baptized in the last year of record which gave the denomination a seven percent growth rate in Rwanda.
Adventist High School in Takoma Park Ranks Among Top 100 Private Schools

From *The Visitor*, Jan. 29, 2015: A company that provides school reviews for families and potential students has ranked the Adventist secondary school in the Takoma Park (Maryland) suburb of Washington DC among the top 100 private schools in the state. Takoma Academy (TA) is operated by the denomination’s Potomac Conference and located a mile from the campus shared by Washington Adventist University, Washington Adventist Hospital and Sligo Church in an historic Adventist neighborhood. The Niche company publishes a report ranking 3,880 private schools based on student statistics and survey data from 16,000 students and parents.

The ranking indicates that TA provides exceptional academic programs and has a diverse group of high-achieving students who rate their experience at the school very highly. The school serves students from throughout the three-state metropolitan area of the United States capital but it is not a boarding school.

Principal Carla Thrower was thrilled with the news. “I feel that this validates the great strides we have been making at the school to have a spiritual and academic environment that propels Takoma Academy to the top tier of academic institutions,” she says.

Niche measures academics, which account for 60 percent of the ranking; student culture and diversity, accounting for 30 percent; and survey responses at 10 percent. High Niche rankings generally indicate that students are happy with all aspects of school life, including academics, teachers, spiritual life, facilities, sports and fitness.

The company states that its top-rated schools have exceptional academics, as seen in the teachers, students, resources for learning and student outcomes. TA meets these requirements, along with having a diverse population and fostering a positive, accepting school culture. TA students are also involved in religious activities, a variety of extracurricular groups and physical exercise opportunities.

*The Visitor is the publication of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination’s Columbia Union Conference in the mid-Atlantic region of the U.S.*
New York City Adventists: Hope & Healing Event Responds to Unrest in the Community

From ANN, Jan. 26, 2015: An Adventist congregation in New York City hosted a service of hope and healing in an effort to quell tensions brought on by weeks of unrest between police and civic leaders stemming from the deaths of a citizen and two police officers. Tied to commemorative celebrations of the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr., the Hope and Healing for Better Police and Community Relations event featured civic leaders, police officials, members of Congress and Adventist clergy.

Held Sunday, January 18, at the Flatbush Adventist Church in Brooklyn, the event included prayers for city officials, for protection of the 35,000 police officers in the city, and God’s healing power to ease the hurt and suspicion rampant in the community. Tensions have flared in New York and across the United States resulting from incidents late last year. On December 3, a grand jury decided not to indict the officer who placed a chokehold on Eric Garner. On December 20, two police officers were assassinated by a man claiming retaliation. Both events sparked protests, rallies and extensive national media coverage.

During the event Adventist Church leaders appealed to all groups for calm, understanding and healing. “Over the past few weeks, the city has been roiled by tension,” said Pastor Daniel Honoré, president of the denomination’s Northeastern Conference. “We still mourn the loss of Eric Garner. We still mourn the loss of [officers Wenjian] Liu and [Rafael] Ramos. Society however has presented us with a false choice. It has told us, ‘Either you support community rights, or you support the police.’ Today I want to categorically reject that choice.”

Pastor G. Earl Knight, president of the denomination’s Greater New York Conference, said that in light of the recent events dividing the city, “as a faith community, we cannot sit in idleness, twiddling our thumbs in despair. We are a people of hope, not despair … We believe that God can heal the brokenhearted; He can heal our broken relationships.”

The Honorable Yvette Clarke, the U.S. Congress Representative from New York’s 9th District, commended the denomination for organizing a “timely gathering for dialog and discussion.” She added, “You have decided that church takes place seven days a week. From that understanding of the gospel, we can transform life in real-time. Not only in the spiritual realm, but indeed we can make a change in the secular realm.”

Other officials who spoke included Letitia James, Public Advocate of New York City; the Honorable Hakeem Jeffries, U.S. Congress member from the 8th District; Harold Miller from the staff of Mayor Bill de Blasio; and Benjamin Tucker, deputy commissioner of the New York City Police Department. Many in attendance were youth and young adults.

“Prayer is not the only thing we can do,” Pastor Roger Wade, youth director for the Northeastern Conference, stated as cards were distributed with information about how one should respond when stopped by the police and citizens’ rights and responsibilities. He was joined in the presentation by Pastor Andres Peralta, youth director of the Greater New York Conference.

The event included a panel discussion with the deputy police commissioner; the president of the local, inter-faith Clergy Council, Rev. Gilford Monrose; and Adventists Pastor Shane Vidal and Pastpr Allen Martin. It was chaired by Pastor Rohann Wellington, communication director of the Greater New York Conference.

When asked what steps need to be taken to bridge the divide as a result of recent events, Monrose cited examples of clergy activism during the Civil Rights era in the 1960s and 70s. “Members of the clergy have a specific role to
pray, but we also have to put our feet to our faith … We have to do work and be that liaison between the police and our communities.” Monrose added that while anger and frustration are inevitable, clergy can be that “voice in the middle” to maintain the flow of communication on both sides.

Martin pointed out the more reactive approach that communities have had and shared his experience while visiting Ferguson, Missouri, after the shooting of Michael Brown. Emphasizing the need for public engagement before tragedies happen in the community, Martin said, “We have elected officials on the podium, but elected officials represent us … Our responsibility is to hold our officials accountable.” He added, “We can’t sit back and let things just go and not raise our voice of concern. And we can’t wait for there to be a shooting, or there to be some tragedy, to be engaged. Vidal called for a new paradigm of policing that would enable police officers to focus not on how many arrests are made, but on how many lives they can transform by their daily encounters.

Recommendations from the panel discussion will be included in a report to be presented to the Office of the Mayor of New York City. There is a plan to build on relationships formed from the event and to provide a continued proactive presence in the neighborhoods affected by these tragedies.

