News and Opinion from Adventist Today

July 29 - August 3, 2012

**NEWS**

**Second Man Arrested in Trademark Battle over the Name "Seventh-day Adventist":** There's just something about that name! A second leader of the self-named Creation Seventh-day Adventist Church in Tennessee has surrendered to authorities, while refusing to remove a church sign he says bears a name chosen by God Himself....

**Mission Catalyst Releases Video Report on its Church Planting Projects:** In contrast to the Creation Adventist Church that insists on including the church name in its title, Mission Catalyst accepts all current Adventist Church doctrines—but chooses to leave the name behind as it plants churches....

**Polls Report that Five Percent of Americans are Vegetarians:** Vegetarianism appears to be holding strong among Adventists (41%), while one-in-20 Americans in the general population follows the dietary practice. The incidence of veganism among Adventists is higher than in the general public, but only by a factor of six or seven....
Adventist Television among the First to Win a Private Broadcasting License in Malawi: In an African nation where Adventists represent an estimated near-10 percent of the population, the church has been awarded one of the nation's historic "first" television frequencies....

California Adventist Academy Graduate Wins Gates Millennium Scholarship: A young Korean immigrant to California has parlayed her straight-A report cards into a full scholarship to Andrews University, where she plans to pursue studies toward a degree in ophthalmology....

Columbia Union Conference Constituency Votes to Authorize Ordination of Women Pastors: By a more than 70 percent majority, 271 voting delegates to a special constituency session of the Columbia Union have enabled ordination of women as pastors within their territory. The meeting (Sunday afternoon, July 29) was attended by Elder Ted Wilson, president of the General Conference, who urged opposition to the main motion....(this item was covered in a special update earlier this week)

OPINION

Internet Addiction Disorder: Blogger Lawrence Downing believes the virtual world is producing psychological effects similar to addiction in millions of people, and that Adventism has a calling to help those caught in their grip....

A Second Look at the One Project: Blogger Nathan Brown says a gathering of "The One" emphasis on Jesus—this time in Australia, after its inauguration in Seattle early this year—brought scores of participants in from Sydney, Melbourne and Perth for nuanced presentations crowded with content and people....

The Heartburn of the 5,000 (plus women and children): Debbonnaire Kovacs looks at the hard-to-digest aftermath of Jesus' feeding of the 5,000 and His attempt to feed the crowd with follow-up lessons that went right over their heads....

SUBSCRIBERS' BONUS FEATURE

High Academics and a Positive Climate Turn Around Struggling Adventist School: A commitment to enrollment of non-Adventist students and S.T.E.M. (an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) are elements that have helped revitalize a struggling Adventist school and doubled its enrollment....
Lucan Chartier turned himself in at the Redlands, California, police station last night on a Federal warrant after holding a press conference on the sidewalk near the Loma Linda University Church. He had planned to surrender to U.S. Marshals on the Loma Linda campus, but they did not show up, nor did county sheriff’s deputies or local police. Campus police did ask him to move from the place where he was on the lawn behind the church and move his press conference to the sidewalk and he complied immediately.

Reporters from the daily newspapers in San Bernardino and Riverside were present, as well as the local community news service in Loma Linda. Chartier distributed a news release and related statements, and answered questions for half an hour before friends drove him to the police station.

Adventist Today has previously reported on this case which dates back to 2006 when the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination sued for trademark protection against the Creation Seventh Day Adventist Church of Guys, Tennessee. This small group splintered off from the denomination because it follows a more fundamentalist version of Adventist faith which it claims represents the original teachings of the Adventist movement.

Walter “Chick” McGill, pastor of the Creation church, was arrested by San Bernardino County Sheriff’s deputies on Friday, July 13, on the grounds of the Loma Linda church. He is involved in a hunger strike in his cell in the county jail. Both men were arrested on Federal Court bench warrants because they have defied the order of a Federal judge to cease and desist using the name “Seventh-day Adventist.”

The North American Division of the General Conference issued a statement soon after McGill’s arrest claiming that it never intended for him to go to prison. George Johnson, the spokesman for the denomination, stated that it respects the religious rights of McGill and his group, but wants to stop the misleading use of the denomination’s name by a group that is not affiliated.

McGill and Chartier believe that God has told them to name their group Creation Seventh Day Adventist Church. They believe that if they were to comply with the Federal court order, they would be disobeying God.

“This is a silly situation,” one pastor employed by the Adventist denomination told Adventist Today. “You would think that the people at the GC would be smart enough to see that they are creating publicity by the tactics they are using. This is a miniscule group that would otherwise be unknown.”

McGill and Chartier contend that they have not tried to mislead anyone about their relationship to the denomination. One of their handouts even includes a quote from Judge J. Daniel Breen that “there is no evidence that the Defendant intended to confuse the public into believing that his church was one of the Plaintiff’s.”

There has been a proliferation of independent congregations and ministries in the Adventist movement over the last couple of decades. Denominational leaders are concerned that this trend may reduce the ability of the
denomination to “speak with one voice” and weaken their control over the local church. Before he retired in 2006, Dr. William Johnsson, beloved long-time editor of the Adventist Review, wrote a book entitled The Fragmentation of Adventism, commenting on this trend.

It is unclear how long Chartier and McGill will be held. Local news media in Tennessee have reported in recent days that the offending, hand-painted sign is still visible at their church.

Share your thoughts about this article:
Stephen Ferguson
4 days ago

I believe it is known in PR as the Barbra Streisand effect, which is "a colloquial term to describe the phenomenon whereby an attempt to hide or remove a piece of information has the unintended consequence of publicizing the information more widely. It is named after American entertainer Barbra Streisand, whose attempt in 2003 to suppress photographs of her residence inadvertently generated further publicity":

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbra_Streisand_effect

I think the GC has the moral right to act the way it does, and it isn't responsible for these men being in jail. It is these men's own decision to refuse to comply with an order of Caesar re the theft of property. However, that is not to say that the GC has acted smart in a PR sense.

Timo Onjukka
4 days ago

What a thrilling chess game. Intentionally camped out at LLUC. I guess the Tennessee prison was less than acceptable accommodations. Hope you folks enjoy your stay in the Federale Hotel. Is there anything else we can get you? Pillows? Mints? You've engineered some fine publicity...and most will never investigate the real story how you planned all of this.

 Seriously, how is it that we attract such a fringe element? Grown men, acting as if they are being hurt by a church with full rights to conduct its affairs according prevailing laws. Pandering to a gullible public and reveling in the inanities of the sound-bites.

I agree with Stephen-and it is not too late-but I believe corporate leadership lacks the verve to address this issue head-on, with forthright disclosure. We as a church seem to thrive on PR train wrecks...LSU, WO, ADRA....etc, ad nauseum.

Andrew Hanson
4 days ago

It’s desperately sad that Chick and Luke couldn’t have been embraced as Adventist believers years ago when Chick began his dialogue with professors at the Theological Seminary at Andrews. There are thousands of NAD Adventists “in good standing” that could care less about the 28, that are just as eccentric, and far less concerned about Truth and the world’s suffering. As far as I’m concerned, Chick and Luke are canaries in the mine of Adventist theology and practice. I’ve talked to them, each of us respectful of the other, brothers bound together in Christian love. Nut cases all.

William Noel
4 days ago

Second Man Arrested in Trademark Battle over the Name “Seventh-day... https://www.atoday.org/article/1318/news/august-headlines/second-man-a...
Andrew,

You make a good point. Often these situations have a long history that is not obvious or apparent when it explodes into confrontation and the public view. Many of these situations might be avoided if we gave the questions and issues people raise enough respect to address them and promote understanding instead of dismissing them with a short "because this is what we believe."

Giselle A
4 days ago

Decades ago, the General Conference Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists applied for, and was granted, a trademark on the name “Seventh-day Adventist.” The United States, by granting this trademark request, indicated thereby that the General Conference Corporation was entitled to sole use of that name, and that it would be protected from others trying to use it in an “unauthorized” manner.

There are a few issues that arise with the above that places the General Conference Corporation in opposition to the principles of Biblical Christianity.

First, trademarks are applied to matters of “intellectual property.” Adventist doctrine clearly states that the name “Seventh-day Adventist” is of divine origin. “We are Seventh-day Adventists. Are we ashamed of our name? We answer, 'No, no! We are not. It is the name the Lord has given us. It points out the truth that is to be the test of the churches.'”  [Adventist author Ellen G. White in Selected Messages, Book 2, 384, emphases added]

In other words, the Lord gave that name to His people, and though the government, and well-meaning individuals who do not accept this doctrine, and worldlings in general, offer the advice, “Just change your name, and everything will be fine,” it is clearly not that simple.

In fact, the name in question “Seventh day Adventist” was given to Bible-believing Christians before the Corporation that now claims sole ownership of it was even formed! Further, even the Conference claims (on paper) to accept that the name is of divine origin, endorsed and strongly promoted by prophetic writer Ellen White as an integral part of the faith. And so, its claim that the name is its “intellectual property” is deceptive on at least two counts. First, it cannot possibly be “owned” by the Conference, since the name pre-dated it; and second, it was conceived in God’s “intellect” and is therefore HIS property, not man’s. Neither the Father nor the Son has applied for a trademark, to have the human courts defend Their right to use it or give it to others faithful servants as They will. No, that was done by man.

It is the Living God's prerogative alone to give “names” to His people – it is a sign of His authority and headship over the Church, just as Adam naming all the animals was a sign of his dominion over the physical world. (Genesis 2:19, Genesis 17:5, Genesis 35:10, etc.)

Why is it that the General Conference is coming after the CSDA Church? Their claim is that the CSDA members, by bearing the name “Seventh-day Adventist” and yet teaching different doctrines, is misrepresenting the people that are authorized (by the U.S. Government) to use that name. The concept of God’s authority vs. the U.S. Government’s authority is a whole other (but related) matter. But we might well ask, what are the “different doctrines” that so concern the General Conference leadership that they should seek to bring their “kingly power” to bear against that little movement?
The WORD OF GOD, plainly says that “whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.” (1John 3:9) By virtue of merely being “born again,” a man’s heart is replaced. The cold heart of stone is removed, and a warm heart of flesh is installed. (Ezekiel 11:19) In many Biblical contexts, “flesh” is a sign of the human, the flawed, the corrupt; however, here it is contrasted with “stone,” to emphasize its characteristics of warmth, life, and the potential to grow.

CSDA doctrine, which is unique in many respects, based on what I have read and know, teaches that a born-again Christian will never again willingly commit an act that is known to be sinful. And further, the process of “sanctification” that takes place thereafter involves ceasing to do evil, and learning to do righteousness, (Isaiah 1:16, 17) without – as an act of faith – even considering the possibility of “backsliding” into those errors and sins that we have left behind. This is because when a Christian truly repents of a sin, and confesses it, we are not merely forgiven, but it is written, “He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1John 1:9, emphasis added)

Satan has inspired the spirit of force, which true Adventists believe to be “the last resort of every false religion,” [Ellen G. White, The Signs of the Times, May 6, 1897, emphasis added] within the most logical enemies of the CSDA Church… their former brethren. What is the true reason why the CSDA evangelists are being persecuted and incarcerated? It is because this doctrine, different from the Conference Corporation’s version of the Gospel, is being taught under the name “Seventh-day Adventist.” This, and other true doctrines of the Bible, are being restored to their place in the Gospel message, in the Adventist message, and Satan is activating anyone who follows his principles (including force, persecution, greed, corruption, selfishness, and various other works of the flesh) to move against the messengers.

When it comes to what Adventists once believed, and should believe, about genuinely becoming a Christian, we may read, “Not one should be buried with Christ by baptism unless they are critically examined whether they have ceased to sin, whether they have fixed moral principles, whether they know what sin is, whether they have moral defilement which God abhors. Find out by close questioning if these persons are really ceasing to sin, if with David they can say, I hate sin with a perfect hatred.” [Ellen G. White, Letter 26d, 1887, p. 6]

“When the doctrine we accept kills sin in the heart, purifies the soul from defilement, bears fruit unto holiness, we may know that it is the truth of God. When benevolence, kindness, tenderheartedness, sympathy, are manifest in our lives; when the joy of right doing is in our hearts; when we exalt Christ, and not self, we may know that our faith is of the right order.” [Ellen G. White, Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings, p146]

But these teachings, and this doctrine, are not founded on the words of Adventist writers and pastors of today.

Satan hates the doctrine of victory over sin. And why? Because anyone who accepts it, truly, and without doubting, will begin to live as Enoch did, as Elijah did… as Christ did! The sons and daughters of God would be filled with the Holy Spirit and, though the faithful continue to be tempted, for we they have sinful flesh until the Second Advent, they have escaped the power of the enemy, settling firmly and unwaveringly into everlasting life.

“For he is not a Jew [SDA], which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew [SDA], which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” Rom 2:28-29

“Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept
the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.” Rev 3:10-11

Any new creature born from God, has Christ seed remaining in him/her, is a Seventh day Adventist before Christ's eyes, in the same way "Christ was a Seventh day Adventist in all intents and purposes." [Ellen White]

Note: I am sorry for this long post, but it was very important to share this, to help others see the real and spiritual issue behind this controversy and arrests.

William Noel
4 days ago

Giselle,

You're a little off the mark about trademarks and intellectual property. Patents protect intellectual property and inventions. Trademarks protect names, logos, and similar. Copyrights are typically used to protect such creations as musical compositions and writing but can also be used to protect names and logos. Patents, trademarks and copyrights are so close to each other that it is easy to get them confused unless you're working with them on a regular basis.

Timo Onjukka
3 days ago

William, we all have a crude and ancient makers-mark, scribed in our own very DNA, in every cell. The deceiver came to say "He's not your daddy, I am. Besides, he cannot be trusted"

In the final analysis who, and who's we are will be the salvific thing.
There will be many who say "we took your name, and did all these things" and he will say "I knew thee not".

The father of lies has deceived each of our orphaned hearts...but the father of truth and love calls his own, and they hear his voice. Interesting that this offshoot group seizes the name, infringes -intentionally (Walter has stated this himself)-on the appropriate rights of the corporate church- in order to claim prophecy on themselves AND apostasy on the corporate church-and they deny the Holy Spirit in God's triune being. Jesus very last words were also his most important. "I will not leave you orphans; I will send you the Holy Spirit". No wonder these orphans try steal a name- they have rejected that which assured them sdoption!.

Sadly, these men have orphaned themselves, and attempted to steal a name, when in fact their names were already entered, and the adoption papers sealed in blood. There will come many deceivers...both within and without the church. Seriously, to use the law of the land on the premise the law of heaven dictates they do so (take the name) is laughable as trying to sue God through "Caesar".

I have one question for these three men; was Jesus in any way using the courts that condemned him to prove His heavenly calling, as you say you do (that your use of the name is a moral issue)? You seem to have been turned over to your strong delusion.
Thanks for trying to clarify my understanding regarding trademarks and intellectual property but what I said above was based on what WIPO says regarding intellectual property.

"What is Intellectual Property?"

Intellectual property (IP) refers to creations of the mind: inventions, literary and artistic works, and symbols, names, images, and designs used in commerce.

IP is divided into two categories: Industrial property, which includes inventions (patents), trademarks, industrial designs, and geographic indications of source; and Copyright, which includes literary and artistic works such as novels, poems and plays, films, musical works, artistic works such as drawings, paintings, photographs and sculptures, and architectural designs.

http://www.wipo.int/about-ip/en/

My argument is the following:

If the name “Seventh day Adventist” was of Divine Origin, and if the Church of Christ is not of this world, and don’t react according to the works of the flesh (Gal 5: 19-21) but walks according to the Fruit of the Spirit, (Gal 5: 22-25) and if we as Christians acknowledge the Divine Truth, that the SOURCE of every Christian and thus The Church is the Almighty, the Creator. **How can the leaders of the Corporation of G.C lie and exalt themselves by saying that the name that was Divinely given by God to a people, (who believe in the purity of Biblical truths, like the Second Coming of Christ, the Investigative Judgment, the Commandments of God, etc) is of private use because they were the original creators and the source of inspiration, when that name existed even before the General Conference was even formed?**

This is what they say to the Courts of the Land, thru legal documentation, but this is an outrageous lie.

“Behold, My servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit. And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto My chosen: for the Lord GOD shall slay thee, and call His servants by another name.” Isaiah 65:14-15

If Creation Seventh day Adventists say they have received a Divine revelation about a new name, without receiving any instruction to remove the oldest part of that name. Who are we, simple mortals, to punish them in the name of Christ with the sword of Cesar for following their own consciences and religious convictions?

It is evident that many modern Adventists really don't know the character of the Son and the Heavenly Father that are revealed in the Scriptures? If they knew THEM they would act and speak as Christ would, and they would love their neighbor as themselves, they would speak words of mercy and encouragement.

Christ said: “These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.” John 16:2-3

I would not dispute the Almighty’s ability to arbitrate those who are to receive His gifts. But then again, **those are His choices.** When a human being takes it upon himself to decide what God should do, and then go on to
DO those things, as if they were doing God a favor, then we have the sacrifice of Cain. It was the best of his efforts, but it was not what God wanted. Then we have the error of Uzza who, thinking the ark was about to be dragged through the mud (literally speaking) put forth unsanctified hands to steady the holy object.

This is an explanation that human policies, when they are at odds with God’s instructions, have human victims. Real people get hurt when such things take place, like CSDAs are getting hurted now, and true Christians should acknowledge this.

I wonder where are the Gamaliels of today, who at least acknowledge that God is the ONLY ONE WHO should be in charge of judging this matter, and not men.

William Noel
3 days ago

Giselle,

Regardless of our feelings about how things should or should not be, we must deal with the reality of law as it exists. If a name is registered with the government, then it has an identified owner who is entitled to exercise the protections offered by the law. Those who violate that ownership do so at the risk of suffering such penalties as the law allows.

If you wish to lobby the government for a change in the law, feel free to do so through your elected representatives. But don't get your hopes up because such legal protections have been written into the laws of almost every culture and nation since before the ancient Chaldeans, who recorded it in the Code of Hammurabi.

(new name)
3 days ago

This is a sure sign that Satan has infiltrated the church from within. We are counseled in the spirit of prophecy that we are to stay clear of civilian courts. The church does not even follow the rules it is supposed to be upheld by. I truly believe that the statement made by Mrs. White in EARLY WRITINGS is manifest even more so in our time than in hers: "Only 1 in 20 church members are adequately prepared to meet the Lord, the rest are just pew warmers." Sad indeed that church members of this corporation (business) are spending so much time and human effort and money on lawsuits that ultimately will be held against them by the Creator. There are people leaving the church due to all this confusion. This corporation will be held responsible for leading people astray. Bottom Line: The SDA Church is not what it used to be. It has evolved, as everything must with time but I believe the church is on the wrong track. By the way....has anyone visited the SDA Headquarters in Maryland? Very impressive. It must have cost millions yet ministers in third world countries do not earn enough to pay their rent or feed their families. My family has had to help ministers outside of the United States with their livelihood. IN GOD I TRUST.

Moderator
3 days ago

Name disallowed.
Please do not utilize over-the-top baiting comments handle.
Posting privileges may be withheld.
"The SDA Church is not what it used to be."

When was the SDA Church what is used to be exactly?

- Was it when members tried to argue God was nature (Pantheism) like Dr Kellogue?
- Was it when members tried to argue that Jesus was a created being (Arianism), where the Trinity only became an official SDA FB in the early 20th Cent?
- Was it when the early SDA Church believed the 'Shut Door', thinking no more would be saved?
- Was it when the Church was extremely legalistic in its first couple of decades, and it took Jones and Wagner (backed by Mrs White) to try and turn the Church towards a more righteousness by faith mindset?
- Was it after Ellen White's death and the 1919 Bible Conference, when Elder Daniels and other people who knew Ellen White were ousted by young conservative Zealots, who built a fundamentalist mythology about Ellen White that was neither factual nor desired by Mrs White herself?
- Was it during WW2 when there were major schisms over military service?
- Was it during the 1970s when the false fundamentalist Zealots came to light with allegations about Ellen White's authority?
- Was it during the Desmond Ford controversies of the 1980s?
- Was it during the WO, evolution and other controversies of today?
- Was it during all the other schisms, controversies and heresies throughout?

The SDA Church has never been, nor has there been a 'golden age', and it always has and always will continue to evolve by continuing the Reformation Process, according to present truth and progressive revelation, as it should be.

David Aguilar
3 days ago

Some years ago, I heard of a painting that was subtly anti-papal. It showed the pope, sitting on a throne, and surrounded by men dressed in fine clothing. On the other side of the painting, Christ was shown, simply dressed and riding into Jerusalem on a donkey.

The Spirit of Christ has not changed in 2000 years. He cannot work through those who have the money to waste on such finery as (new name - whatever it once was) lists, so I agree with him entirely. Court cases, fueled by tithes that ought to have been given to the work of the Gospel, demonstrate exactly where this gentle spirit is NOT found. I've seen some pretty weak attempts at justifying the Conference's actions here, but really... none of them stand up to the character of the Redeemer that the Church was originally created to teach. There's no excuse for this kind of behavior, very simple.

Timo Onjukka
3 days ago

Except, in brutal honesty, David, this whole chess match was orchestrated to effect just such a thing. This group you represent has capitalized on its intentional open and notorious use of the duly protected name, to push the issue. Had Walter, following a God of order, submitted to the law of the land (and it is NOT against your religious expression...unless you chose to position yourself there) and chosen a legal name, you would not have painted the GC into the corner with your little sign.
And yes, I know, if I quote "let he who is without sin cast the first stone"
...you guys have that covered, too.
Artful, your deceptions, from the beginning.

Truly sad such waste results from such deceptions. Yet, somehow though it may be a PR debacle atm, the purposes of God have been served.

Nic Samojluk
2 days ago

When John and James complained that someone was performing miracles in the name of Jesus without proper authorization, did Jesus order him incarcerated? Did Jesus resort to the civil authorities? No! He told his disciples to leave the man alone. Can we follow the example of Jesus in this?

Elaine Nelson
3 days ago

Neither God nor the Divine have standing in court.

Bea
3 days ago

Creation Seventh-day Adventist Church is not the same as Seventh-day Adventist Church. Excuse my ignorance but it looks like two different entities. When people name their organizations they can use similar words as long as it is not a duplication.

Timo Onjukka
3 days ago

Walter McGills choosing that name, as articulated by himself, was to force the church to sue him, and claim he was a prophet (because he said he'd be sued) and then call the SDA church into apostasy (because they sued "a church member").
So far his plan seems to be working; he's cost the church money, he's gained free pity and PR, and enjoys a rather twisted notoriety with his contorted heterodox teachings.

You've apparently not gone to his websites, or listened to the rhetoric, Bea. There's a wealth of information about him as well by him out here in the wonderful web...He claims his is the only TRUE SDA church, so, yes, there is intentional confusion. Methinks if God inspired this man and was behind his ministry there might be an altogether different means and message.

Stephen Ferguson
3 days ago

Agreed. As I said, McGill's plan was what they call in PR terms 'The Barbra Streisand Effect' - and everything is no doubt proceeding in accordance with McGill's plans. I think the GC has been caught in a catch-22 ambush.
Nic Samojluk
2 days ago

My opinion is that the "Adventist" name is now a generic name like the term "Baptist." I counted nearly 100 religious denominations using the Baptist word in their official names. These two men should be released from jail and allowed to rejoin their families and their church. They are not a threat to society and should not be incarcerated with common criminals.

Nic Samojluk
2 days ago

There are nearly 100 denominations in the U.S. alone using the "Baptist" generic word in their official names, and they are not suing each other in an attempt to monopolize the Baptist name. Can we emulate them on this?

Bea
3 days ago

Excuse me, I didn't intend to get into what he is all about. I am simply addressing the fact that along with 7th day Adventist he has included Creation. When we file for a LLC, Inc. etc. as long as we don't duplicate what someone already has filed as the name of their corporation, it is legal. Would someone please answer this? I understand the logistics of not wanting to share part of a name especially when there is a feeling of discord and mischief.

Stephen Ferguson
3 days ago

The morality of the GC’s actions comes down to 4 biblical questions:

- **According to biblical commands is a name ‘property’?**

- **According to biblical commands, does the CSDA have the right to claim ‘divine exception’ to steal the name ‘Seventh-day Adventist’?**

- **According to biblical commands, does the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists have the moral right to commence legal action in a secular court against CSDA to prevent the stealing of its name?**

- **According to biblical commands, has the General Conference been moral in allowing McGill and Co to go to Jail?**

1. **According to biblical commands is a name property?**
The first issue is whether the name ‘Seventh-day Adventist’ is ‘property’ or not? The question is obviously important, because if it is ‘property’, it can be ‘stolen’, and the stealing of that name is a breach of the 8th Commandments. Moreover, any person who is unauthorised to use that name may be breaching the 9th Commandment against bearing false witness by ‘passing off’, causing confusion.

Names are extremely important in the Bible. In fact, theologically the act of giving someone a name in effect gives the bestower certain rights of dominion and ownership over the bestowee. You see this way back in Genesis 2, where God gets Adam to name all the animals, to demonstrate mankind’s dominion over the natural world. You see if with names changes from Abram to Abraham, Jacob to Israel or Saul to Paul.

Moreover, this is not just a Jewish thing but a common notion found throughout the world in many cultures. King Nebuchadnezzar renamed Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah as Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Likewise, in many tribal societies, one never reveals their true, secret name, as it is believed this would bestow powers over the person.

Finally, in Numbers 27:4 we see a close link between the notion of preserving one’s name for posterity and the possession of property. We also see the sin of ‘passing off’, when Ahab’s wife Jezebel conspired to obtain a vineyard by writing letters in Ahab’s name to the elders and nobles in Naboth’s town, instructing them to have two scoundrels bear false witness claiming that Naboth has cursed both God and the king (1 Kings 21:8,20-21).

Therefore, it is reasonably clear that a name is ‘property’, and as such it can be ‘stolen’. More specifically, to ‘pass off’ using someone else’s name without permission, as Jezebel did, is actually two great sins of stealing and bearing false witness.

2. According to biblical commands, does the CSDA have the right to claim ‘divine exception’ to steal the name ‘Seventh-day Adventist’?

The main argument of the CSDA is that they are not ‘stealing’ the name SDA because they believe God told them to take it. Pastor McGill and others have claimed to have had visions to this effect. However, obviously those arguments are irrelevant to the SDA Church, because to accept that argument would be to accept McGill is a true prophet, something it cannot do. If a thief breaks into my house, steals by jewellery but claims, ‘God said it was ok,’ I obviously am unlikely to accept that argument and will simply call the Police. Therefore, from the perspective of the SDA Church, the CSDA is clearly stealing or making a false witness by passing off to be Seventh-day Adventists, contrary to the 10 Commandments.

A good expansion of the law here is found in Jesus’ comment in Matt 15:4-7. In that situation, Jesus noted that despite the Commandment to ‘Honour your father and mother’, people would get around this by saying their property was dedicated to the Temple. As such, people often argued that to give money to their parents would be to break their oath to God.

A similar situation by analogy is happening here. McGill is trying to rely on his ‘devotion to God’ to nullify the clear word of God against stealing and being a false witness.

3. According to biblical commands, does the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists have the moral right to commence legal action in a secular court against CSDA to prevent the stealing of its
Finally, many people have argued that the GC has somehow been immoral or unchristian in bringing legal action against our brothers and sisters in the CSDA, supposedly in contravention of scripture. But the major point is – they aren’t our brethren! CSDA itself says we are not their brethren, calling the SDA Church apostate.

Moreover, provided the SDA Church has complied with Jesus’ prescribed procedure for a wayward brother in Matt 18, the SDA Church is entitled to treat McGill and the CSDA as a pagan or tax collector. That might sound harsh, but again, Jesus’ exact words were: ‘If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.’ (Matt 18:17).

CSDA (and their ex-Adventist and CB supporters) often try to raise the Gamaliel example in Acts 5:34,38-39 for the proposition that the GC should have done nothing. But that example is not directly analogous. The Apostles were not passing off pretending to be imposter High Priests or the Sanhedrin, and no doubt if they had, the outcome may have been very different. Rather the Apostles were preaching their message clearly in the distinguishing name of Jesus of Nazareth, and it was the right to preach the message itself that Gamaliel was addressing.

Likewise, at no time has the GC said McGill and co cannot teach their message, including notion of Binitarianism and the rest. Rather, the GC is principally concerned with the common stealing of its property, and the dangers of confusion resulting in CSDA ‘passing off’ to be the SDA Church.

4. According to biblical commands, has the General Conference been moral in allowing McGill and Co to go to Jail?

Much has also been said against the SDA Church for allowing these men to go to jail. However, the truth is, it is the Court alone who is sending these men to jail for contempt, for not respecting the Court’s authority contrary to Rom 13:1-6. Again, McGill and Co are utilising a Matt 15:4-7 argument to justify their behaviour. But it should be remember that the Court are ‘God’s servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.’ (Rom 13:4)

Thus, I believe the GC has no moral case to answer for re its action. Whether the GC has been political smart – that is a different question.

William Noel
3 days ago

Stephen,

Excellent analysis! Bravo! On-point the whole way through.

Bea
3 days ago

I have not heard of this man or this CreationSDA church until now. I did go to a website a minute ago to take a
quick look - so I don't have real knowledge about this specific situation. But if we could expand the conversation to include the fact that we, as the official world church of SDA who holds the trademark, have NO tolerance for any deviations of what we hold as true and holy. We also believe we are the ONLY true church, the remnant, and anyone (from any other church) who will enter the pearly gates of heaven have to first convert to SDA and only then be eligible to enter heaven. We do a good job of bashing other denominations - especially the poor Catholics and 666. We have the only true message given to us by EGW and show great reverence - despite the fact that her writings have basically been copied - mostly word for word.

Think of all the people that have been treated poorly (put mildly) as they have sincerely attempted to enlighten, caution, or challenge a new interpretation of the Bible. If we examine the timeframe of 1960's to the present day, Carnage is the word that flashes through my brain. If we were to search for the 100+ clergy who were defrocked in a short period of time in the '80's what would we find? Some have done church plantings, started congregations on their own, joined mainline Christianity. But from the SDA organization (who holds the trademark) they are considered backsliders and slanderous things are said about them.

I recently went to the official website of the SDA church NAD and read terrible things about Ron Gladden and snide remarks about his ministry. In looking at Ron Gladden's website, positive affirmations toward the church of SDA. The word ecumenical has had negative connotations in our church. I had the opportunity visiting a church of another denomination and found it lovely hear prayer from the pulpit for other churches in that town. They do Vacation Bible School together. They work together supporting charities, etc. We can't even be decent to those we consider as backsliders or who have tarnished the church, or are thinking outside the box - too far. It would be wonderful if we could embrace more expansively our own people - they have been treated severely and thrown out of the organization.

Stephen Ferguson
3 days ago

“But if we could expand the conversation to include the fact that we, as the official world church of SDA who holds the trademark, have NO tolerance for any deviations of what we hold as true and holy.”

Bea, I don’t think that is respectfully true. The SDA Church is in fact quite theologically diverse and tolerant. The fact that CUC could vote to ordain women, and will probably get away with it (whether you agree or disagree), just illustrates that diversity. The fact that the SDA Church has a range of independent ministries, including 3ABN and even AToday, is further proof.

Moreover, as observed by non-Adventist theologian Kenneth Samples, of the Christian Research Institute:

“As an interested outsider with my nose pressed to the window, I see quite a bit of **theological diversity within Seventh-day Adventism.** In some ways it reminds me of present-day evangelicalism. One strand of Adventism appears quite traditional, another very liberal, and still another distinctly evangelical. There also seems to be a segment that is atheological in nature and reflects what I would call a cultural Adventism.” (emphasis added)

See: http://qod.andrews.edu/docs/08_kenneth_samples.pdf

In fact, some outside Christian commentators have even criticised this lack of centralised control, as it has...
arguably prevented the SDA Church from stating ‘the official position’ on a range of subjects:

“Because of Adventism's strong emphasis on progressive scriptural understanding, they have been reluctant to adopt any formal creed. Even their doctrinal statement known as the "27 Fundamental Beliefs" allows for change and revision. Historically, this lack of a formal creed and emphasis on progressive biblical understanding has given place to a wide spectrum of doctrinal interpretation among Adventists. In the 1950s, as today, this tolerance of divergent and sometimes heretical views has hurt the unity and doctrinal soundness of their denomination. This was a critical issue for the evangelicals, who could not hope to accurately represent the position of Adventism to the evangelical world if the Adventists themselves lacked consensus as to those positions.” (emphasis added)

See: http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/cri/cri-jrnl/web/crj0005b.html


Do you think this level of diversity and tolerance exists in say the Roman Catholic Church, or even many of the Pentecostal Mega Churches?

“We also believe we are the ONLY true church, the remnant, and anyone (from any other church) who will enter the pearly gates of heaven have to first convert to SDA and only then be eligible to enter heaven.”