The event also included worship and a press conference. One poignant moment during the service came when the audience—comprised of a variety of races and ethnicities—collectively rose to their feet and enthusiastically applauded eight-year-old Nathanel McKenzie after his recitation of King’s “I Have a Dream” speech.

Closing remarks were presented by Pastor Abraham Jules of the Adventist Community Worship Center. Using Christ’s parable of the Good Samaritan, Jules reminded the audience that those who have been wounded often have a greater capacity to become healers.
Glendale Congregation Becomes First Adventist Peace Church

By AT News Team, Jan. 30, 2015: The Glendale City Seventh-day Adventist Church in Glendale, CA, is the first congregation to be certified as a “peace church” by the Adventist Peace Fellowship (APF). In order to join “the Adventist Peace Church network, churches must demonstrate a serious long-term commitment to certain core values and ongoing practical actions in their local communities,” states the APF website.

Todd Leonard, the congregation’s senior pastor, explained to Adventist Today why he values service and social values in ministry: “I really feel that bringing peace into communities...seems to be at the heart of the gospel. From what I read in the prophets, from looking at what Jesus did during his ministry and then carried on in the early church, there appears to be this work to include more people...in the blessings of God.”

In the past year, Glendale City Church has co-founded two nonprofit community service agencies—Caesura Youth Orchestra and Glendale Communitas Initiative. The music program provides instruments and instruction for elementary students who would otherwise have little access to musical training.

Communitas, which is a network of congregations from twelve different denominations, aims to reduce poverty in Glendale by 10 percent over the next five years. To accomplish this, Communitas is bringing together organizations in the religious, government, business and nonprofit sectors to coordinate service delivery for families at risk of becoming homeless. In addition to referrals for currently available services, Communitas will provide mentors “from other civic groups like Rotary or Glendale Young Professionals,” explains Leonard. “Each mentor,” he continues, “would meet with a family member an hour per week for an entire year.”

The Glendale congregation could continue to pursue these efforts locally without joining the APF peace church network; however, Leonard sees two reasons for connecting with APF. “One, we would love to have the collaboration and collegiality of networking with other churches who have the same mission and vision for their congregation. We can share ideas, share what’s working in our local context, find resources that would be beneficial for one another,” shared Leonard.

Secondly, Leonard hopes the network will “be something that more and more Adventist churches would want to be a part of, that they would reconnect with some of our heritage of not only preaching about the kingdom to come but actively working in society to make life better for the world we’re in and to work towards God’s purposes without violence.”

In order to support congregations in the network, APF director Ron Osborn told Adventist Today that the APF is prepared to “provide grants, as funding allows, to Adventist peace churches for projects they might be pursuing in their local communities. We are also committed to helping call attention to their activities through our blog and social media. The APF is really a platform and ‘network of networks’ that we hope can serve as a ‘force multiplier’ for congregations that might otherwise feel isolated and disconnected from Adventist community in their too-often unsupported work for peace and social justice.”

Four other congregations are currently in the peace church certification process—Advent Hope Church (NY), Anaheim Seventh-day Adventist Church (CA), Hollywood Adventist Church (CA), and The Well (TN). The APF website outlines nine steps toward certification, with the major actions including: (a) contacting APF to initiate the process, (b) passing a church board resolution expressing intent to join the network, (c) identifying a key area of action, (d) demonstrating commitment to the values of peace and justice over a one-year period, and (e) reporting the congregation’s sustained efforts to APF for evaluation.

On its website the Adventist Peace Fellowship describes itself as a non-profit lay organization that seeks to raise
consciousness about the centrality of peacemaking to the beliefs and heritage of Seventh-day Adventists. The APF is not officially affiliated, funded, or controlled by the Seventh-day Adventist Church and does not speak on the Church’s behalf.

In 2003 Washington Adventist University history professor Douglas Morgan founded the APF with leadership support from Ron Osborn and approximately 20 Adventist scholars, administrators, pastors, and graduate students throughout the United States. In a 2011 interview with Adventist Today, Morgan shared about the early developments that led to the formation of the fellowship during the build up to the war in Iraq after the 9/11 terrorist attacks: “It started off as a discussion group there at CUC [now Washington Adventist University] and the surrounding community. We read John Howard Yoder’s The Politics of Jesus. I think in 2002 we decided to reach out to people who were on other campuses, the circles we were already familiar with."[1] Morgan became the first director, and Osborn took over the role in 2011.

Originally, the organization’s focus was on peacemaking in the context of war and violence. Over time APF expanded its scope, and “efforts today include…care for creation, economic justice, freedom of conscience for persons both inside and outside of the Adventist community, racial and gender equality, and the nexus of health and human rights,” says the APF website.

In addition to online resources available via the APF website, the fellowship has produced two resources for distribution. “In 2005, the APF published its first book, The Peacemaking Remnant: Essays and Historical Documents, edited by Morgan, which has been used in college level courses as an introduction to the social ethics of Adventism with a particular focus on questions of violence and war,” states the APF website. In 2015 APF published its first calendar, which includes major figures in Adventist peace history along with quotes and notable dates.

Congregations interested in learning more about the peace church network can visit the APF website (link) or contact APF leadership (link). Readers can also learn more about the Glendale City Adventist Church in Adventist Today’s recent interview with Leonard (link).

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Sharing is caring!
The Inspired Expired-1

What to Do with a Deceased Prophetess? Part 1 of a three part series by Jack Hoehn, January 27, 2015: The world fraternal twins Elizabeth and Ellen Harmon were born into on November 26, 1827, was more like a third world country than the USA of today, according to Daniel Walker Howe[1] in the Oxford History of the United States—1815-1848—What Hath God Wrought.