Again, a think that is probably a gross overgeneralisation. I am not aware of any official statement that suggests the SDA believes or teaches that only Adventists will go to heaven.

Adventists might say they are a unique remnant people with a special message, having the most truth as found in the Bible, but probably not the truth. Of course, every religion or denomination in the world says that as well – otherwise they wouldn’t be in business.

As with most Christian traditions, the SDA Church has not officially or historically ever held that it possesses all ‘the truth’, in the sense of a final and complete knowledge of God. In fact, we actually say the exact opposite officially! As further stated in the preamble to the 28 SDA Fundamentals, which notes we are open to revision of our statement of fundamental beliefs:

“Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. These beliefs, as set forth here, constitute the church's understanding and expression of the teaching of Scripture. Revision of these statements may be expected at a General Conference session when the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth or finds better language in which to express the teachings of God's Holy Word.” (emphasis added)

Thus, the SDA Church almost uniquely amongst Christendom has no formal creed other than the Bible (2 Tim 3:16), and recognises the principle of present and progressive scriptural truth (2 Pet 1:12). As stated by SDA pioneer Ellen White:

“And the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character.” (Ellen White, Mar 373.2, emphasis added).

You might be getting confused because Adventists make the slight but important distinction between the Church
at Large, comprising all individual believers found a multiple of Christian denominations, compared with the remnant role of the Seventh-day Adventist movement. This is a position also found in many other ‘mainstream’ Christian groups, who no doubt each believe their denomination has a special mission.

This is a concept similarly held by other Christian traditions, including the Roman Catholic faith (see Second Vatican Council Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*), the Eastern Orthodox Church and even the North American Assemblies of God (the largest Evangelical-Protestant denomination).


Nic Samojluk
2 days ago

It amazes me that we invest a fortune to protect our intellectual property, but forget that our prophet, Ellen White did borrow--should I say steal?--the intellectual property of other authors with impunity. If we expect the world to show mercy towards our church, should we not show mercy towards others?

Bea
2 days ago

My simple question has not been answered. CSDA is not SDA. There is a C in front of SDA, therefore when filed, it is a different name. I am not taking sides theologically - I don't know a thing about the organization CSDA.

Thanks for the expose' EGW,SDA Stephen. A bit evasive in hitting the nails (modern-day examples posed above) directly on the head regarding the question I asked. By the way, I should have placed quotation marks (from a very conservative person) regarding all other churches in the end would have to become SDA in order to be saved. Certainly not my view.

Stephen Ferguson
2 days ago

Again, the central issue in 'passing off' is whether 'consumers' are likely to be confused, or whether someone is stealing or using someone else's goodwill and reputation to their unfair advantage. For example, if I started a internet directly company called 'Blue Pages', that would be stealing (and illegal) because we all know instantly that it is probably an internet directly as we all know what 'Yellow Pages' is. Likewise, if a started a fast food hamburger restaurant called 'Delicious McDonalds' that would also most likely be stealing the goodwill and reputation of the McDonalds.

Thus, simply inserting the name 'Creation' in from of 'Seventh-day Adventist' may still be stealing or bearing false witness against the SDA Church. The Court's judge in this case has already ruled it is illegal.

I admit it is difficult at times to know where to draw the line, but even the Bible teaches that a person or group's name is really, really important - perhaps the most important thing. In the Bible, names help define who we are to ourselves and to outsiders.

Pastor Roger
2 days ago

How does another separate denomination, Seventh-day Adventist Reformed Movement equate to this
issue/dispute? Did they choose their name BEFORE the "official" SDA church trademarked the name? Since they have been using the name "Seventh-day Adventist", along with "Reformed Movement" as their name, since world war II, are they somehow grandfathered in as being permitted to use the name? How many other groups are entitled then to utilize the name?

Stephen Ferguson
2 days ago

IP (intellectual property) is not my expertise. However, I suspect it is indeed because the SDA Reform Movement took on that name before the official GC trademarked the name.

Interestingly, there are actually two SDA Reform Churches - not one. They had a schism in the 1950s. They did each sue each other, over naming rights and property. The group that lost now calls themselves 'International Missionary Society', presumably because the other 'Seventh-day Adventist Reform Movement' has similarly used legal action to protect its name.

Nic Samojluk
a day ago

How about "Adventist Today"? Does this magazine which uses the name "Adventist" share all the Fundamental Beliefs of the Adventist Church? Do we prosecute only those who have very little financial resources to defend themselves in court? If Walter McGill had had the millions in the GC coffers, would the church have prevailed in court?

Bill Garber
2 days ago

There may be more at stake here than a few people meeting in an old gas station in Tennessee.

I'm not saying it will happen, but if someone with money and a sense that opening the church is in everyone's best interest, say, could a court be convinced that 'Seventh-day Adventist' is protected only when used without modifiers such as Creation or Reformed or Today's or Michigan or Progressive or ...?

Now, if that were the case, the court would also have found that 'Seventh-day Adventist' was in sufficient general use for a period that long predates the present organization that it is no more protected than Lutheran.

Well, it is a name that was used commonly well before there was a General Conference, that is for sure.

Were 'Seventh-day Adventist' to become 'Luthern,' if you will, not only would the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists be faced with formally losing control it once thought it had with regard to ordination, it would even be formally forced to legally concede that doesn't and never had control of the church name itself.

This is potentially not a small matter.

Congregationalism would have become the enforced model. It would be the end of the Roman Catholic model the current church president's father, then holding the same office as his son currently holds, claimed in a failed attempt to escape federal sanctions in the Merikay Silver employment case

I don't expect this outcome.
And stranger things have happened.

And if this happens, it will be the result of the current activist president having taken his eye off of that which holds us together as a church, the Gospel of Jesus the creator and redeemer who has promised that as much as we don't want to be in the pew beside someone, the arrangement is that they will be our next door neighbor in the life to come, where everyone is everyone's neighbor.

Jesus told a story about neighbors, of course. And wouldn't you guess, there were some fine points of religion involved. And the point of the story was that the fine points are pointless when it comes to who is truly our neighbor.

Is there a single one here that doesn't believe that the spirit of Jesus hovers over this little band in the old gas station? So who are we to make the point that they are not our neighbors?

Pastor Roger
2 days ago

OK, I wish to present a very serious question for EVERYONE to consider:

If the Seventh-day Adventist Church is so determined to protect its' name, how did it ever stand by and permit a group to produce a film titled "Seventh-Gay Adventists"? Ok, that "name" does not represent another, separate, (offshoot) denomination but is there not a risk that the church's name and reputation may be sullied when this movie hits all around the world?

And please, do not postulate that I am "off topic" here. This article, and the subsequent comments, addresses the use, and the protection of, the "official" church name - or even any part of it. The church has trademarked even the word Adventist(s) to my understanding, as well as the initialized version of SDA.

How on earth will anyone that is casually encountering this movie NOT KNOW that it is not an official church release? Or IS IT, in fact, in truth a backdoor (pardon the pun) propaganda medium that some department of the church, agenda driven, has spearheaded?

Stephen Ferguson
2 days ago

Good question. I suspect that the GC could have a legal right to sue over the name 'Seventh-Gay Adventist'. The only exception perhaps is trying to rely on a 'fair comment' or 'satirical' exception, but doubt it.

I suspect a more important question flowing from this is:

*Why does the GC enforce its trademark rights in some situations, which it is morally and legally entitled to do, but not enforce its trademark rights in other situations?*
I am not sure what the answer to that is, and something the GC's own lawyers would need to answer. Perhaps AToday would like to find out - or maybe they are too scared in case the GC comes after their use of the name 'Adventist' in Adventist Today, which is trademark protected.

William Noel
2 days ago

I agree with you. Trademarks and their protections can be a sticky wicket requiring the wisdom of Solomon for a judge to decide with clarity.

Timo Onjukka
a day ago

There have been bilateral discussions on this in the past, Stephen, on this very issue. Despite the comments by others if AToday fully supports Adventism and its underpinnings, it does. Allowing healthy discussion on divergent views does not mean we are "teaching" contrary doctrine, like a church might.

In this case though, I sense McGill the matador intentionally waved the flag at the bull, spoke of what he was going to do (force suit, then claim prophetic status and call the church apostate). I think the Bull had no option, in this case, as the matador would not accept any other outcome.

Stephen Ferguson
a day ago

Timo, I was not suggesting AToday was teaching contrary doctrine. I suspect the GC has a very wide tolerance for all 'independent ministries', including both liberal and conservative. As I have said before, there is a big difference between independent ministries, even those who are critical of the GC and want reform, but are still 'inside' the 'Adventist tent', compared to groups like CSDA who are 'outside' the 'Adventist tent' and want to destroy the tent.

But it still is not entirely clear on what basis the GC enforces its trademark rights in some circumstances and not others. Are you aware of any GC policy on the matter - I'm not? Shouldn't the GC have a transparent and consistent approach to this matter, as good governance requires, not seen to be acting arbitrarily?

Again, if you read above I gave a detailed defence of the GC's actions. But I still don't quite know why they did what they did either!

Timo Onjukka
a day ago

Not to worry, Stephen, had no sense that you felt Atoday was heterodox in teaching; on the contrary, Mcgill is, and this may be one of the differences. Unfortunately not privy to the GC purposes or standards on this, but echo your cry that their governance is not transparent in many ways.

Ella M
2 days ago

I have a friend who is a farmer in the midwest. He can read AT blogs but can't afford the magazine, so he has
asked me to add his feelings to this blog. He writes below:

"It was the church who persecuted Jesus for not preaching the exact beliefs of what His church taught. Seventh Day Adventists have fallen into the same pompous way of thinking. I call myself a Christian. I'm sure that's also trademarked somehow. Maybe the SDA church can build it's own jails for such offenders. This makes me sorry to belong to such a bunch at reading things like this. Our church should be all about drawing people to Jesus so what's a name got to do with it? Perhaps it's all about money instead of Christ. Yes I know there are argument's pro and con on this issue. This should not have happened. Now we face another ridiculous issue of woman's ordination. If we can't get past these foolish details then I see no reason to even be taken to heaven as the arguments would only continue if SDA's were the only ones there. I praise God for people with common sense.

Very disgusted,

Steve Tanner

Edwin A. Schwisow
about 18 hours ago

As one who was employed in communication and marketing for the Adventist church for a good number of years, I see three peculiar reasons (not often discussed) why the denomination wishes to hold tight to its trademarks.

First, it is tacitly recognized that the Adventist church membership consists of many people who are prone to swerve off into doctrinal enthusiasms and speculative theories about this or that prophecy, this or that occult, Jesuit personage, this or that conspiracy to suppress a prophecy of Daniel 12, this or that reason the Lord will return during the presidency of a black man (yes, some friends of mine....). I will not ponder here why Adventism is so blessed with such inventive minds, except to say that the church's marketing stance has for so long been one of "prophecy, prophecy" that it tends to pick up a large share of adherents who have a bit of an extra-strong affinity for that theme. (As the ghost of William Miller can attest, long study of prophecy does not necessarily guarantee less than embarrassing results, at least in the short term.) To be able to tell a dis-fellowshipped group that it is now legally bound not to use the word "Seventh-day Adventist" in referring to itself is a great advantage, when for public relations the church desires dissociation. Second, there is (still alive and well) a segment of the Adventist church that holds that the entire membership must become pure, holy, and Christ-representative before the end can come. These individuals hold that for this ever to happen, the ability of leadership to decisively purge away those who are contaminating the clear radiance of Christ in the church must be held inviolate.

And third, the church holds on retainer and staff a team of attorneys skilled in the arena of trade-name registration and protection. These three ingredients, working together (and I see no immediate prospect of things changing) are absolute indicators that anything short of the Lord's Coming itself will not change this aspect of the church, anytime soon—and I have often suggested to my musical friends that if the angelic host in the clouds of heaven should happen to decide to play a copyrighted Advent anthem, such as "We Have This Hope," the last Adventists on earth will be found in a court room, desperately trying to get a legal injunction against its unauthorized public performance....Someone has also suggested that the reason there will be no Adventist section in the Holy City is because the Lord couldn't get legal clearance to post the sign. But, seriously, there are cultural and religious reasons in Adventism that make it unsurprising, on reflection, that we have this bent toward tight defense of our trade name. And, again, I see no prospect of change in the immediate
Elaine Nelson
about 15 hours ago

Do the Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians have similar problems? I know there are many divisions but do they fight over naming rights?

You are right: because Adventism was born out of particular and peculiar interpretation of prophecy that really was unique, they very jealously guard their name. But what about the independent ministries that liberally advertise that the leader-speaker is SDA and denominationally employed? One who sells (at a good price) his DVDs books, etc. are mainly focused on prophetic interpretation and surely are not much different that the Creation SDA church.

These independent ministries certainly appear as "off shoots" in many ways, but they have free rein to preach their stuff all the time. Do all the money they receive for their publications and DVDs go straight to them or to the SDA church? Is this considered appropriate even if legal? Is the church unconcerned that they are siphoning off funds from the G.C.?

Edwin A. Schwisow
about 13 hours ago

The Adventist-laymen's Services and Industries (ASI) organization (an umbrella group of self-described independent ministries, with liaison with the General Conference itself) originated in 1948, to all appearances to offer a "best of both worlds" way for Adventist groups with strong self-administrative streaks to enjoy that independence, without drifting away and losing touch with the Mother Ship. Members of ASI do not designate their organizations "SDA" but "affiliated with the Adventist Church through ASI," or "with ASI."

Most of the "independent ministries" in the church today are members of ASI, and being a member of that association automatically gives the organizations at least arm-length use of the word "Adventist," as members under the “Adventist-laymen's Services and Industries” umbrella. ASI bu any count has been enormously successful in its efforts to keep groups "in the church, but not of the church," to paraphrase the words of Jesus.

Nic Samojluk
2 days ago

My view is that the correct question we need to ask is not whether the church has the legal right to prosecute these men. In the parable of the two debtors, the one who was forgiven a huge debt failed to show mercy toward the other man who owed him an insignificant amount of money.

He had all the right to insist on his legal rights, but Jesus condemned his action for his unwillingness to show mercy. My understanding is that the church has spent nearly $100,000 dollars in the prosecution of this case. The Adventist Church has been the recipient of God's mercy more than once. Is it right for us to show a lack of mercy towards these men?

Elaine Nelson
a day ago
I don't believe "Adventist" is trademarked. How could it be when it is an adjective meaning someone waiting for the advent? (maybe on the 7th day ;-)  

Kevin Riley  
a day ago  

Bad grasp of history? Unlike the Baptists, there are not enough Adventist groups to speak up and object to the trademarking of the name. While many of us prefer SDA as the abbreviation, the GC is pushing 'Adventist' as it bolsters our claim to the name. It doesn't take long trying to write about the early history of the SDA church, or even earlier church history, to realise that 'Adventist' is needed to apply to a wider group than just the SDA church.

Timo Onjukka  
a day ago  

True, Kevin. ALL second-coming-expecting christians are, technically, "advent-ist". Even the RCC! This is interesting, and has potential to be challenged, I think. Also fascinating how large the "adventist church" just became!

Stephen Ferguson  
a day ago  

The name 'Adventist' is trademarked - see the GC link below:


Interestingly, laygroups (presumably including Adventist Today) are subject to the followin policy position of the GC:

5) Lay Groups. Lay and professional groups must apply for written permission to the Office of General Counsel. The articles and bylaws of such groups must indicate that they are independent of the Church and are not its agents as well as meet other criteria. After receipt of written notice of General Conference approval, such groups may use the trademarks solely for noncommercial purposes.

6) Revocation of Permission. For cause the General Conference Corporation Board of Directors may revoke permission of any denominational entity or lay group to use the trademarks. "For cause" includes, but is not limited to, conflict with the objectives or doctrines of the Church as determined by the General Conference and commercial use by nonchurch groups.

Stephen Ferguson  
a day ago  

It appears to be theoretically possible to revoke the right of Adventist Today to use the name 'Adventist' in its title for 'conflict with the objectives or doctrines of the Church...'

Theoretically, Pres Ted could muscle the GC to revoke AToday's right to use the name 'Adventist' on the basis
of articles (and not merely comments) supporting evolution, homosexuality or are critical of the Church (such as the whistleblower artlies about Florida Adventist Hospital) etc. I am obviously not supporting that idea, and think Pres Wilson would have enough sense not to do that, just saying he theoretically could if his wanted to further his conservative jihad.

Kevin Riley
about 14 hours ago

I believe the likelihood of success decreases with the time elapsed since the GC knew of the 'breach'. Considering how long Adventist Today has existed, the first question asked is likely to be 'why now, after so long?' Attempts to protect trademarks are expected to be timely, which is why the GC has people keeping watch for breaches.

Stephen Ferguson
about 13 hours ago

Yes, I am no IP expert and you may be right.

Elaine Nelson
about 15 hours ago

So after receiving official permission to use the SDA name does that also entitle them to receive (and keep) all money sent to their particular ministry?

Anonymous

You do not have sufficient permissions to post a comment.
Mission Catalyst Releases Video Report on its Church Planting Projects

By AT News Team

Mission Catalyst is an independent Adventist organization involved in a number of innovative church planting projects across North America. It is not officially connected with the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, although it communicates the same message.

Ron Gladden, coordinator for Mission Catalyst, admits that its’ status is controversial for some, and reports that its unaffiliated status has actually proved useful in winning people to Christ. Many Americans, particularly younger adults, are increasingly skeptical of the whole concept of denominations and independent congregations are growing more rapidly than those affiliated with any denomination, according to the 2010 United States Census of Religion released just a few weeks ago.

What is Mission Catalyst doing? Readers can see the four-minute video report at www.vimeo.com/43307841. It carefully explains the approach that this parachurch evangelism ministry is taking.

“Take a look,” says Gladden, who has planted a number of congregations over the years that are affiliated with the denomination. “When you’re finished … pray for us as we branch out to the next city.”

Share your thoughts about this article:

Bea
5 days ago

Will you give more background? When was the first church started and how many plantings have happened? I did see the video and then googled Ron Gladden but must have hit a website from the official SDA church that showed skepticism and sarcastic in nature. A letter from NAD president was included as well. I think it is possible one of my academy friends is a pastor of a planting in Atlanta, Ga. area

pagophilus
5 days ago

Why even bother report in this? Ron Gladden is not a Seventh-Day Adventist. He may be "Advntist" but in a wolf-in-sheep's-clothing way. He is about as Adventist as Des Ford. His ministry is simply a place for disgruntled and rejected ministers to continue their ineffective methods of ministry, a bit like Oikos in Australia is a gathering place for disgruntled and rejected ministers to fiddle with house churches and attempt to maintain some tithe income.

Kevin Riley
5 days ago

Des Ford is - or was, last I heard - a member in 'good and regular standing' of a Seventh-day Adventist church. As are some of the most divisive leaders on the far right. Membership in a local church (which is the only measure we have of who is a Seventh-day Adventist) is solely a local matter. I personally am glad that we can still accept as members people from a wide range of positions within the church.

William Noel
5 days ago

pagophilus,

I with you could be more gentle and slower to jump to strong opinions when you apparently do not know the people involved or their circumstances. I can tell you from personal contact with Ron Gladden that the negatives you state and imply are neither correct or factual.

You did make one at-least partially accurate observation when you said that Gladden's church and others are havens for the disgruntled and rejected. That illustrates a serious challenge that our church needs to learn to deal with. Members and ministers are getting disgruntled and leaving the church all the time. There are a variety of reasons behind their issues and actions. Perhaps the most common situation I have observed is where individuals have doctrinal questions and church leaders try to dismiss the matter with inadequate answers that get complicated by refusing to study the issue using the Bible and the Bible alone. Questions about topics like tithing are typically answered with answers like "That's what we believe", "That's church policy" or quotes from Ellen White instead of the Bible. Such responses only throw gas on the fire and what could have been kept a minor issue explodes into a major one. Then the innuendos get whispered and rumors start charging things like infidelity. That's when churches split and members leave.

We've got to find better ways to deal with questions and disagreements. Ways that don't lead to the repeating and perpetuation of falsehoods.

Moderator
5 days ago

Pagophilus, comment privileges suspended. You have been previously warned. Email moderator at Atoday@Atoday.org to discuss this in private.

Bea
4 days ago

I am in total agreement with you Mr. Noel. And in fact, people are finding peace, joy and love as they are part of a church that is practicing "love one another as I have loved you" as well as embracing HIS AMAZING GRACE.

William Noel
4 days ago

Bea,

Thank you and Amen! You are so right about our need to learn to love each other. I visited Ron Gladden's church a little over one year ago with a brother who is a member there. I found them to be a very friendly and loving church that is working to build a variety of ministries in the community. The testimonies I heard were evidence of God working. It was a dramatic contrast with some SDA churches I have visited!

ronaldg261
2 days ago

Glad to read your comments, William. I wish everyone could visit our first Pivotal Design church in Vancouver, Washington. The church is not perfect, but we are reaching a lot of unchurched people. 84% of our attenders
have never been in an Adventist church before. We started with six people and we are having our 49th baptism tomorrow with six more scheduled for later this month. We have an average of 15 life groups at any given time. Church has never been more fun or more fulfilling! Praise Jesus!

William Noel
2 days ago

Ronaldg261

Praise the Lord! Keep on following where he leads and doing what he says to do.

Ella M
2 days ago

From what I can see, Mission Catalyst is serving God in a way that the organized church is not. It is keeping some in the church who wouldn't otherwise be there. It is also practicing the ways of the early church in its focus on Christ while still adhering to basic fundamentals (not focusing on them, but using them to point to Christ).

Wasn't it the Roman Church that required absolute organization? I don't see it in the NT church. Of course, administrative organization is necessary, but church structure and policy isn't sacred is it?

Cherry Ashlock
a day ago

Ron Gladen is the one person that has kept his SDA values and practices while ministering as non-denominational. That rarely happens...most of the time the Sabbath goes by the wayside. God bless Mission Catalyst and I hope it continues to thrive. I would attend in a heartbeat if it were nearby.

Elaine Nelson
a day ago

Could it be possible for the "sabbath to go by the wayside" while keeping good Christian values? Is the sabbath intricately tied to "SDA values and practices" of ultimate importance? Do good Christians who do not observe the seventh day have good Christian values and practices?

I know, the "giving up the sabbath" is the true indicator of "apostasy," regardless of all else.

Bea
a day ago

Regarding ..."most of the time Sabbath goes by the wayside". Colossians 2:16, 17: " Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." Some of us are embracing the New Covenant and recognizing that It is Not about the Day, but that Jesus is my Sabbath Day of Rest and I have access to Him 24/7/365. It opens up a whole new scope of understanding of Sabbath. Sabbath is Jesus - Not a Day. It does not mean that we have to give up meeting on a day with other Christians.
You do not have sufficient permissions to post a comment.

Polls Report that Five Percent of Americans are Vegetarians, 41 Percent of Adventists in the U.S.

Submitted: Aug 2, 2012
By AT News Team

A new Gallup Poll conducted last month finds that five percent of Americans say they are vegetarians. This percentage has remained stable for more than a decade, Gallup reports.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has been promoting a vegetarian diet to improve health for about 125 years. Repeated studies by a number of different research teams have show definite health advantages. Yet, internal surveys indicate that only 41 percent of American Adventists consistently follow a vegetarian diet. This is eight times the proportion among the general public in the United States and studies have shown that Adventists generally have a longer lifespan than other Americans.

Most Adventist congregations across the country follow the practice of a vegetarian menu for church dinners. About one in five Adventist local churches offer a vegetarian cooking class for the community about each year. These classes also help new converts to learn to prepare vegetarian meals for church potlucks and social events.

There is increasing interest in “vegan” diet, vegetarians who also do not consume eggs or dairy. This year the Gallup Poll asked specifically about vegans and found that only two percent of Americans claim to follow a vegan regime.

Internal surveys among Adventists reveal that 16 percent never eat cheese, 25 percent never eat eggs, and 38 percent never use drink milk of any kind. Overall, about one in eight American Adventists can be labeled vegans. This is six or seven times the percentage among the general public.

The survey data do not include trends because earlier surveys have not asked about vegan practices. This means it is impossible to know if the percentage of vegans is growing, either in the denomination or in the general public.

Share your thoughts about this article:
24 comments

William Noel
2 days ago

If the number of vegetarians has remained stable, what further proof do we need that the church has become ineffective, if not irrelevant, in North America?

Elaine Nelson
2 days ago

Perfect non sequitur!

Jean Corbeau
2 days ago

Why is it that New Agers and other are catching on to the benefits of a vegetarian diet, while so many Adventists are going the other direction? It can only mean that no more than 41% of Adventists are waiting for the Second Coming. Ellen White said that flesh foods would be abandoned by those waiting for the coming of the Lord. But, these figures may also indicate that at least 59 % of Adventists have rejected the SOP. No matter how cut it, it's a sad statistic.

Stephen Ferguson
2 days ago

Adventist Today Magazine is published quarterly by Adventist Today Foundation
Phone: 503-826-8600  |  Email: atoday@atoday.org  |  Web: atoday.org
Are you trying to saw eating meat is a salvation issue - with respect, that is ridiculious. I suspect Ellen White might have a few words to say to you Jean, and not all good. She might adopt the same counsel as in 1858 to the Haskells (Brother and Sister A) about being a dogmatic externist (her words) and wrongly making counsels on health a 'test question'.

Ella M
2 days ago

Jean,

What if most of those being translated turn out to be new agers? ;)

Elaine Nelson
2 days ago

Do vegetarians eat dairy and fish? Or, do they eat only plants? How does one define "vegetarian"? Some indicate only no red meat, so there are different definitions.

I've been a life-long vegetarian, very rarely eating a little chicken when eating out. Salmon has been shown to be most beneficial, as have a few other fish, which Jesus ate, and of course he also ate lamb--both of which are still staples in that part of the world, AKA as the "Mediterranean Diet." Cheese is especially a good source of protein for vegetarians. The public has certainly been informed of the health benefits of less red meat and more veggies, but changing habits is a problem. My parents were SDA converts and no meat was the rule at home, but I believe they unnecessarily deprived themselves of an occasional piece of fried chicken--a staple in the southern diet.

Patti Grant
2 days ago

My husband and I were both life-long vegetarians, having grown up SDA, and both were at least 30+ lbs overweight. Last November we watched the documentary Forks Over Knives about the health benefits of a vegan diet (the "knives" are scalples, as in heart surgery). Half way through the documentary we spontaneously decided to go for it. No milk, eggs, cheese, or any other animal product in any form. It is amazing how many natural foods are chock full of protein. Ten months later we have both lost at least 35 lbs., with no regrets. I have loved learning a whole new way of cooking. The food is absolutely delicious! There is an abundance of vegan cookbooks out there, as well as thousands of vegan recipes on the "Google machine." My favorite new cookbook is Vegan Fire and Spice, by Robin Robertson, best-selling author of Vegan Planet (and to think I used to hate cooking!). Forks Over Knives is available at the local ABC, in book and DVD. We. Feel. So. Much. Better! Not to mention having a closet full of new clothes. Cholesterol, blood sugar, blood pressure, lipids and other indicaters have dropped dramatically! Take a leap. Try a recipe or two. Like the Turkish-spiced Orange and Onion Salad on page 102. Trust me :)

Ben
2 days ago

The numbers will probably drop as time goes on. I ask my teens from time to time how many are vegetarian. Pretty consistently about a quarter of them are. That number may be different depending on the setting, but I've never had a result go too far either way from 25% among high schoolers

Bea
2 days ago

Please be careful Jean Corbeau. Even though EGW admonished vegetarianism, she ate meat often - even lobster! I believe this came directly from the White Estate in recent years. They don't have banners flying above proclaiming this, but now that the ban has been lifted, people are able to read this fact. You said, only "41% of SDA's are looking forward to our Lord's Second Coming".

Joe Erwin
2 days ago

I have the impression that Sister White said something on the order of "I was shown that God's people would not be flesh eaters at the time of the second advent," or something of that sort (others here will have the direct quote, no doubt). It seems to me that she did not say why that was to be so--whether the diet would be without meat for health reasons, or because meat was too scarce or had become excessively contaminated. Someone surely will be glad to correct this impression....

Stephen Ferguson
2 days ago

From the Official Ellen White Estate: http://www.whiteestate.org/issues/faq-egw.html#faq-section-a7

Ellen G. White's Practice Regarding Vegetarianism

Did Ellen White eat any meat after her health-reform vision in 1863? What about that 1858 "pork" testimony?

Ellen White did not claim that after her 1863 health vision she never again ate meat. Prior to the vision, she believed that she "was dependent upon a meat diet for strength." Because of her weak physical condition, especially for her tendency to faint when weak and dizzy, she thought that meat was "indispensable." In fact, at that time she was "a great meat eater"; flesh meat was her "principal article of diet."

But she complied with advancing light. She cut meat out of her "bill of fare" immediately, and it was no longer a regular part of her diet. She practiced the general principles she taught others, such as that one must use the best food...
available under the circumstances. When away from home, either while traveling or camping in austere conditions, decades before convenience foods were invented, finding an adequate diet was often difficult. Not always able to obtain the best, for whatever reason, she at times settled for the good—the best under the circumstances.

**Ellen White was not dogmatic regarding meat eating.** In 1895 she noted, “I have never felt that it was my duty to say that no one should taste of meat under any circumstances. To say this . . . would be carrying matters to extremes. I have never felt that it was my duty to make sweeping assertions. What I have said I have said under a sense of duty, but I have been guarded in my statements, because I did not want to give occasion for anyone to be conscience for another” (Counsels on Diet and Foods, pp. 462, 463).

In modern attempts to understand history, too frequently the past is judged by the present, most often unknowingly. Individuals of the past must be judged in the context of their circumstances, not ours. In a day without refrigeration, when obtaining fresh fruit and vegetables depended on where one lived and the time of the year, when meat substitutes were rarely obtainable before the introduction of peanut butter and dry-cereals (mid-1890s), on some occasions one either ate meat or nothing at all. In our day, in most circumstances meat eating is rarely a necessity.

While in Australia, she came to the place where she “absolutely banished meat from my table.” For a time, **she had allowed some meat to be served to workers and family members. From that time on (January 1894) it was understood "that whether I am at home or abroad, nothing of this kind is to be used in my family, or come upon my table" (ibid., p. 488). Many of Ellen White’s strongest statements against meat were written after she had renewed her commitment to total abstinence in 1894.

Ellen White’s major health visions of 1863 and 1865 encompassed all features of the health reform message that she emphasized until her death. Changes in certain emphases through the years only refined those principles, they did not add or subtract from them. As time passes, even prophets must take time to assimilate revealed principles—time for theory to become practice in their own lives. She constantly advocated the principle, in practice as well as in teaching, that everyone who is committed to truth will move from the bad to the good, from the good to the better, from the better to the best. Such was her experience.

What about her apparent reversal on the question of eating pork? In 1858 she wrote to the Haskells (Brother and Sister A) on a number of items, **rebuking them for insisting that pork-eating should be made a "test question";** “I saw that your views concerning swine’s flesh would prove no injury if you have them to yourselves; but in your judgment and opinion you have made this question a test. . . . If God requires His people to abstain from swine’s flesh, He will convict them on the matter. . . . If it is the duty of the church to abstain from swine’s flesh, God will discover it to more than or two or three. He will teach His church their duty” (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, pp. 206, 207).

In the health reform vision of June 6, 1863, a broad array of health principles was revealed. The next year she published a fifty-page chapter entitled “Health” in Spiritual Gifts, volume 4. In reference to swine’s flesh she said: “God never designed the swine to be eaten under any circumstances” (p. 124), and in her later books she continued to emphasize the injurious consequences of eating swine’s flesh. How does one account for this change in Ellen White’s views between 1858 and 1863?

First, she had received no light from God on swine’s flesh before 1863. Her vision in 1858 did not inform her as to the rightness or wrongness of eating pork. Rather, **it reproofed this brother for creating division among Adventists by making the issue a test question at that time.** Second, she left open the possibility that if pork-eating ought to be discarded by God’s people, He would, in His own time, “teach his church their duty.” When the vision did come, nearly five years later, the whole church saw the issue clearly and never again was there division regarding this issue.


Kevin Riley
2 days ago

I find it interesting that what finally led Ellen White to give up meat completely was a discussion with a Catholic vegetarian on the cruelty to animals inherent in meat eating. That is a lot more important to most vegetarians than any other reason. The same issues actually come up with dairy products. Something has to be done with non-milk producing animals and with chickens too old, or too male, to produce eggs.

and3togo4
2 days ago

**MY WIFE AND I ALSO BEGAN A PLANT BASED DIET (USING AS LITTLE OIL AS POSSIBLE) AFTER READING DR ESSELSTYN’S BOOK "REVERSING HEART DISEASE" BOTH OF US HAVE LOST WEIGHT (ABOUT 25 POUNDS). MY CHOLESTEROL DROPPED FROM 230 TO 175 AND MY TRIGLYCERIDES ALSO DROPPED. MY WIFE HAS ALWAYS HAD A DIFFICULT TIME LOSING WEIGHT; SHE EATS SPARingly AND STILL HAS HAD A HARD TIME. SHE ALSO HAS HIGH CHOLESTEROL. SHE TOOK PROVACOL AND IT DID NOT REDUCE HER CHOLESTEROL. SHE IS NOW ON CRESTOR. FOOD IS DELICIOUS BUT YOU MUST COOK DIFFERENTLY.**

Moderator
2 days ago

Kindly avoid all caps, **and3togo4-it is considered the equivalent of shouting, and rude!**

Blessings and happy sabbath!