Dirty, Smelly, and Barefoot

“Life in America...was dirty, smelly, laborious, and uncomfortable. People spent most of the waking hours working with scant opportunity for the development of individual talents and interests unrelated to farming. Cobbler-made shoes being expensive and uncomfortable, country people of ordinary means went barefoot much of the time.”

“People owned few changes of clothes and stank of sweat. Only the most fastidious bathed as often as once a week. . . . [A]s late as 1832, a New England country doctor complained that four out of five of his patients did not bathe from one year to the next.” [2]

A Man’s World

“The man was the ‘head of the house,’ by both law and custom, and he could exploit the labor of other family members as his predecessors had done for centuries...”

Men had legal control over the property and labor of their wives and children. “Children could perform many of the necessary errands and tasks: fetching water from the well, feeding chickens, collecting firewood. Foresight, not irresponsibility, prompted farm couples to have many children.”[3]

Slaves were the Key

“In 1815, of about 8.4 million people in the United States, almost 1.4 million were held in hereditary slavery, the personal property of their owners.... Public opinion...generally held the institution a regrettable evil, contrary to both Christianity and natural rights. However...nowhere were whites willing to be taxed to pay compensation to owners for freeing their slaves.” Paternalism would lead an owner of slaves to admonish his overseer “not to overwork “a
breeding woman” but to remember that her healthy baby was worth more money than her extra labor would represent…”[4]

Diet and Drink

Americans ate wheat, beef, and potatoes in the North, and corn, pork, and sweet potatoes in the South. Fruit appeared only in season. Milk, cheese, and butter were plentiful, but there was no refrigeration and bacteria had not been discovered and pasteurization not invented till 1864. As Howe writes, the diet was “monotonous and constipating, too high in fat and salt.”[5] It may surprise you to know that the consumption of alcohol was much higher in 1825 than it is in 2015! “In 1825 the average American over 15 years of age consumed seven gallons of alcohol a year, mostly in the form of whiskey and hard cider.” (Today that’s down to less than two gallons, mostly from beer and wine.) “All social classes drank heavily; college students, journeyman printers, agricultural laborers and canal-diggers were especially notorious. School children might face an inebriated teacher in the classroom.”[6]

Housing

“Indoor light was scarce and precious; families made their own candles, smelly and smoky, from animal tallow. A single fireplace provided all the cooking and heating for a common household. During winter everybody slept in the room with the fire, several in each bed. Privacy for married couples was a luxury.”[7]

Risky Sex and Risky Doctors

Perhaps the lack of privacy was a blessing in disguise for American wives, because “women bore children in agony and danger, making their life expectancy…shorter than that of men. Once born, children often succumbed to diseases like diphtheria, scarlet fever, and whooping cough. One third of white children and over half of black children died before reaching adulthood.” “Doctors were in short supply, hospitals almost unknown. This proved a blessing in disguise, for physicians then did as much harm as good, and hospital incubated infection.”[8]

Ellen White’s Pregnancies

Ellen married James Springer White when she was 17 years of age. Her first son Henry was born ten months and 29 days after her marriage. He died of pneumonia at age 16. Her second son Edson was born when she was 21. Her third son William was born when she was 26. Both survived childhood. But her fourth son Herbert was born when she was 31 and died before his third month. James White died after multiple strokes when Ellen was 53. A fellow minister about 6 years her junior, Stephen N. Haskell proposed marriage to Ellen when she was 67 after his first wife died. (Ellen declined and suggested someone else for Elder Haskell, but still had Stephen’s picture in her bedroom when she died!)

Slow Communication

“Communication in the early nineteenth-century America usually required the transportation of a physical object from one place to another—such as a letter, a newspaper, or even a message attached to the leg of a homing pigeon.” It took 50 days to get news from Liverpool to New York City, another day to get to Philadelphia, 2 days to get to Boston, 2-5 days to get to Washington, DC, and 10 days or more to Charleston.[9] In fact, the last battle of the War of 1812 with Great Britain was won by General Andrew Jackson two weeks after the Treaty of Ghent had been signed in Europe on December 24, 1814, formally ending the war! But because of the harsh winter of 1814-15 the American president in Washington, DC, didn’t know of Jackson’s victory at New Orleans until four weeks later the news was brought by the fastest horsemen, arriving on February 4. Then the news that the war was already over since Christmas Eve didn’t arrive from Europe till February 13!

Changes after 1844
By the time Sister White (the name by which most Adventists knew her) died at 87 years of age from a fall that fractured her left hip and kept her in bed for the last five months of her life, the third world status of the United States (at the time of her birth more like rural Africa today) was rapidly changing.

Although Ellen Harmon may not have known it, this change began in 1844, not on October 22, but on May 24, when Professor Samuel F. B. Morse “seated amidst a hushed gathering of distinguished national leaders in the chambers of the United States Supreme Court in Washington, tapped out a message on a device of cogs and coiled wires: WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT. Forty miles away in Baltimore, Morse’s associate Alfred Vail received the electric signals and sent the message back. The invention they had demonstrated was destined to change the world.”[10]

Not only were there now telegraph offices everywhere in the USA, but many cities had electricity, railroads went everywhere, and automobiles were being made at Henry Ford’s factory in Detroit. Airplanes were flying, Hollywood was making silent films, and early submarines were preparing for World War 1. Ellen’s broken hip was X-rayed at the Adventist Sanitarium in Napa Valley. The Panama Canal was completed, milk could be pasteurized, professional baseball had Babe Ruth, slavery had been abolished, and they even allowed women as well as men to vote in the new states of first Washington, then California, Oregon, Kansas, Arizona and Illinois!

Gutenberg, centuries ago with moveable type, had made books available in the world Ellen White was born into, but the moveable type process was slow and laborious and many families only owned one book, usually a Bible. By the time of her death the Cylinder Press had been introduced in the USA. Paper made, not from old cloth but from cheaper and more available wood pulp, could now be produced not sheet by sheet, but by huge rolls (1860). Rotary printing, offset printing, and hot metal typesetting had made it possible for her books and magazines to proliferate “like the leaves of autumn.”