Edwin A. Schwisow
2 days ago

A historic-style Adventist who owns a health-food store in an Adventist population center in a nearby state told me without a blush the other day that he can no longer stay in business on Adventist trade alone; his financial success...
now depends on keeping the local "New Agers" supplied with the vegetarian foods they favor. "It's a great mission field," he added.

He sees the stasis in vegetarianism and apparent growth of vegan eating as attributable less to the influence of Adventism, and more to changing ways among the aged and the growing popularity of Eastern religions in the US. Non-Adventist clients are often more observant of the chemistry and content of his products than his own churchmates. He sees his store as a "growth industry" that will not be put out of business anytime soon by the Internet. "People like to come and talk about what they buy, to compare labels and ask questions."

Ella M
2 days ago

Were you aware that the Health Dept at the GC does not advocate veganism? You would think they would welcome the likes of Colin Campbell, Bernard, Fuhrman, etc. but instead they put them down. Why? Is it because they are not Adventists? It seems like it to me!

These non-Adventist advocates of veganism are doing a great job of changing America's diet for many, especially the educated and young people, and the church health leaders are not supporting it because it is promoted by "eastern religions" and "new agers."

The church talks about appealing to nonbelievers and secular people, but turns them away on the very topic where they could be reached. They never talk about animal cruelty (as did EGW) in this area, because again they are afraid of being aligned with some maverick group. This seems quite hypocritical of a people who want to use health as an "opening wedge."

Unfortunately AT magazine played right into this by printing its article about Colin Campbell and his research. We should be forever grateful to this man for bringing to the country's attention the diseases of meat eating, but instead have rejected him and his followers and those we should be talking with. You can see I am totally disgusted with the church's approach in this area. It seems more of the same "only we are right" and following the tradition of vegetarianism even when EGW said there would be a time to give up dairy and eggs and we would know when that time came. Maybe the GC Health Dept. expected a vision from God, but instead we have only research! This is especially true with dairy as it includes some university research and certainly observational/geographical studies. The only research for promoting milk is that paid for by the dairy industry and it lobbies.

Patti Grant
a day ago

"Why? Is it because they are not Adventists? It seems like it to me!" ". . . the church health leaders are not supporting it because it is promoted by 'eastern religions' and 'new agers."

Why not ask GC Health the question? It appears that you've answered for them, but I haven't heard from them directly. Do you have a reference for how you know their stance - either an article in print or even what one of them told you in a conversation or meeting?

I eat an almost-vegan diet, and I was delighted by what I read in Colin Campbell's book, but I realized when I read it that it was describing correlation in a way that made it appear to be cause-effect. I like to see research where the conclusions support a vegan diet, but the AT article used statistics to criticize Campbell's book. If the GC Health Dept. is going by research, the AT article says that Campbell's book doesn't measure up. How is the Campbell critic wrong? What statements in his article are wrong or debatable? For all I know, the article is riddled with mistakes, but I haven't come across anything listing mistakes. If Campbell is using misleading statistics, informed people will have reason to question a GC Health Dept. that depends on his research.

The fact that I need a Vitamin B-12 supplement suggests that a vegan diet has its problems, even if it is better than other diets. I have started eating more greens since reading Fuhrman. I have only bought two e-books, and one of them is by Fuhrman.

I'm more concerned with the evidence for or against the vegan diet than I am with possible GC Health Dept. prejudice. As I see it, there is still plenty of good reason for a vegan diet even if Campbell's book is suspect. The more you can show me the problems with the AT article, the more likely I am to use Campbell, but for now I will rely on other material for deciding on the best way to eat.

Timo Onjukka
a day ago

I was baptized by DJ Handysides, June 12 1972, who was the father of Allan, partner with Peter Landlessas the GC head health team. Perhaps I shall try personally ask him next time we meet.

On another note, some of my new age vegan friends express some anger that we have always had this message, and either religiosized it or didn't otherwise honestly present it on its own merits.

Edwin A. Schwisow
2 days ago
It's too bad the church at its highest levels appears to resist opportunities offered it openhanded on a cultural platter.

This seems to be a situation not dissimilar to the discussion in the apostle Paul's day regarding food offered to idols—some Christians vehemently preached against any contact whatsoever with pagan-blessed provisions; Paul argued that all food comes from God, and heathen gods simply do not exist—there is no God but One.

Interacting over cultural touchpoints with non-Adventists generally holds little risk. It's the surest pathway to evangelism and conversion, when people at long last are ready to make a spiritual transition in their lives. We must stop being so fearful of "the evil gods out there" and trust God to keep us out of spiritual harm's way as we interact on points of common interest, such as a commitment to physical health and a more protective attitude toward animal life.

Joe Erwin
2 days ago

I find it interesting that more than half of the adventists surveyed were not strictly vegetarian. Yet, it seems that generalizations about the health and longevity of adventists are often based on the assumption that all adventists are vegetarian or vegan. Even so, I imagine the lifestyle of adventists is pretty health, based partly on the fairly unusual degree of health awareness among adventists, and, over all, an emphasis on moderation in the consumption of flesh and dairy, as well as valuing and attending to needs for exercise and the Sabbath rest.

But not all adventists are as devoted to moderation. Some are quite attracted to eccentric positions on all sorts of things, and really thrive on being apart and peculiar. And pressing others to be as strange as they are. There is some sense in which this is a mental health issue, but it is not so clear whether it is a cause or consequence of the lifestyle choice.

As mentioned before, I think, I grew up in an adventist family on a ranch, where we grew much of our own food—all sorts of fruits and nuts and vegetables; but we also always had a cow or two for supply of fresh and uncontaminated dairy products, kept chucks for eggs and flesh, raised sheep for wool and occasional mutton, sometimes had calves reared for beef, and Dad and other family members were skilled and careful subsistence hunters—mostly for deer. We were all taught to be nature lovers and conservationists from the time we could walk, and were absolutely immersed in humane principles of animal care.

It certainly was no accident that I grew up into a career concerned with animal conservation and care.

Elaine Nelson
about 22 hours ago

For all the benefits of a plant food diet, I don't believe the G.C. or anyone else is qualified to recommend it wholesale, as it should not be followed by everyone; children, the elderly, and others have special dietary needs that sometimes cannot be met by a total plant diet.

At a family reunion yesterday, I saw a niece for the first time since she was a small child (now in her 30s) and when we ate (turkey or black bean burgers) it was discovered that she is a total vegan; with tatoos covering almost all areas of her exposed body and the ragged jeans. she may be called "New Age" but that is such a false judgment that I

Dr. Gott's diet is wonderful for losing weight and very simple: no flour, no sugar.

and3togo4
a day ago

Ella M
ReplyApproveDelete
about 13 hours ago

"Were you aware that the Health Dept at the GC does not advocate veganism? You would think they would welcome the likes of Colin Campbell, Bernard, Fuhrman, etc. but instead they put them down. Why? Is it because they are not Adventists? It seems like it to me!

These non-Adventist advocates of veganism are doing a great job of changing America's diet for many, especially the educated and young people, and the church health leaders are not supporting it because it is promoted by "eastern religions" and "new agers."

I have read and heard Dr's Campbell, Bernard, and Dr Esselstyn speak. Their whole approach is from scientific measurement: they show how high protein, high fat diet results in Diabetes, Heart disease, and Cancer. They advocate no religion. Many people are seeing the limits of medicine, and are looking for other answers. Many of the younger ones understand and believe science. One only has to attend the "vegetarian potlucks" and look around at church members to see that many/Adventists are overweight, and suffer from many of these chronic diseases. Diet will not cure everything, but can reduce the odds of developing one at an earlier age.

Kimberlee Green
a day ago

It does seem that it is the "new agers" that are spreading vegetarianism/veganism throughout the US at least. Adventists seem to shy away from anything that does not have an official SDA stamp and that includes diet.

The SDA vegetarian diet is very different than that of these other veg groups. We seem to only be comfortable with
our Midwestern diet with its meat analogs/dairy products that are cultural to us. Most veg/vegan restaurants that I have been to have menus based on a wider "world cuisine".

As a generalization most 2nd and 3rd world SDAs don't seem to put much, if any, emphasis on being vegetarian. I have been told this by many different people of different cultures other than my own (Caucasian). It seems that we have managed to make it not important/relevant and has become more of a "white" diet thing but even that seems to be fading away each decade!

As an aside, I also think that earlier vegetarian generations equated practicing vegetarianism with godliness. We do not seem to be emphasizing this dietary choice with perfectionism as we once did. This could be explored further but it seems to be fading.

Anonymous

You do not have sufficient permissions to post a comment.

Log In to Post a Comment. Log In | Register
Adventist Television among the First to Win a Private Broadcasting License in Malawi

Submitted: Aug 2, 2012
By AT News Team

Last week the government of Malawi announced the licenses awarded to the first private television stations in the southern Africa nation. Adventist Television was among the seven awarded by the Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA) as reported in The Daily Times of Blantyre.

Prior to this the only television available in the nation was the official, government broadcasting operation. A Christian television operation, Joy TV, previously went on the air without a license, according to Malawi Today. It was shut down by the government and its equipment confiscated. The case resulted in extended litigation and it is unclear if Joy TV will ever get a license.

The other television broadcasting licenses went to established media companies and a college. More are to be announced, said both newspapers. A number of radio station licenses were announced at the same time by Moses Kunkuyu, the cabinet minister responsible for information and civic education. Short wave radio is used throughout Africa which means that people are used to international broadcasters such as the British Broadcasting Company (BBC), which has an extensive staff of journalists in Africa and the rest of the world.

The new television stations have 12 months to complete their vetting by MACRA and set up operations. This includes both program production, importing the transmitter and construction of the necessary facilities. Those not on the air within 12 months will lose their licenses. MACRA received a total of 36 applications, stated The Daily Times.

There are nearly 400,000 members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Malawi out of a population of 16 million. The number of adherents is estimated to be nearly one million. The denomination has had an eight percent annual growth rate in recent years, about four times the rate in North America. It has 2,846 local congregations and operates 19 community health clinics, six secondary schools and two hospitals, Blantyre Adventist Hospital and Adventist Health Center Lilongwe. An Adventist publishing house and seminary are also located in the country.

Share your thoughts about this article:
There are no comments.
Anonymous

You do not have sufficient permissions to post a comment.
California Adventist Academy Graduate Wins Gates Millennium Scholarship

Submitted: Aug 2, 2012
By AT News Team

Helen You graduated recently from Paradise Adventist Academy in northern California and is headed to Andrews University this fall with a full scholarship from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. She had a perfect 4.0 grade point average, more than 400 hours of community service during her four years of secondary school and plays two musical instruments, so guidance counselor Brenda Muth encouraged her to apply for the scholarship program. “There’s no one I know that’s more deserving of this scholarship,” Muth told the Chico Enterprise-Record.

The teenager immigrated from South Korea with her mother in 2003. She knew no English at all, but learned the language within a month and by fifth grade "got her first straight-A report card," reports the newspaper. Her mother works as a caregiver and was worried about how to pay for college because Helen had only a $500 scholarship from within the Adventist education system.

“They screamed and jumped up and down and we screamed and cried,” the mother told reporter Ben Mullin. “The thing that makes me the happiest about receiving this scholarship,” Helen said, is “to relieve my mom of the burden of paying for my college education.” Helen wants to be a physician specializing in ophthalmology because of her experience during a mission trip to Honduras, volunteering in an eye clinic for two weeks.

The newspaper described Andrews University as a school “with a minuscule student-to-professor ratio and a great academic program.” The teenager is typical of many Adventist youth from minority families in North America, helped to achieve social mobility through Christian education.

Share your thoughts about this article:
3 comments

Patti Grant
2 days ago

Congratulations to Helen You and her mother. And thank you to Bill and Melinda Gates. What an incredible accomplishment! Helen will be a source of light and vision in the world for many years to come. God bless!

Elaine Nelson
2 days ago

This is a great award for a young lady! Congratulations and may you succeed in your college education! Asians now have the highest educational level of any group in the U.S. and are nearly always top students. Perhaps we could follow their lead.

Ella M
2 days ago

Wonderful news! As part of the same family of believers, we feel so happy for you. Congratulations to you and a life of blessings and service.

Anonymous

You do not have sufficient permissions to post a comment.
Delegates to a special constituency meeting of the Columbia Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church voted Sunday afternoon (July 29) to authorize the union and the local conferences within its territory to ordain women to the gospel ministry. The historic vote came after four hours of prayer and discussion. It was taken by secret ballot. There were 209 votes in favor, 51 votes against and 11 delegates who abstained or turned in unmarked ballots.

The vote came after two presentations by General Conference (GC) officers urging the delegates not to approve the motion and two presentations by conference presidents presenting the reasons for the motion. A total of 38 of the delegates went to a microphone and made a speech about the motion, of these 24 made it clear that they were in favor of the motion and 10 stated they were against it. As the time came to vote, Elder Dave Weigley, the union conference president and chairman for the meeting, asked all of the delegates to join in a special season of prayer in addition to several occasions for prayer throughout the meeting.

Elder Ted Wilson, president of the GC, personally appealed to the delegates not to vote the action. “I care about matters of conscience and the unity of the church,” he stated. He said that when a matter of conscience is at odds with unity “we must turn to the Word of God” for a solution. He stressed his personal ties with the Columbia Union. He is a local church member in the Chesapeake Conference. He was born in Takoma Park at Washington Adventist Hospital and attended the Adventist schools in that community through his college graduation, and recalled waiting at the old union office next door to Sligo Church as a boy when his father was union conference president. “If Dad were alive today, he would be very concerned” about the action before the delegates.

“There will be very grave consequences if you vote the recommendation,” Wilson said. He made it clear that he did not want to debate women’s ordination. He appealed to the Columbia Union to wait for the theological study of ordination that the GC is conducting, promising that it will be “the most in-depth study to date” on the topic. He referred to the concern that after nearly 50 years of contemporary studies on this topic, the GC has not been able to bring resolution to it. “You cannot afford not to wait.”

Elder Lowell Cooper, a GC vice president, spoke to the issues that have been raised in the article by Gary Patterson, a retired GC officer, published by Adventist Today. Patterson points out that GC policy assigns union conferences the role of authorizing ordinations and that the 1990 GC Session is on record stating that there is no biblical or Spirit of Prophecy barrier to doing so. The votes taken in 1990 and 1995 which many Adventists think of prohibiting women’s ordination actually did not result in any doctrinal or policy statements. Cooper referred to “misleading impressions” and stated that “the idea that [union conferences] can operate independently” is out of line with the way in which the denomination functions. He referred to the corporate culture among denominational executives in which even clearly-specified authority is not exercised without consultation with GC officers if the action being taken is unprecedented.

Elder William Miller, president of the Potomac Conference, and Elder Raj Attiken, president of the Ohio Conference, spoke on behalf of the union conference executive committee and its recommendation. Both
emphasized that they are loyal Seventh-day Adventists who were raised in the faith. They pointed out that there have been repeated discussions over the last half century and more than 30 major Bible studies completed. The GC Session in 1881 voted to authorize the ordination of women and Ellen White never once said or wrote anything negative. In fact, the denomination’s archives have no record of any opposition to that original decision.

Miller pointed out that 1972 the Columbia Union Conference voted to approve the ordination of women as local elders despite the fact that it was not the practice of the world church at the time. “Some said it would break the unity of the church and result in grave consequences.” The GC ended up approving the action and it is now part of the Church Manual and Working Policy. He continued, “In 1984 the Columbia Union Conference voted to allow women to become licensed ministers and to conduct baptisms and weddings. Again, there were those who said it would break the unity of the church and cause an earthquake, but the earthquake never came.” And now this is widely practiced.

Almost all of the speakers who came to the microphone, including several retired GC and union leaders, a number of pastors and lay members of conference executive committees, spoke to three themes. Many stated that they are ashamed of how the church continues its unfair practice toward women serving as pastors and how long it has taken to correct the situation. A few said they oppose the ordination of women, although only one stated the Southern Baptist position—because of Bible teaches “male headship”—and none of them mentioned the Catholic position—because Christ chose only males for the 12 apostles. The theme most often mentioned was concern about the worldwide unity of the Adventist movement.