What Ellen White Left

In the Bibles present in most USA homes in the nineteenth century the inspired prophet Jude left us one little book with 25 verses and 605 translated English words. The world Adventist church recently studied the writings of the inspired half-brother of Jesus in their Sabbath Schools. James has a few paragraphs recorded in Acts, and again a single book of 5 chapters and 2,304 words. The inspired doctor Luke left us 2 books of 52 chapters and 49,869 English words. And the 5 books of inspired Moses have a total of 127,840 words.
Our inspired prophetess, Ellen White, on the other hand has left us 100 books, 5,000 periodical articles, and a total of two million and five hundred thousand (or so) words. What are we to do with someone from a very different world than our own, who left us with such a prodigious output? How can we put Ellen on a level footing with other inspired writers such as Moses, Luke, James, and Jude?

What do we do with the writings of the Inspired Expired?

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[To be continued. This is Part 1 of a three part series on The Expired Inspired. If you found this article interesting, please share it on Facebook or other media with interested friends. Because this is a series, it will be closed to reader comments until after all three articles have been published.]

Footnotes:

[1] Daniel Walker Howe is the winner of the Pulitzer Prize for History with this book. He is Professor of History Emeritus at the University of California, Los Angeles and a Rhodes Professor of American History Emeritus at Oxford University.


Voices

By Debbonnaire Kovacs, Jan. 28, 2015

Most of the time, I can be in control.

Well. Scratch that. Most of the time I can look like I’m in control. Maybe there are some people who don’t even know anything is wrong; otherwise, I’d be banned from synagogue.

I keep waiting for it to happen. If they could hear what I hear, they would know.

I am quite, quite mad.

——–Voices…hissing…anger…do it do it…you’re bad you’re so bad…DO IT!!

It’s been going on for a while now. Since I was a young man, actually. I used to foolishly put my fingers in my ears to try to shut them out. But they’re inside. They’re me, really. I know the truth. I am evil. I don’t deserve to live.

——–Screaming…a cacophony…DO IT DO IT DO IT…kill—attack—attack—

So far, I haven’t given in. I haven’t killed any of the people they—I—want to. I DON’T want to!!

——–You do…you really do…you are BAD BAD BAD…the rising shriek…my ears are torn…it feels as if they should bleed…

I don’t think I have killed yet, anyway. But sometimes I have hours, or whole days I don’t remember. Once, it was a week. I am so terrified I can’t eat much. I look like I’m dead already. If I kill anybody, it will be myself. They would like that almost as well.

But—can’t God help me? Will God help me? I know I’m evil, but I don’t want to be. Doesn’t that count? I’ll go synagogue again. Just this once. Maybe after that I’ll just go ahead

——–do it do it do evil evil evil DO IT!!!!

Oh, dear God! He’s here—that man—somehow I know—heh—I’ve heard he can—

Against my will, no matter how I try to stop them, the words snarl out. The shriek from my mouth sounds like the shrieks in my mind. “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?” I spit the words with fury. And deep inside I let go all hope. I won’t have to kill myself now. They’ll stone me. The words still writh the way out of my mouth. “Have you come to destroy us? I know you are, the Holy One of God!”

The Holy One. I know it’s true. And I am evil. So evil…He’s looking at me. He looks angry. Soon it will begin. He’ll cast me out and then…I try not to cringe as he snaps, “Be silent!” I can’t look away. He raises a finger that looks as if it could split lightning and the next words are the thunder. “Come out of him!”

I feel a convulsion and hear a scream, but I think maybe I have one of those blackouts.

But only for a minute, apparently. I am on the floor and faces are staring down at me. His is the one that draws my eye. The anger is gone as if it never existed. His eyes look at me and into me and all the way through me and, incredibly, they smile. He reaches that lightning hand, which now looks perfectly ordinary, to help me up. Somehow, my hand joins with his, and I am on my feet.
For a second, I don’t realize—I just stare at this Man and cling to his hand, faintly aware that there is a buzz of commotion around me. Some people are backing away. Others come closer. Some look joyful, some angry.

And then my breath stops. They’re gone.

_They’re gone!

_They’re GONE!!!

I fall to the floor again, weeping and clinging to both the Man’s hands.

Based on Mark 1:21-28
I’m a Seventh-day Adventist

by Grace Pitt, January 29, 2015:  *(This phone conversation is based on actual experiences and comments heard in her church and in churches she has visited.)*

“Hello… Oh, hi Jane. Yes, there is potluck this week… No, I don’t know what I’m taking yet… Yes, I enjoy potlucks too.

I’m glad that I’m an Adventist. I’m so happy God loves me. I know that this is the right church… Yes, I know you feel the same way too.

I’m so blessed. I feel I should help others become better Adventists. The Bible says we should go to others who are stumbling and help them… You know our church members have so many problems!

Last week at church all the children were making so much noise! What is wrong with their parents that they can’t keep them quiet?… You didn’t notice?… I think I’ll have to talk to their parents… What’s that?… Well, yes, I know Jesus called the children to Him, but I’ll bet He made them be quiet!

Did you see those people that came to church last week?… That one girl had green hair and huge earrings. I know that she isn’t an Adventist! I’ll bet she even eats pork! I don’t think they should come back to church until they learn that Adventists don’t do things like that. Why, the next thing we know, our children will be dyeing their hair green!!!

Did you see the dress Sally Brown was wearing the other week?… She knows Adventists don’t wear dresses that short! I had a talk with her… Pardon?… Oh, well, yes, I guess I’m glad she was still coming to church, but I’m sure she was a tare living right here among us… I’m just trying to help her be a better Adventist! She hasn’t been back since I talked to her. I knew she was a tare!

By the way, did you see Jim Smith at Tim Horton’s last night?… I’m sure that was a coffee in his hand. I’ll have to talk to him. Good Adventists don’t drink coffee!… Pardon?… Well, of course I love him. I’m just trying to help him be a better Adventist… Mrs White says you shouldn’t drink coffee, he should know that. God knows he’s sinning! I’ll pray for Jim.

Well, it’s been nice talking to you, but I have to run. I’m late for prayer meeting… Did you say your daughter was coming to visit?… I’m looking forward to meeting her at church next week! Hopefully we can be a good Christian witness to her!… Pardon…pardon…my cell phone is acting up… Did I hear you say she has green hair??????”
Youth Set Sails for the Kingdom

Guest Feature by Steve Vistautnet, Gleaner Editor, Jan. 28, 2015, Reprinted by permission from the October Gleaner. Mix 180 young people and their leaders together on a sailing ship in the middle of a rainy October weekend, and you'll get an adventure.

Bob Gaede, a lay member from Rockaway Beach, Oregon, has planned a number of active weekend activities for Oregon Conference Pathfinders. But this was the first one he has organized on behalf of three Northwest conferences — Oregon, Washington and Upper Columbia.

Gaede is passionate about providing spiritual, hands-on experiences to Adventist youth, and this weekend event, centered in Olympia, Washington, and held October 10–12, was no different. Activities were organized around three stations: an adventure on the historic Adventuress sailing vessel, a trip on an open whaling boat and a learning activity on small sailing dinghys.

The Adventuress is a 130-foot vessel listed as a National Historic Landmark and operated by Sound Experience, a nonprofit entity. Gaede and his team designed an onboard program for the Pathfinders that helped them experience the spiritual lessons in the stories of Jesus asleep in the disciples’ boat and of Peter attempting to walk on the water, as well as learn the basics of navigation and tall-ship sailing.

The weekend was forecast to be inclement, with rain and wind. When the first group went out on the large sailing vessel, clouds were dark and rain was falling out on the Sound. But the ship sailed for four straight hours with rain on each side and bright skies overhead. Only when it returned to the dock did the heavens open. Likewise, rain held off for the afternoon sailing and again on Sunday morning.

Another activity, originating from the Tacoma, Washington, Sea Scouts base, took Pathfinders out on a whaling boat, originally from the USS Nimitz. On the water, leaders recounted the example of Jonah, drawing “lots” to see who would be thrown overboard to illustrate the story.

While this event may have helped each Pathfinder who went achieve a better understanding of sailing, the main purpose, says Gaede, was something far more important. “With each of these weekend events, we hope to create a spiritual experience surrounding a Pathfinder honor by using some activity other than a sermon,” he says. “Hands-on lessons make a lasting impression for the kingdom and build lifelong friendships.”

Gaede began organizing local Pathfinder events with Anne and Glenn Campbell 18 years ago. Even with the hard work of the leadership team, including, among others, Rick Pummel, Ed and Erin Betz, and Michael and Lauren Gregory, this
weekend wouldn’t have happened without a few miracles along the way. Miracle after miracle, says Gaede, keeps these events going strong. “It’s such an incredible way,” he says, “to work with the Lord.”

North Pacific Union Gleaner, December 2014
Exodus: Gods and Kings (movie review)

Reviewed by Andy Hanson, January 27, 2015: The movie cost one hundred and forty million to make. That’s not surprising when one considers the props and costumes and special effects. Unfortunately, it’s not a very good movie. Not only has it been panned by Christian audiences; it’s been banned in Egypt as historically inaccurate and insulting. The skin tones of the leading characters are lighter than one would reasonably expect, and God is a boy.

If you haven’t seen the movie, I know of no better critical review than Rebecca Cusey’s. (1) My edited version of her review follows. She begins with a quote from C.S. Lewis.

“The ancient man approached God (or even the gods) as the accused person approaches his judge. For the modern man, the roles are quite reversed. He is the judge: God is in the dock.”—C.S. Lewis (2)

Director Ridley Scott acts as lead prosecutor in “Exodus: Gods and Kings,” putting God on trial using one of the Bible’s most famous stories. The accused stands charged with capriciousness, meanness, petty jealousy, and simply being an all-around jerk.

The film follows only the bare outlines of the Biblical story...Moses (Christian Bale) believes himself the Egyptian cousin to the future Pharaoh Ramses (Joel Edgerton). When Ramses ascends to the throne, he drives Moses away. Turns out, Moses is not Egyptian at all, but was adopted by a princess, and is truly the son of a lowly Hebrew slave.

Fleeing into the wilderness, Moses meets a local girl (Maria Valverde), marries, and settles into a life of shepherding. But one day—wouldn’t you know?—he gets knocked on the head. He sees first a burning bush, then a small, angry boy (3) who chides him about his lack of concern for his suffering people. Moses is to return to Egypt and free his people, by force if necessary. Tellingly, Moses carries a sword, never a staff.

Moses grudgingly obeys this petulant deity. He confronts his would-be cousin Ramses, but there’s a much more sinister force at work. Soon plagues start afflicting the people of Egypt, down to the precious son in Ramses’ castle...

The film changes the tone and ideas of the story. The central conflict is not between Moses and Ramses, but between little-boy-God and Moses. They yell at each other, they snipe, they call each other nasty names and accuse each other of being heartless, uncaring meanies. The only thing they never do is listen to each other. At the end, as Moses chips painstakingly at some stone tablets, little-boy-God wonders that Moses “doesn’t agree with” Him, but sticks around. Moses concedes that he “doesn’t agree with” little-boy-God, but at least they’re still talking.