No speaker indicated that he or she did not value unity. Many different views of “unity” were expressed. Some felt that nothing should be done which might offend Adventists in other parts of the world, even if it had to do with cultural and not theological issues. Others pointed out that women in North America and Europe are offended by the refusal of other parts of the world to permit ordination to go forward, and that also “breaks unity.” A number of speakers, including several who are immigrants from Latin America and Africa, stated that there is wide diversity in the worldwide Adventist family and that somehow we do stay together.

It is unclear what steps the conferences in the Columbia Union will take next. The Mountain View Conference seemed to be united against the action, while at least three conferences have women serving as pastors who could be candidates for ordination almost immediately. Adventist Today will continue to follow this story and report future developments.

Share your thoughts about this article:

Forrest Howe
7 days ago

While I rejoice that the Columbia Union voted to treat women equally with men in this issue, I am saddened that the GC still does not recognize the moral and ethical issues here. Instead that want to argue it on a much lower level, that of church policy. If there is division in the SDA church it will be at the hands of the GC and not the local unions who are recognizing justice and fairness.

George Tichy
7 days ago

I am amazed that Ted Wilson had the guts to go and ask them to wait. Wait more? Again? Just to be deceived by another GC promise that some "study group" will come up with an answer? When? Three years from now?
Thanks, but no thanks! He treats people in church as if all were mere bozos.

Enough was enough, and the CUC did the right thing!

Patti Grant
6 days ago

While labeling us as being "in opposition to the world church," warning that there will be "grave consequences" and "devastating effects" as a result of this vote, and that being "out of harmony" makes us ineligible "to be an integral part of the remnant church," greatly saddens me though it comes as no surprise. Inclusion in—or exclusion from—the Body of Christ is not a power arrogated to the GC. Each individual will stand alone before God to be judged by Him and Him alone.

Jim Walters
7 days ago

Finally, the dam has been broken—the dam of General Conference institutional power cloaked in the language of unity. Has a GC president ever declared that a vote against his position would put an important North American union conference (in this case, the GC’s own home union) in “opposition” to the world church, and then seen his position voted down 4-1 in a duly called constituency meeting, before his very eyes? President Ted Wilson appeared very sincere in his plea to let GC-led studies of ordination precede the CUC vote on women’s ordination, and I believe his sincerity is genuine. Wilson is just out of step with the intensifying western sensibility that discrimination against women is immoral.

President Wilson is well known to be personally against women in ministry, and of course this is his personal business. However, a wise world church leader will do everything possible to avoid a showdown on a salient moral issue. He will devise creative solutions, using his immense influence as the church’s preeminent pastor, as its foremost communicator with ready access to denominational media, and as chairman of key committees. President Wilson’s unwillingness—not, inability—to find common ground raises significant questions about his administrative judgment as leader of a world church of nearly 20 million members in diverse cultures. A denomination that is able to use its levers of power to accommodate certain converts who are married to multiple wives is surely able to create a way to let other members treat male and female pastors equally. If a church can abide regressive moral practices, it can allow progressive ones.

This showdown today in Maryland was not necessary. However, good may come from today’s vote, as it may significantly advance a new era in church governance—one that is respectful of reasoned, conscientious positions of its members, and one that is less paternalistic and more collaborative.

Jean Corbeau
7 days ago

"President Wilson is well known to be personally against women in ministry"

Wrong, wrong, wrong! Distortion is always the tool of those who want to control the debate. Elder Wilson supports women in their various legitimate ministries, but he knows that there are rules to be followed when making changes in church policy, and he is trying to follow them. He is also knows that there is no Scriptural justification for ordaining women as elders or pastors.

Patti Grant
7 days ago
He also knows that there is NO scriptural justification for NOT ordaining women, as was the verdict of the Biblical Research Institute.

George Tichy 7 days ago

Jean, if that is 3 times wrong, why did he behave as he did at that ordination in Melbourne, Australia? Just that would be a reason for him to resign from his position of "leadership." What kind of leadership is that?

It's now more than evident that he is completely against WO. Telling us otherwise would be an insult to our intelligence. Seriously!!

olive hemmings 7 days ago

Jean, your statement is not making sense. Elder Wilson opposes the voted policy of the GC to ordain women as elders and deacons. There are no women in these positions at his home church.

Kimberlee Green 7 days ago

Jim,

I believe that you are correct that the show-down did not have to be inevitable but it had to be because of the circumstances. Good will come from this...thanks for this reminder.

TruthWave7 7 days ago

@Jim Walters: The flagrant rebellion and apostacy of Columbia Union has begun, and will no doubt cascade into the others NAD Unions, in short order. This is a day of infamy for the SDA church, truth is lying in the streets, bleeding. Ted Wilson is the best GC President we have had since Robert Pierson. they are men who had a spine, and loved truth. The current Presidents of Unions that are pro WO, do not have love of truth, but love to appease their constituents. Much like Aaron did when ancient Israel wanted a golden calf to worship, instead of being obedient to the God of Heaven.

Jean Corbeau 7 days ago

I believe this is part of the process that will result in the church "appearing as about to fall," as Ellen White said. But, since "progressives" don't believe in the inspiration of Sister White, they won't believe it, nor be bothered by it. Sad day, indeed.

TruthWave7 7 days ago

So true.

Ben Maxson 7 days ago
TruthWave7,

I am troubled with the personal attacks you are making on leaders who do not agree with your position. We need to treat each other with Christian respect and love. I understand our strong disagreements with differing view points. At the same time it is important to remember that only God can read our hearts.

Individuals in both groups in the discussion are committed to Scripture and truth. The reality is that the SDA church has never identified the issue of women being silent or not being leaders in the church as a point of biblical truth. Instead, women have had pastoral and other leadership roles throughout the history of our church, clear back to the 1860s. In fact, our pioneers and leaders often defended the role of women as pastors and leaders against those who used Paul's statements in Timothy to attack women who were in leadership, or who were attacking the church because there were women in leadership.

It is time for us to realize that our Adventist understanding of Truth as defined by the World Church in Session is found in the Statement of 28 Fundamental Beliefs. This does not include any statement against women as pastors or leaders in ministry. Thus we can look to the principles as practiced by our spiritual forefathers in the church as helpful guidelines for shaping our attitudes today.

The over-literal interpretation of certain passages accompanied by the lack of consistency in applying the same hermeneutic to other points in the immediate context demonstrates the lack of congruency in our interpretation and application of Scripture. This only leads to further confusion and conflict.

It is time to focus and build our unity on our identity that is found in the relationship with Jesus and our mission of helping people discover the joy of a life lived in Jesus Christ. Let's focus on how we can draw together in Jesus and lift each other up in prayer. A growing walk with Jesus where we allow Him to be Lord of our lives will also allow Him to be in control of others' lives through the Holy Spirit. Let's trust God to see His Church through and focus on lifting each other in prayer rather than becoming increasingly critical.

TruthWave7
7 days ago

I'm sorry that you interpreted what I stated as "attacking" the Columbia Union leaders regarding the WO vote. I really don't know how else I could have described the actions, other than what I said. This is a time of political correctness, and when one points out sin, its now called a "hate crime". If Martin Luther were here today, he no doubt would disfellowshipped from most churches, even his own Lutheran Church would most likely disfellowship him for calling the Pope the Antichrist. I simply do not want to see our Seventh Day Adventist Church go the way of the United Methodist, Lutheran, and Presbyterians. Do you want to see our church become irrelevant?

Stephen Ferguson
7 days ago

Funny you mention Martin Luther, given he was the one who first seriously challenged the notion of Apostolic Succession, re-discovering the ancient biblical principle of ‘priesthood of all believers’ in his treatise To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation (An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation) (1520). Be careful in trying to assume which way Martin Luther would go on this issue.

All4Him
How about re-discovering the plain thus saith the Lord in the Word of God?

First of all 1Timothy 2:13 points back to creation BEFORE sin, verses 14 and 15 were given AFTER sin. Then look at Timothy 3:1 If a MAN desires the office of a Bishop, HE desires a good work. Then in verse 2 it states “the HUSBAND of one wife”….

Secondly, 1Peter 2:25 is talking about the relationship of the Church and Christ which follows straight into 1 Peter 3:1,5,7 which mentions the relationship of a man and wife. So if the sin of submission was abrogated by the cross was the sin of homosexuality done away with also?

There is a large army of women and men that care more about Gods Word than mans culture. The sifting and shaking of the church will happen prior to the out pouring of the Holy Spirit. Instead of following the SOP which points to the truths of the Word of God, they choose to be politically correct..... They are grasping hard because the church is awakening to the fact and many are taking a stand for Christ over culture...

Kevin Riley
7 days ago

So you agree that women should keep silent, and should not teach or have authority over men? Or are you happy to allow that if they are not ordained? Or are you also not prepared to stand against culture and say women can't do these things, but prefer to say they can do so, they just can't be openly recognised for doing these things? How do you turn the NT texts about what women can't do into texts about what women can't be ordained to do without in some way twisting Scripture?

Stephen Ferguson
7 days ago

All4Him, I still fail to understand how you say these household codes apply to the Church? How can they be used to prevent women from spiritual leadership, when the SDA Church had a woman leader in the person of Ellen White? If you say it is because she was not bound by these rules because she was a prophet, I say to you, how do you know that these women ministers were not similarly called by God and who are you to deny that calling?

I am happy to agree with your hypothetically that in the home men should rule over women. I am also happy to concede that in the Church older men, with one wife and obedient children, should be appointed as elders. But these texts clearly can't apply to spiritual leaders (i.e. apostles and prophets), because Paul and Timothy would not have satisfied the criteria, nor would have Ellen White in modern times.

I think the model that arose in China, based solely on the Bible and spirit, perhaps gives a compromise that truly reflects scriptures. My understanding is that their massive churches often have women in spiritual leadership, through spiritual gifts, as pastors. However, they still have older men in appointed leadership as 'Uncles'.

You also see this in the early SDA Church. You have Ellen White, as well as other women, in spiritual leadership. However, then you have older men, such as Joseph Bates and then later James White himself, in appointed leadership of administration.

The fact that Ellen White chose not to be ordained just proves in my mind that ordination is only required for appointed leadership (elders and deacons), not spiritual leadership (apostles and prophets).
I was always taught that truth was progressive. Because the cosituents made a statement on how they felt with the issue does not make them less faithful or make them hate truth. A lot of church members do not understand the acculturation process of our society in how it impacts our theological thinking over time.

Duane Sandvick

This is an opportunity for church leadership to transition from administrative control to spiritual leadership. This leadership faces a number of key challenges which include:

1. Developing and leading with consistent biblical hermeneutics.

2. A rejection of the traditional approach to ordination (both Catholic and Protestant) that focuses on and emphasizes position and power.

3. Restoring a biblical understanding of ordination as a church practice that is rooted in God's calling and gifting for ministry and an understanding of the priesthood of all believers that removes the separation of clergy and laity.

4. Trusting God to guide the different levels of church organization and process more than relying on committees and policies to control.

This whole situation actually provides an opportunity for us to draw together in unity in Christ rather than in attempts at unity in structure and practice. It worked in Acts 15 and the early church, and it can work again.

Ervin Taylor

That there were 209 votes in favor and 51 votes opposed was a great testament that there are still many members of the Adventist Church who still believe in "Present Truth." Also that our current GC President, widely known as want to return the Adventist Church to its 19th Century fundamentalist roots, attempted to influence the vote and his views were soundly rejected inspires hope that the future of Adventism in North American Adventism may not be dark as some might have feared. In the end, truth does win when people of principle stand together and reject the voice of those who would return Adventism to its sectarian past.

Jean Corbeau

Unless I misunderstood, it appears that you, do not believe in "Present Truth." But, somehow that doesn't surprise me.

God's faithful have always been in the minority (except when the Ark rested on Mt. Ararat, after the Flood, which you don't believe every happened). Today was no exception.
So who comprised God's faithful at the 1995 GC session?

Would to God, we could go back to the future, in the 19th century. In fact I wish EGW were alive today, she would no doubt rebuke the Aaron like Union leaders, that we have plenty of in the NAD, these days.

The irony of expecting a woman exercising charismatic leadership (and I use 'charismatic' in the biblical sense of spirit-called) to support men who condemn other women exercising charismatic leadership.

This is ridiculous! EGW supported women's ministry in her days. She was one of them, and ordained. What would have changed in her mind to be against it in our days? An "apology" from Ted Wilson?

Hell hath no fury like a Wilson scorned.

So what's next on the horizon, ordination of gay ministers? Will unions have authority to vote on this issue, contrary to what the world constituency says? If you think I'm being facetious, there are those even now on record who see this as the next civil rights movement, and that the SdA church needs to be in step with the rest of the World.

That hits the nail on the head doesn't it. It really isn't about women at all - it is really fear of homosexuals. No doubt similar 'thin edge of the wedge' arguments were used against civil rights campaigners who sort racial equality, fighting against those so-called Christians invoking the curse of Ham.

At the present time our church defines homosexual acts as sin. It does not define being a woman as sin. Therefore ordaining women simply takes an action to declare we believe ordinationis open to men and women. To ordain practicing homosexuals, we would need to redefine our views on sexuality and attendant sins.
Ordaining women does not say anything about ordaining homosexuals. Sex and sexuality are not the same issue.

Kenneth Comstock
7 days ago

You entirely missed my point. Who decides whether homosexuality is accepted or not? The world constituency or individual unions?

Kevin Riley
6 days ago

Whoever is given that role by church policy. As a theological issue affecting some of our 28FBs, I would assume the GC. I expect us to be ordaining (straight and monogamous) budgerigars before the GC would seriously consider a reconsideration of our views on homosexuality.

Barry Wecker
7 days ago

Congratulations to the Columbia Union. Finally, a church organization with the courage to end centuries of 'the divine right of males', courage to back off from blocking the leading of the Holy Spirit in the lives of dedicated women in the church, the courage to do what is right! May God abundantly bless the Columbia Union Conference and its pastors and its laity and may God's work advance in it!

Maybe Ted Wilson should accept this as a vote of non-confidence in his leadership and resign as any prime minister in parliament would be obliged to do in this situation.

Gary Patterson also needs to be thanked for his clear explanation of the authority and responsiblity of the various levels of church administration. What a clear, rational presentation he gave! Thanks Gary.

Dean Waterman
7 days ago

As present at the meeting serving in a support staff role, I appreciated the spirit of the meeting by everyone present. Serving in the Potomac Conference as a pastor, part of the Columbia Union, gives me confidence in that we in the church can come to the right conclusions with sincere prayer and determination to seek God's direction and presence through the Holy Spirit.

The overwhelming majority who voted in affirmation gives me added confidence that God HAS spoken through these delegates. If we had been at a 51/49 split (51% was all that was needed to pass the motion) would have left many believing personal preference ruled the day, not sought-out guidance from God. I am not indicating that the 20% were not Spirit-led in their vote, but having 80% of those present vote yes would seem to show solidarity in the Spirit.

I hope this is a domino for the N.A.D. The women I serve with in the Potomac Conference have served, and are serving, with humility, grace, and power. I am happy they will receive the recognition that ordination, not just commissioned, brings to them for the service they give to the church and communities they are in. To ALL the ladies I serve with in Potomac, thank you. For those in Columbia Union I have not yet met, thank you as well.

Stephen Ferguson
"I hope this is a domino for the N.A.D."

Whether you agree or disagree with the result, surely the factual implication (and the one Elder Wilson feared), is that it will be much easier for other Unions to now follow suit.

Kevin Riley
7 days ago

And not just NAD. TED, the European part of EAD and SPD are three other areas that I would expect to move ahead fairly rapidly as well once this is accepted.

George Tichy
7 days ago

Ted Wilson didn't want the vote. He tried to suppress the vote at any cost. Most probably because he and his minions at the GC knew what the result would be, and that their attempt to perpetuate discrimination against women would be defeated by a large margin. As it was indeed!

I predict that Ted Wilson's next moves will most certainly lead to a big division in the church. When he was elected, I predicted that either he would split the church or he would resign before the end of his mandate. It's getting closer to one of them now!

Elaine Nelson
7 days ago

Why not?

Jonathan Gallagher
7 days ago

Let's not see this in terms of winning or losing. We believe the Lord is leading the church and so we need to commit ourselves, male and female, to do all we can spread God's good news and to heal any fractures within the church. More than the vote, we will all be judged on how we relate to one another in the aftermath. Blessings to all, especially our leaders and ministers, both men and women. Jonathan

TruthWave7
7 days ago

There is no doubt that God is leading the church, but there is also non doubt in my mind, that there are clearly times in human history, and in particular the history of the SDA church that truth was set aside and replaced by political expediency. This is one of those times. Our North American SDA church has gradually succumbed to the popular culture around us, if you don't believe it, just take a walk around just about any of our SDA colleges in the NAD, if cannot see that the values of the "world" have trumped holiness, you are in denial and are delusional. I blame for the most part the spineless generation of baby boomers leaders that we now have in positions of power in our NAD church. They are as a whole of a different breed of character, who go with the what constituents want, even at the cost of disguarding sacred truths that we have held for over a century.