For me, the impact of the film had to do with visualizing the gruesome and terrifying plagues, particularly the deaths of the Egyptian first-borns. It's one thing to read about the Nile running in blood and another to watch the viscous gory flow and see dead children in the arms of their parents.

I found myself sympathizing with the early Gnostic Christians who contrasted the god of the Old Testament with the Good News of the New.
Marcion, a Christian from Asia Minor, was struck by what he saw as the contrast between the creator-God of the Old Testament, who demands justice and punishes every violation of his law, and the Father whom Jesus proclaims—the New Testament God of forgiveness and love. Why, he asked, would a God who is ‘almighty’—all powerful—create a world that includes suffering, pain, disease—even mosquitoes and scorpions? Marcion concluded that these must be two different Gods. (4)

I’ve included photos of Moses, his wife, Malek, and a scene from the parting of the Red Sea.


2. C.S. Lewis, God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics

3. Director Ridley Scott cast 11-year-old British actor Isaac Andrews to play the role of Malak in the film. In Scott's interpretation of the story, Moses meets Malak in front of a burning bush and it becomes apparent to Moses that God is speaking through Malak.
Interview with Todd Leonard, Pastor and Peace Church Advocate

Viewpoints Interview Series #18
Todd Leonard Interview by Jeff Boyd
Submitted January 30, 2015

Welcome to Viewpoints: Adventist Perspectives on Peace, Justice and Righteousness.
Todd Leonard lives in Los Angeles with his wife and three daughters. He is senior pastor at the Glendale City Church in Glendale, California. He is interested in helping people discover spirituality in individuals, cultures, religions and lifestyles that differ from their own and building a radically-inclusive congregation devoted to community transformation.

AToday: Your congregation recently completed the process of becoming a “peace church” in the Adventist Peace Fellowship network. You were actually the first to be certified. Why do you want your congregation to embrace the values of a peace church? Why are peace and justice important to you in your congregational ministry?

Leonard: I really feel that bringing peace into communities, bringing peace into our world seems to be at the heart of the gospel. From what I read in the prophets, from looking at what Jesus did during his ministry and then carried on in the early church, there appears to be this work to include more people in the goodness of God, in the blessings of God. And our job is to make sure that every chance we get we bring good news in very tangible ways into the lives of people so they are not excluded from all that God wants for them to have and to experience.

I feel like our call is to live out the Lord’s Prayer, where it says, “Your kingdom come, your will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.” The idea is that Christ came to bring God’s kingdom into the world here and now. And however God intervenes eschatologically in the world to bring His purposes to fulfillment, our call is to work toward that end in the here-and-now through His Spirit to bring the reality of peace, justice, love and grace into the world today as much as we can. That means reaching out to people who have typically been excluded from the blessings of their nation, from the blessings of being part of a faith community. And it also means working to undermine systems that keep barriers up, that keep people excluded, that keep people divided from one another. So where systemic structures in the church and in our society keep people apart and keep people on unequal footing, we have a responsibility to try to undermine that by bringing equality and grace and justice and welcome to those people. That’s the working out of our salvation, the salvation that we felt when we realized we were not excluded from God or from our faith community, that we were welcomed and included—that welcome, that inclusion, that love and justice that we in turn extend to others as a working out of the salvation that we have already received.

AToday: You can do or be this without joining Adventist Peace Fellowship, so why did you want to join the APF peace church network?

Leonard: It’s two-fold. One, we would love to have the collaboration and collegiality of networking with other churches who have the same mission and vision for their congregation. We can share ideas, share what’s working in our local context, find resources that would be beneficial for one another. There’s that connection where the sharing and the interaction can happen more effectively and much easier.

The other thing, I would really hope that this would be something that would catch fire and would be something that more and more Adventist churches would want to be a part of, that they would kind of re connect with some of our heritage of not only preaching about the kingdom to come but actively working in society to make life better for the world we’re in and to work towards God’s purposes without violence. I’m hoping that since we’ve joined and we’re
seeing some others get on board that it will become a movement of more and more churches embracing this and wanting to bring the peace focus to the work of their congregations.

**AToday:** How did you bring up the peace church topic with your congregation? Were there any objections to joining the network?

**Leonard:** We took it to our church board and shared the mission of Adventist Peace Fellowship. We said, “We would like to officially be in the process of being certified as one.” One of the comments on the board was, “This already seems to be the values of our congregation. This doesn’t seem to be a stretch or different from who we are.” So it was probably one of the easiest decisions we’ve ever made as a church.

In our congregation there are people all along the political spectrum about how we should address issues in American politics, but we’re united about this. In the context of what our church is doing, this is who we’ve been as a church—about healing brokenness, being inclusive where others exclude.

**AToday:** How has your congregation been living out these themes?

**Leonard:** Glendale City Church was established when the city of Glendale was kind of an Adventist Mecca, with a nursing school, Voice of Prophecy, conference and union offices, an academy, and two hospitals within eight miles of each other. It had a large Adventist presence, so there were a lot of Adventist churches established in the area to serve all the Adventists living in the area. And while not always being incredibly proactive outside of the Adventist bubble, Glendale City was always the church Adventists knew they could go to if they weren’t accepted in another congregation.

There’s one story from the late 1980s that is telling. There was a gentleman who was coming to church who had found a home in a group Bible study that was happening at our church, and he felt welcomed and loved and accepted. While he was attending, he received the diagnosis that he had contracted AIDS. He felt like he needed to share that with his Bible study group. In the 80s to share that you had AIDS was basically the same thing as a leper coming out about their condition in biblical times. They would be immediately distanced from everybody because people were afraid of contracting the disease. And it also meant that you must have been engaged in acts of immorality at some point—whether it was drug use, sexual promiscuity or homosexual behavior. So not just within the church but in society in general, to contract AIDS meant you basically lost connection with most of the people you were in relationship with.

When he shared his diagnosis, the Bible study group hugged and embraced him one-by-one and told him that they loved him, that they would be with him no matter what. As his condition deteriorated and he had to go into the hospital more regularly and then even into hospice care, many of our members regularly visited him and kept in touch with him. The medical professionals at the facilities would ask him, “Who are all these people visiting you because no other patient in this AIDS ward is getting visits anywhere like this?” He told them, “That’s the Glendale City Adventist Church. It’s their members who are coming and visiting me.” So we even had people from those medical institutions come visit our church because they wanted to know what kind of church actually loved and cared for an AIDS patient.

That not only shows you the type of church we already were in a lot of ways, but that also became a catalyst for our church to move forward in being welcoming and inclusive of people, no matter where they were from.

Also, our church has moved on women’s equality. We had women elders and women deacons back in the 1970s. Our associate pastor, Cherise Gardner, who left back in August to become the senior pastor at Long Beach Church, was ordained in our church in 2013. She was one of the first women ordained in the Pacific Union after the vote on ordination.

**AToday:** What social action or community service are you currently involved in?
**Leonard:** In the past year we’ve started two nonprofit organizations to collaborate with a number groups—business and government entities in our city—to help at-risk families and at-risk children in our community.

The first that we started is called Caesura Youth Orchestra. This organization has begun providing music lessons to children in an elementary school in our city that has an over 80 percent rate of kids on the school lunch program. These kids are coming from families that don’t often have the resources to do musical education on their own. And like a lot of school systems around the country, school music programs have been cut, so there’s very little music education happening in the Glendale public schools, especially in the elementary and middle schools.

So this organization is coming in and teaching music classes four days a week after school to children who don’t have access to music otherwise. The organization provides instruments, brings in the instructors, brings in volunteers from major orchestras and musical organizations in the city of Los Angeles, who are looking for ways to give back to the community.

In addition to giving music lessons, in time they will also form a youth orchestra that will provide opportunity for the kids who are getting the instruction at school. They can then be part of this orchestra that will have rehearsals, providing an outlet for kids to be engaged in something constructive after school rather than being on their own and being more likely to get involved in gang-related activity.

The other organization is called Glendale Communitas Initiative, which is a nonprofit we’ve begun with the support of our sister Adventist church, Vallejo Drive, to intentionally collaborate with the religious congregations of our city no matter what their affiliation or denominational background. So far we have fifteen member congregations who are part of this network from twelve different denominations. We’re still working to reach out to Jewish and Muslim congregations that are in town as well.

Along with those churches, we are networking with the other nonprofits in our city and working with local businesses and government officials to create a collaborative program where we come along side families who are at or below the poverty line who are on the verge of homelessness. These would be individuals and families who aren’t homeless yet but who if something doesn’t change for them soon, they may become homeless. The Glendale Communitas Initiative would work with these families and provide a case worker, who would help the families connect with resources in the government sector and the nonprofit sector that can assist them in getting on their feet.

Secondly, we would provide some financial assistance in the form of helping with rent, helping with utilities, maybe getting a car repaired, getting an appliance repaired, so they can continue to function and not get further behind because of these important repairs. Maybe we would help out with some medical expenses on a limited level as well. If they would benefit from going back to school, we could provide assistance for up to two years to pay for their tuition at Glendale Community College.

The third component of this is to bring supportive mentors to work with the family over the next year in an encouraging, supportive role. These mentors would come from the congregations or from other civic groups like Rotary or Glendale Young Professionals. Those people would come together and each mentor would meet with a family member an hour per week for an entire year.

The purpose of this is to reduce poverty in city by 10 percent over the next five years. But the second thing is to bring congregations and organizations together who have all been really working on their own and not having much interaction of significance together. We can come together around our commonality of wanting to do the work of compassion, of justice in our area, to break down barriers that have divided us religiously and that really have kept us from knowing the good things that each other have already been doing. We want to build a network of communication where we can be more effective in serving the needs of families in our city and making our city a more just and compassionate place.
AToday: Is Communitas currently operating?

Leonard: Our executive director and finance director have been putting the infrastructure in place over the last five months to bring the congregations together, bringing together an advisory board of the different nonprofits, businesses and government entities. So we’ve been building the infrastructure. We just hired our case worker who will be the professional contact with the families, so we’re beginning the process of bringing in families to be mentored. We’ll be starting that process in February. So we’re just on the verge of officially launching.

AToday: Can you clarify the relationship between the Glendale Adventist Church and these two new nonprofits? How will your congregation interact with these nonprofits moving forward?

Leonard: We have a church leader and a church member who sit on the Caesura Youth Orchestra board. Our church will continue to be involved when music professionals who are members of our church would like to assist in the training and instruction. Church members have been contributing their used instruments. As the program expands, our church facility will be utilized for individual instrument lessons, orchestra rehearsals and citywide concerts.

With Communitas, I’m the president and board chairperson. Our church members will volunteer to be part of the mentorship program. And the families in our congregation who can currently benefit from the stability program will enroll. Church members can nominate eligible people they know in Glendale to be considered as well. And all of the congregations who are part of the network will be doing the same thing. But those will be the two significant contributions.

Our church has invested significant financial resources in both of these organizations to get them on their feet. We expect long term funding to come from grants and other donors, but our church put in a significant amount of seed capital to get these things off the ground.

AToday: What are your plans for the future?

Leonard: The City of Glendale has a significant Armenian population. In fact in the next five years, over fifty percent of our residents will be people of Armenian descent. This actually goes back to another way our church has been welcoming and inclusive. Back in the early 1980s, our congregation welcomed two other language groups onto our campus to have church services. One was an Armenian group. They’re part of our congregation with an Armenian-language service. We also have a Romanian language worship service.