Timo Onjukka
7 days ago
Dr Gallagher, very succinctly put. Yes, our peculiarity is to be on how we love, not the arrogating of "truth" which is itself merely a cultural tradition of man subjugating and dominating, and certainly not taking dominion in its proper sense.
Arrogating truth
is a spiritual toe tag.
Yet Truth indeed promises
Life abundant...

Ervin Taylor
7 days ago

Might I ask "TruthWave7" what precisely are the "sacred truths" that we are discarding or disregarding? Let's see. How about that women should not speak in church? Is that a "sacred truth"? How about that men should hold all the important offices in the church? Another "sacred truth"? And what do you see when you "walk around about any of our SDA colleges in the NAD"?

Stephen Ferguson
7 days ago

I was wondering much the same. I have the opposite concern. I fear that the SDA Church has lost the innovative spirit of the pioneers, who were not persuaded by tradition, nor did they have an arrogance that they knew everything, but were willing to dive into scripture to find out what the Bible said on a topic.

I fear the reaction against WO is a sign that the SDA Church has finally become an 'orthodox' religious institution, with all those trappings of power and politics, rather than a religious movement. Pres Wilson's argument all seemed to be power and politics, not the Word.

As for culture, I believe the biggest argument used by most Church leaders and scholars in the non-Western world is not the Bible, but that WO wouldn't be acceptable in their cultures.

Peter Yip Lam
7 days ago

I am an baptized SDA living in Hong Kong, China.

I fully support the Columbia Conference to ordain woman pastors.

Dr Peter Lam, Hong Kong, July 30, 2012

Stephen Ferguson
7 days ago

It is interesting to see how China, which is largely outside the confines of power and politics of the SDA Vatican in Washington, but rather where Seventh-day Adventists are still a movement and growing, is dealing with this issue - where WO isn't an issue at all!
Dwayne Turner  
7 days ago  

Shame! Shame! Shame on Columbia Union Conference! You have forced your constituents to choose between the SDA worldwide church and the Columbia Union. Brethren! Your members are not first and foremost a part of the Columbia Union. They are a first and foremost a part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church! You are not baptized into the Columbia Union, you are baptized into the remnant church; the Seventh-day Adventist Church! You had no right to require that you members choose between the two entities. Both "entities" are to be One! But since you have taken this action today, your members are now forced to pick which leadership they will follow.

There simply is no Columbia Union Seventh-day Adventist Church.....there's only the Seventh-day Adventist Church, for which Columbia Union is a part of.....

Think Twice!!!! Only Satan enjoys disunity...... Clearly many on this site are "besides themselves" with glee over "stickin it to Ted Wilson"...... but in the judgment...... you will find out that it was not Ted Wilson's agenda you were going against; but God's Agenda! Don't forget....many of us don't go for your "smoke and mirrors" arguments..... long on emotion, long on cutural considerations....but woefully short on Bible and spirit of Prophecy...... Oh, and it is so interesting that so many are twisting Spirit of Prophecy quotes to suit their arguments...... when for so long...... we have seen the same make a myriad of arguments on issues with utter disdain for the Spirit of Prophecy.

Now its time for discipline!!!! The Union Leadership & Executive Committee must be disciplined!!! Just as surely as members who behave in ways that fall under the "Reasons for Discipline" section of the Church Manual, so too must the Leadership of the Union and Conferences be disciplined, who fall out of harmony with the God's Order!

Nothing short of Chaos is soon to exist..... but then again, isn't that what pro WO individuals are enjoying?

All4Him  
7 days ago  

Amen the 4,750 people is a drop in the bucket compared to the ground swell you are about to see that is against WO. The shaking and sifting is taking place before the out pouring of the Latter Rain.....

Stephen Ferguson  
7 days ago  

Don't confuse a vocal minority for a silent majority.

All4Him  
7 days ago  

Right....your about to hear from the silent majority that the WO push is awakening.....

Kevin Riley  
7 days ago  

No choice was demanded. The delegates could vote their conscience and still remain members of the SDA
church. Had there been a clear vote that the ordination of women was against SDA beliefs at any GC, then there would have been a choice between the two. There has never been such a vote, so there is no rebellion and no one has been forced to make a choice between membership in any Union and in the SDA church. I sometimes wonder if the choice was between a literal reading of the NT - no woman in any position of leadership at any level - and a more nuanced reading that allows women to be leaders and be ordained, just how the vote would go. And how we would explain not just Ellen White but all the other women who held various positions of authority and both preached and taught men with the full backing of the church if we went with a literal reading?

All4Him 7 days ago

The delegates are not the true voice of the body you will find out there really is a silent majority that will stand up for the Word. You mention Ellen White.... you can not find in her writings anywhere a push for WO.

"Those who enter the missionary field should be men and women who walk and talk with God. Those who stand as ministers in the sacred desk should be MEN of blameless reputation. 5T 598.

The primary object of our college is to afford young MEN the opportunity to study for the ministry and prepare young persons of BOTH SEXES to become workers in the various BRANCHES of the cause. 5T Page 60.

Shepherds who fail at home will fail at church—He who is engaged in the work of the gospel ministry must be faithful in his family life. It is as essential that as a father he should improve the talents God has given him for the purpose of making the home a symbol of the heavenly family, as that in the work of the ministry, he should make use of his God-given powers to win souls for the church. As the priest in the home, and as the ambassador of Christ in the church, he should exemplify in his life the character of Christ. He must be faithful in watching for souls as one that must give an account. In his service church there must be seen no carelessness and inattentive work. God will not serve with the sins of men who have not a clear sense of the sacred responsibility involved in accepting a position as pastor of a church. He who fails to be a faithful, discerning shepherd in the home, will surely fail of being a faithful shepherd of the flock of God in the.—Manuscript Releases 6:49

Stephen Ferguson 7 days ago

"Shepherds who fail at home will fail at church—He who is engaged in the work of the gospel ministry must be faithful in his family life. Shepherds who fail at home will fail at church"

Does that mean that to be an ordained minister someone needs to be a father? If so, how could celibate Paul or young Timothy have been ministers?

Does this passage also mean that if a ordained minister fails at home, by having a rebellious child, does that mean he should no longer be a minister? If so, I can't think of many ministers with children at teenage age or older who could qualify to be ministers? I think you will find even at the highest levels of our Church, including in the GC and including those opposed to WO, that they have children who have left the Church.
I guess I am affirming Kevin's point - 'a more nuanced reading'. Be careful in your strict, literal reading, because often following it to its logical conclusion results in clear absurdity. Once you find qualified 'buts', which you must, then your whole argument against WO unravels. We should be looking at the 'spirit' of the law on these things, as Jesus taught, not the hard nosed letter of the law.

Dean Waterman
7 days ago

Kevin, I don't typically engage other's comments, but in this case I must. If the spirit that you have shown in your post(s) had been present in the meeting today at the Columbia Union Constituency Session, it would have been a very sad day. However, I was impressed that even those who did not agree with the motion still maintained a Christ-like spirit in their gentle opposition. I do not expect everyone to agree as I do, but I don't have to be insulting, demanding, or derogatory to get my dissatisfaction of the result across to others.

No member was "forced" to vote a certain way. I see it clearly as those delegates taking their charge serious to "pray without ceasing" regarding their meeting today, and seeing the end-result be a firm conviction of the Holy Spirit to move forward in this matter; to ordain ministers (recommended by the Conferences) without regard to gender. The individual Conferences still maintain the choice to send the chosen minister's recommendation to the Conference, which gives each Conference a choice as to whether or not they will ordain women.

The General Conference, after numerous studies, has not been able to conclude for, or against, women's ordination. The Columbia Union, as all Unions are able to do per the GC Constitution, have the choice to determine who will be ordained by recommendation of the local Conferences. No policies were broken in order to see this action through, and each Union around the world is free to do as they feel led by the Holy Spirit to do in the matter of women's ordination. In watching today, as cool heads prevailed in the discussion, I see no practical argument against policy, only preference.

I must add one other thing...

The argument that Jesus did not choose any women to be disciples, and there were no apostles that were women, and therefore we should not ordain women, is not a relevant argument. In these matters the culture was followed at the moment, which in this case was a heavy male leadership role outside the home. Women had a cultural role to play, and Christ respected it, as well as the early church. There are several instances in the NT of women leading, which I believe happened as their communities reacted to women in leadership. There are many culturally different things we do now in comparison to the Bible. Not everything is as clear-cut as this; principles always remain, methods adapt to time and culture.

Kevin Riley
6 days ago

Dean

I am not sure what you read in my post that led to your reply. I thought I had substantially agreed with what you said.

Patti Grant
2 days ago

In reply to Dwayne Turner, I think that angry calls for discipline are un-Christlike. It is sad to see this spirit of anger and retribution exercised with lots of capital letters and exclamation points. Does God really need such human passion?

Stephen Ferguson
7 days ago

**Serious question raised from the article. What 'grave consequences', which President Wilson mentioned, could practicably befall Columbia Union for taking this decision?**

The article suggests none - that President Wilson's own statement is all bluff, given how the World Church's warnings turned out to be nothing re the ordination of women elders. Moreover, the Church in China, which is outside the GC’s control because of the Chinese Government, has long ordained women and there has been no reaction from the rest of the World Church.

Finally, is the only practicable option the ‘nuclear option’ of expelling Columbia Union from the communion of the World Church? And what are the chances of that actually happening? And how would it work, given people like President Wilson himself seem to have their memberships in that Union?

Some further info, or even a separate article, on the practicable ‘grave consequences’ would be most appreciated.

Kevin Riley
7 days ago

I am not convinced the GC would move to expell any Union, given how many support the ordination of women. No church leader wants to be known as the one who split the church. Some compromise will be found that preserves unity.

George Tichy
7 days ago

The GC will NOT give up the money coming from the Unions!

Stephen Ferguson
7 days ago

Interesting point George. Question - we all know that membership is growing in the developing world, and no so much in the developed world. But what % of money flowing to the GC comes from the developed world (NAD, Europe and Australia etc), where WO is likely to be allowed?

Kevin Riley
7 days ago

The majority of funding for the world church comes from western areas that are generally in favour of ordaining women. NAD alone contributes more than Africa. But I would hope this will not become a matter of choosing between numbers and money.

Stephen Ferguson
True, but I think George has a point - unfortunately the realities of money and political power do seem to come into it. The reporting of this issue suggests the arguments given were not wholly based on 'Thus saith the Lord' but largely political considerations. What is 'politics' but the science of running state and institutional affairs. Pres Wilson's own speech on the issue all seems to be about politics, and it will no doubt come down to politics re how other Unions and the GC itself reacts to this news.

Stephen Ferguson
7 days ago

So you do think it was mainly all bluff?

Kevin Riley
7 days ago

I am sure that there will be moves to bring the 'dissidents' into line, but unless there is very clear grounds in voted positions or policy, I doubt it will go far. It would be very difficult to act without the GC appearing to wield far more power than it is given - unless a special session of the GC were called. The usual way of dealing with a Union that really was in rebellion would be to remove the officers and call a special Union session to voe in new officers. Does anyone believe that would lead to a different outcome - and how would the GC look if it resulted in exactly the same course of action again? If not, it would require disbanding the Union and starting again, perhaps with appointed leaders. There is simply no precedent for that. As a majority churches in the majority of conferences are in favour of ordaining women in each of the Unions that have voted or are likely to vote, the only effective way of removing the threat is to remove all those churches. I see that as very unlikely. I don't believe we have a policy to deal with mass 'rebellion' by church members on this scale.

Stephen Ferguson
7 days ago

Thanks that is really interesting. I think it is worth explaining in a full article, by you or someone else. I am sure a lot of people on both 'sides' of this debate are now asking - so what now?

Kevin Riley
7 days ago

I would say there will be a lot of discussion in private. The Union leaders obviously cannot go back on what has happened, the GC will try to find a way of making its effect as limited as possible. Our system works well when it is a matter of pressuring one or two employees - even leaders - to fall into line. But how do you apply pressure to a session, when many of the delegates are not church employees? I don't know all the intricacies of GC policy, but I suspect there is not a section headed 'what to do when a Union session votes the wrong way'. If the GC could find a way to show that the vote was technically flawed or illegal according to the Union constitution, that would be the simplest way to void the result. If that were possible, I suspect it would have been pointed out in time to avoid a vote. I would like to see an article by someone who is well versed in GC policy setting out the grounds on which the GC could act, and what actions are open to it. The GC has not kept the church together this long by waiting until actions are taken before challenging them or pointing out why they won't work. I don't believe our leaders are so inept that they would not have already done everything they could do, and perhaps more. The fact that the motion got to a session vote to me indicates that it was according to policy, and there is no real way of voiding it. If the next vote in mid August goes ahead, then I would take that as a sign that the decision will stand. Once a woman is ordained as a pastor, we can be pretty sure it will
David Barr
7 days ago

Stand.

Dwayne Turner
7 days ago

Thanks for the information

So what's next Columbia Union? Maybe the members of any local church might band together and vote whatever they want, about whatever they want! What right do you retain to point to "conference policy" or "union policy", or even GC policy as a reason not to proceed!!!! You have just let it be known that you do not subscribe to the "higher authority" on this one! What's to keep your members, churches, pastors, etc. from "doing as they please" and ignore those over them. Can you now, with a straight face, point out any violations of any working policies, the church manual etc., and seek to discipline your members if they are "out of harmony". Can you ever plead for UNITY on any issue, when you have revelled in DISUNITY on the issue of Women's Ordination?

Well..... let's not stop at the local church..... let's go to the family; inside the home..... Will not the children who have seen their leaders (who also are parents) ignore Biblical counsel, church authority, pleadings from God's appointed leader of His church to cease and desist etc., just simply begin to rebel in their homes as they see fit?

Leaders and Delegates of Columbia Union: You have hurt the cause of Christ today!

Kevin Riley
7 days ago

It has been acknowledged that the Union level is where decisions on who should be ordained are made. It does not contravene any GC policy. Disunity is caused by two sides failing to agree on an issue and making it such an issue that they cannot work together. I have not seen any call for not working with those who do not vote to ordain women, nor any call to remove them from the church. So who is causing disunity?

Stephen Ferguson
7 days ago

Who says they have ignored biblical counsel? You rely on Papal tradition; not scripture. As noted in the article, the various Biblical Research Reports over 30 decades showed that there was no serious biblical reason to prevent WO. The main argument used by Pres Wilson is political - there was no 'Thus saith the Lord'. The main argument used by delegates from non-developing nations when the issue has come up is cultural - that WO will not be accepted in their cultures. As the Pres of Columbia said in his letter to Pres Wilson, the GC view against WO is arguably against current FB#14, which prohibits any form of discrimination, including based on race and gender.

Perhaps you want to go and re-read FB#14, which you will notice is entitled 'Unity'. According to our own FB, unity doesn't mean continuing to discriminate on the basis of political expediency. Unity is unity in Christ, realising we are all equal in Jesus.

TruthWave7
7 days ago
@Stephen Ferguson: The all male Apostolic model that Jesus left for us, was divinely inspired. The sin of the Papacy is the exhaltation of tradition over Scripture on any given issue. Those pushing for WO quote volumous cultural reasons and civil rights issues, and very little Scripture. Its so much like the reasons that the United Methodist quote. True Protestants will base their biblical conclusions on Bible texts, and we have them in the NT, 12 male Apostles, 70 male disciples sent forth. 7 Deacons, Matthias replacing Judas. Its the order of God. This was put into place before the Papacy existed.

Stephen Ferguson
7 days ago

Where is the 'Thus saith the Lord'? If you try to quote ‘husband one wife, with obedient children’, explain to me how celibate Paul or young Timothy qualified? Paul was talking about appointed leadership (i.e. elders and deacons), not spiritual-gifted leadership (i.e. apostles and prophets). Prove to me otherwise.

Moreover, why do you say because Jesus chose men we must only have male ministers? How do you know Jesus wasn't also suggesting that all ministers have to be Jewish? Why do you extrapolate gender from Jesus example but not race? If it was such an essential issue, why didn’t Jesus (or any of the NT writers) leave clear instructions that only men could be apostles – they didn’t.