One thing we’re working on, our English and Armenian-speaking groups will have a special memorial Sabbath on April 18, the Sabbath before the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide. That will be a Sabbath to remember the atrocity and to pray for on-going reconciliation between Armenia and Turkey. We’ll try to invite in officials within our city who are of Armenian heritage to be a part of that service. And we’ll also participate in the city-wide gathering on April 19.

Even though we welcomed this Armenian congregation as part of our church, we have a lot of work to do to try to build relationships with the Armenian community. Our church has not been shifting to reflect the demographic of our city, so we have work to do to become more welcoming and inclusive and connected with the Armenian community.

AToday: What advice do you have for pastors who are interested in learning more about being a peace church or actually becoming one?

Leonard: I would say there’s a lot of good information on the APF website that gives an introduction. Then I think any of the churches who are either certified or are in the process of getting certified would be thrilled to talk about what they’re doing in their local contexts to give ideas. For our congregation it would be a privilege to have a phone conversation or have a sit-down with somebody else who wants to find out what this could look like.
I can even share from my experience starting a church in Atlanta—the Canton Adventist Church—and how we built the DNA in that congregation to be a community church.[4] I really sought to build bridges with different groups of people and serve those in need in our community. Zane Yi is a professor at Loma Linda now, but he followed me at Canton, and he continued that approach, adding an after-school tutoring program.[5] Attendance on Sabbath is around fifty—it’s a small church—but it has the DNA of networking with the community. So it’s something that is close to my heart and close to a number of people in our congregation that would feel privileged to share.

I would also say that if you’re thinking about how hard this is to get going, don’t think you have to have the perfect plan in order to get going. Just start. Just start reaching out in some way. Start by setting up appointments with other congregations in your community to say, “Hey, I wanted to get acquainted. I’d like to know the other leaders in our community.” Or take the time to start attending city hall meetings. It doesn’t have to be anything drastic and dramatic, just pick a way that you’re going to move outside of the walls of your church and start building relationships. Just start there and see where it goes.


Be Brave

By Cherilyn Clough, Jan. 28, 2015  See the art that goes with this essay at Visual Arts.

The world is full of hurting people. Much of this pain comes from the misrepresentation of God by parents and religious leaders. As someone who has dealt with both narcissistic and religious abuse, it took me decades to trust God. When I realized God was better than I thought He was, I was filled with joy and wanted to share it with the world. Frederick Buechner sums up my mission with these words:

“The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet.”

I was raised to worry about what people think. I was also not used to speaking my truth in private much less in public. The first time I posted in a chat group seven years ago, I screamed out loud and scared my cats. Since then I have learned to ignore the fear of what other people might think of me.

Not everyone was excited about my better understanding of God. Some relatives still clung to a more legalistic mindset and felt I was no longer walking with God. It was hard to have them misrepresenting what I believe to other people, but there is nothing I can do about what they think and say.

As I grew in understanding of God’s character, I also began to see how God had been misrepresented to me while I was growing up. The narcissistic minds that tried to control me and tell me I was wrong began to get more and more frustrated that I no longer allowed them to abuse me.

I wrote a blog for several years for my Adventist friends, but I realized I was preaching to the choir and I wanted to go outside of my comfort zone. The common ground I found to do that is narcissism.

I have had several names for my blog and most were very religious sounding. About a year ago I read an ancient account of Little Red Riding Hood where she was not rescued by the woodsman or a prince charming and she was not swallowed by the wolf.

In this oldest story, Little Red told the wolf she needed to use the outhouse. The wolf tied a string to her finger and allowed her to go outside Grandma’s cabin to use it. That’s when Little Red tied the string to the outhouse door and made her escape. In this narrative, Little Red was not a victim, but used her freedom of choice to set a boundary and rescue herself.

After reading this story, I realized Little Red is symbol of all who have been innocently skipping through life, smelling the flowers, when they were suddenly shocked by wolves in sheep’s clothing. Little Red represents all who were abused in the name of love in the home and in the church.

I have posted a lot of information about narcissism and survivors of childhood abuse. I have plans to bring God further into my writing in the future, but my first goal is to mingle among the hurting so they know I empathize and understand their pain, before I bid them to follow Jesus.

Recently, I received a message at my Little Red Survivor page from a girl who has a page full of witchcraft pictures and asked me to lead her to a group for survivors. I sent the info she wanted, then she wrote back to say, “Please don’t be offended by my witchcraft pictures, I really need your help and I am just exploring ancient ways. I can tell you are a Christian and I just hope you are not put off because your blog has really helped me.”

This is how I know who to pray for each day. I am being allowed to pray over and speak into the life of someone who otherwise would never cross paths with me. I was glad to write back:
“Never worry about what others think my dear! You are free to be yourself with me and I hope others too. If we cannot allow people to explore ideas then we become like our abusers. I for one believe in God and I understand He is not an abuser like I once thought. I believe God grants freedom to all—it is false religion and humans who have tried to control others and ruined our world. You have a great day!”

About a year ago, I took an art class where we decided to make art for 101 days. This allowed me to create all kinds of messes and in the process I began to create art that spoke to me and others. This led to people asking if they could buy prints so I started selling them on Etsy. The biggest goal for my art is not to make money from prints, but to help the people who read my blog find hope and strength to deal with their abuse.

My goal is for the readers of my blog to realize we are no longer victims. We can stand up and let our voices be heard. Jesus gives us our individuality and He empowers our voices. We were not meant to live as the slaves of our abusers because, “Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom.”

http://www.littleredsurvivor.com

https://www.etsy.com/shop/LittleRedSurvivorArt

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Sharing is caring!
Little Red Riding...Survivor

Art by Cherilyn Clough, Jan 28, 2015  When Cherilyn Clough, a survivor of many forms of abuse, read an old form of the fairy tale, Little Red Riding Hood, in which Red finds a way to outwit the wolf and survive, she created this painting as her symbol of survival. Read her story in Poetry and Prose.