Those pushing for WO don't just rely on culture - we rely on scripture. What do they say? They say that to be an apostle is a spiritual gift, as is to be a prophet, and not an appointment of man like elders (Eph 4:11). They say that apostles are chosen by lots (the origin of the world clergy), meaning whilst men appoint administrators only God can call ministers (Acts 1:21-26).

They say both the Old and New Testaments mention women selected by God to spiritual leadership. For apostles, there was Junia (a woman’s name) (Rom 16:7); for prophets, we have Anna (Luk 2:36), Elizabeth (Luk 1:41-45), Mary (Luk 1:26-38,48) and the four daughters of Phillip (Acts 21:9); and for evangelists, pastors and teachers, there was Phoebe (Rom 16:1), Priscilla (Teaching Apollos in Acts 18:26; Rom 16:3), Euodia and Syntyche (Phi 4:2). Furthermore, a keystone text for Adventists is Joel 2:28-29, which says that in the Last Days women, and not just men, will be bestowed with spiritual gifts, including prophecy.

Finally, the scriptures are clear as to the proper interpretation of the ‘spirit’ of the law; whereas, you try as best to enforce your own rigid view of the letter: ‘There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.’ (Gal. 3:28).

Don’t trust me though – 30 years’ worth of intense biblical study by our Church’s greatest theologians have come to a conclusion supporting WO. You really don’t want to admit that the case against WO is fairly and squarely built upon the Papacy. It is firmly built upon Roman Catholic doctrines of Sacred Tradition and Apostolic Succession, where after the failed prophetic revival of Montanus in 165 AD, the office of bishop and apostle were gradually fused, where the appointed hierarchy of the Catholic Church effectively did away with charismatic leadership. The final nail in the coffin of Christian equality was the Council of Orange in 441, which revoked female ordination.

TruthWave7
6 days ago

@Stephen Ferguson: Can you not see that the "Thus Saith the Lord' statement was made when Jesus, who is God, only ordained and layed hands on Men in the OT and NT! How can their be any more powerful
biblical evidence than that! You keep bringing up the Papacy, I have already exploded that argument, in that the Jesus gave us the model for biblical leadership before the Papacy even existed. The pro WO movement texts that are quoted time and time again are lame and don't cut it when compared to the strong and an overwhelming biblical evidence against WO.

Kevin Riley
6 days ago

You keep ignoring that Junia was an apostle and Chloe a deacon. Are they not ordained positions?

Kevin Seidel
6 days ago

The Bible does not say the 70 were men. Luke mentions that certain women were with Jesus and the 12. Jesus taught Mary just as He did his male disciples. The Bible does not say Jesus laid hands on anyone to ordain them. Jesus laid hands on the sick and children, but it does not say He laid hands on anyone to ordain them. Mary was the first person that Jesus appeared to after His resurrection and she was sent to tell the news to the male disciples. That make Mary the first apostle of Jesus resurrection.

Stephen Ferguson
6 days ago

And you, TruthWave7 keep ignoring that they were also all Jews. If you make an argument on gender, you also make an argument on race. Do you believe ordination should be restricted as a matter of race? Far from exploding my arguments about the Papacy, you still have yet to address this racial question.

If we accept Gal 3:28, we must accept all of it. If we take Jesus example, we must accept all of it. On what basis do you, in your human wisdom, pick and choose?

Stephen Ferguson
7 days ago

That should be 30 years not 30 decades.

Ervin Taylor
7 days ago

The leaders and delegates to the Columbia Union Conference have aided the cause of Christ today. They have allowed their spiritual insights to confront political power and have carried the day. Those who support women's ordination are not interested in disunity. If a split comes about as the result of women's ordination issue, it will not be caused by the supporters of women's ordination. It will be caused by those who refuse to follow where the Spirit of God is leading the church -- toward equality and toleration.

Elaine Nelson
7 days ago

"Maybe the members of any local church might ban together and vote whatever they want, about whatever they want!"

The local church can vote on their church offices: deacons, SS leader, treasurer, etc. but if they voted against WO it would useless as the union must approve ordination.
Be careful of the slippery slope you're sliding on, it may bump right into that dread word: insubordination, or even worse, congregationalism--which seems you are suggesting. Congregationalism allows each church to have its own policy not with an overseer which must approve.

olive hemmings
7 days ago

What is the "cause of Christ" my friend? Why would an act such as this make a disciple of Christ so angry?

Dwayne Turner
7 days ago

Brother Kevin,

A choice was demanded of the constituents of Columbia Union today. The church voted not to ordain women pastors and study the question. The only reason this has been "tabled" is because the past General Conference Presidents have hoped to "live to see another day". All Presidents since the first "Wilson" have wanted women's ordination and have kept the issue alive hoping that the Divisions will "fall in line" someday.

Once again....the church in 1990 & 1995 voted "Not to ordain" women; but today the Columbia Union voted "to ordain" women! Not in favor and in favor are polar opposite; therefore the vote today is in opposition to the worldwide church. To vote "for" WO today was a vote "against" what the worldwide church voted for. You can't have it both ways! So yes, the constituents picked (some proudly) between the worldwide church and the Columbia Union. They have a lot of "splanin" to do with their members. But, I suppose that most members are too docile to care. If they have already sat through messages, berift of scriptural proof, and declared, "we had a good sabbath", they certainly will swallow any explanation of the fiasco in Maryland today.

Kevin Riley
7 days ago

The GC voted not to proceed with a vote to authroise the ordination of women in 1990, and not to allow divisions to make the decision in 1995. They were clear both times that it was to preserve unity. Not allowing women to be ordained is just as divisive in some areas as allowing women to be ordained is in some others. As the decision of who to ordain has for a long time been with Unions, those votes did not prohibit Unions deciding to ordain women. I see it as the delegates deciding to listen to God and I hope that their example will spread far and wide. The GC has had decades to decide and has failed to do so.

George Tichy
7 days ago

Today's vote is a fresh air, maybe the hope that "SDAC" will continue to stand for "SDA Church" and not for "SDA Cult"

Stephen Ferguson
7 days ago

I personally wish we would become an SDAM again - Seventh-day Adventist Movement. Movements are innovative, flexible, explorative and egalitarian, which is why they grow. Churches are rigid, orthodox, class-based and political, which is why they slowly die.
Kevin Riley
7 days ago

But the benefits of being a church are not to be sneezed at - especially by those who get to lead.

Stephen Ferguson
7 days ago

Yes I agree that organisation is important. But organisation can also be a double-edged sword - to draw an analogy of the appointment of kings of Israel. Look at how the SDA Church is flourishing in China - it has organisation but is more egalitarian and congregationalist. It would be an interesting hypothetical question as to whether the Church in China would be doing better or worse if the GC had direct control in that region.

Dwayne Turner
7 days ago

So Sister Taylor,

This is "new light" indeed....the Spirit is Leading through the Columbia Union, The Mid-America Union, The Pacific Union, The North German Union etc. The rest of the 15 to 16 million members should move to one of those Unions.....so that they can be "where the Spirit is"......

Come on..... do you really believe that the WO cause is being led by the Spirit and the rest of the church is not? The Holy Spirit does not lead God's Church to Disunity!!!! (Romans 16 and 1 Corinthians 1)

Stephen Ferguson
7 days ago

This isn't new light - it is very, very old light - simply re-discovered. It is the radical message of the Gospel, which destroys the powers and constraints of kings and potentates on earth, where, ‘There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.’ (Gal. 3:28).

In 1520, Martin Luther rediscovered the biblical principle, ‘priesthood of all believers’. In one swoop, the Reformation put an end to the aristocratic powers of bishops and priests throughout much of Papal Europe. Luther’s rediscovery was founded on 1 Pet 2:9 and Rev 5:10, where it was said through Christ’s blood, ‘you have made us into priests and kings’.

The case against WO fairly and squarely built upon the Papacy. It is firmly built upon Roman Catholic doctrines of Sacred Tradition and Apostolic Succession, where after the failed prophetic revival of Montanus in 165 AD, the office of bishop and apostle were gradually fused, where the appointed hierarchy of the Catholic Church effectively did away with charismatic leadership. The final nail in the coffin of Christian equality was the Council of Orange in 441, which revoked female ordination.

In 1833, Lutheran Pastor Theodor Fliedner of Kaiserswerth, Germany, revived the deaconess movement – forgotten for over a thousand years. Despite deaconess being a biblical office, the Council of Orange in 441 revoked female ordination. To put this in perspective, the Synod of the Greek Orthodox Church only reinstituted the female deaconate in 2004.

If something as biblical as the office of deaconess could be forgotten for sixteen hundred years, how many other
ancient truths are yet to be rediscovered – or do we still unwittingly follow Rome? Is the SDA Church the true inheritor of the Reformation, where we believed the other Protestant Churches progressed some but then ossified and went no further, or are we in danger of joining them? In each generation, do we intently study the Word, realising that there is still much more truth to learn, as Ellen White clearly taught, or do wallow in our arrogance that we have the complete truth?

Dwayne Turner
7 days ago

Brother Kevin,

The decision that Unions make on who is ordained is not initiated by the union. The Unions vote on the persons who are recommended for ordaination, handed to them from the Ordaination Committee of the Local Conferences. This is such a colossal misrepresentation of the facts! The Unions derive their authority from the church organization. The Unions are not "self-empowered"!!! To date....the Union's only to decide on male candidates for ordination. To date only males have been ordained.

Now let me say this before I comment further.... I can care less about all the tags that people place on others (not saying you) when you talk about male-only leadership. When these tags are used, they only confirm that the one issuing the statement has spent more time "in the world" than "in the Word".

When we have met at GC's in times past, we have been deciding on whether to expand ordination to include women. For Columbia Union to acknowledge that Women's Ordination has been a subject of discussion and votes at the GC, but then turn around declare that they are empowered to "take matters into their own hands" is confusing, to say the least. No doubt, if the G.C. had voted to ordain women, the Columbia Union would be citing the GC as its "authority to proceed" to any and all dissenting members of the Columbia Union. The vote simply hasn't "gone their way" at the GC'; therefore they seek to "take matters into their own hands.

Perhaps the members of the Columbia Union should not participate in the upcoming G.C. or at Annual Council! What right do you have to effect what happens to the World Church, when you can care less about the World Church when you meet in your own territory!!!! Now we know that you will come there with own agenda.....and if it doesn't pass.....just pass it at a future Columbia Unino constituency meeting and you will have what you couldn't get at the GC!!!!!!

Dwayne Turner
7 days ago

Ervin Taylor,

Please forgive me! I did not look close enough to the first name. I addressed you as Sis. Taylor. Seems it should be Brother Taylor.

Ervin Taylor
7 days ago
Brother Turner: I wonder if being addressed as "Sister Taylor" might, in some ways, be thought of as a compliment? If think it has that potential. At least the opinion I expressed on women's ordination did not seem to be coming from a biased male upset that his "headship" (a strange word) might be threatened.

greg prout 7 days ago

Early adventists used to print a broadside entitled 'Present Truth.' Truth relevant and timely, a word of hope in history's current context, not first century patriarchal values. Women sitting in church and counseled to shut up (1Cor. 14: 34, 35) I hope would find no place in today's congregations. I would dare Elder Wison and others to advocate such a position and expect a warm acceptance from the women in our church; talk about division while postulating unity! And what man would promote such a first century patriarchal notion publicly and go home and expect his wife to greet him with open arms? Though it is in the Bible, nevertheless it is Paul's misogynistic view of women (tainted by the culture in which he lived), not God's, and viewed through the prism of Jesus it is clearly an archaic belief of no 21st century value. I salute the Columbia Union for upgrading fairness and equality of sexes in the church. Elevating women to their rightful status (ordination) is in the spirit of Christ who always treated women with equality and respect (John 4) inspite of a culture that equated them as chattel. Women's ordination: Relevant Truth for our present time.

Stephen Ferguson 7 days ago

"Early adventists used to print a broadside entitled 'Present Truth.' Truth relevant and timely, a word of hope in history's current context, not first century patriarchal values."

Amen! Whilst those opposing WO usually claim to be 'historic Adventists' I wonder in fact what our very first generation of pioneers would make of all this? I wonder what they would think of a Church (or at least sections of it) that seems to think more of tradition than searching the scriptures, that refuses to learn anything new (even when the 'new' is actually the re-discovery of the very old), and that uses political arguments of power over as the prime basis for its decisions?

I look to our pioneers who discovered the Sabbath, state of the dead, adult baptism, our health message and salvation by faith through grace and Trinity - and often through a somewhat painful process of ernest prayer and study of the scriptures. These pioneers often came from different backgrounds and different denominations. Not all of these discoveries came at once, but sometimes took many decades. Yet, the pioneers had a sense of mission, a sense of openness and flexibility, and humbleness, that they were always willing to have their preconceived views corrected by present and progressive truth through scripture, even if these views were the premier tradition of Christendom. This is what makes a restoranist Christian Church.

I think many of the 'historic Adventists' would be quite suprised by the attitude of our pioneers to this issue.

Andreas Bochmann 7 days ago

I am saddened and concerned about the tone of language used in some comments.

- flagrant rebellion and apostacy
- truth is lying in the streets, bleeding
- you, do not believe in "Present Truth." But, somehow that doesn't surprise me.
I acknowledge that some members are deeply hurt and wish to express those feelings (though the same kind of hurt on the other side of the issue usually did not trigger this kind of language). Yet I find such stake-igniting language inappropriate in a protestant church (which values religious liberty and personal conscience), let alone the body of Christ (which is about faith, hope and love), as a contribution to an admittedly difficult issue. If ordination is the recognition (by the church) of God's calling - the whole discussion is way out of proportion.

Stephen Ferguson
7 days ago

"If ordination is the recognition (by the church) of God's calling - the whole discussion is way out of proportion."

But that appears to be one of the key theological issues here. Regardless of the issue of gender, does ordination ‘make’ the minister (i.e. BEFORE), or is ordination merely the Church’s public acknowledgment of God’s making of a minister (i.e. AFTER)? In his excellent thesis 'Leadership in the Early Church During the First Hundred Years', Emeritus Professor Robert M. Johnston of Andrews University argues that charismatic leadership, which he defines as meaning apostles and prophets, are:

“…called to it directly by Christ or his Spirit. It was not an office to which one was elected or humanly appointed. It was a function to which one was divinely called. The church could extend its recognition of that calling, but its reception did not depend upon such recognition and normally preceded it.”

You see this in the life of Ellen White, our premier charismatic leader. Her calling as a prophet and apostle was not dependent upon human recognition, because it was God who gave her these spiritual gifts. The Church did recognise her gift, but at times didn’t quite know what to do. They did give her ministerial credentials, sometimes with the words ‘ordained’ on it, because that was about the highest recognition it knew to give.

Throughout the history of the OT and NT, many of those called by God to exercise spiritual leadership were not recognised by those in official administrative authority. The fact Ellen White never insisted in being ordained merely confirms that human acknowledgement of God’s calling is a secondary issue – what really matters is if people doing the Lord’s work as called. Women currently doing the Lord’s work exercising the gifts of apostleship (Eph 4) are apostles, whether we human beings acknowledge them or not.

Jean Corbeau
7 days ago

"I find such stake-igniting language inappropriate in a protestant church (which values religious liberty and personal conscience), let alone the body of Christ (which is about faith, hope and love), as a contribution to an admittedly difficult issue. If ordination is the recognition (by the church) of God's calling - the whole discussion is way out of proportion."

Religious liberty is one thing; divisiveness and rebellion are another. This was clearly done in opposition to
duly established church policy. This has the potential to tear the church apart. The way to effect change in the church is not through defiance and rebellion. It is through prayer and patience.

Elaine Nelson
6 days ago

Please state the "duly established church policy" as exactly written and where it can be found for corroboration.

TruthWave7
6 days ago

@Andreas Bochmann: I'm concerned at your lack of concern, when we are seeing before our very eyes the majority of Union Presidents in the NAD voting to lead us into the same type of theological apostacy that decimated the membership of the United Methodists, Lutherans, and Presbyterians. They are no more than glorified social clubs, and have experienced a massive bloodletting of membership. They is why, I described many of our Union Presidents as Aaron like leaders, who take positons that are politically correct, instead of bibilically correct.

All4Him
7 days ago

The fact Ellen White never insisted in being ordained merely confirms that human acknowledgement of God’s calling is a secondary issue......

No, the fact is that she refused any effort to be ordained is because she was a messenger of the Lord that followed His Word. She was called as a prophetess NOT an apostle and there are examples in the Bible of that. "Those who enter the missionary field should be men and women who walk and talk with God. Those who stand as ministers in the sacred desk should be MEN of blameless reputation. 5T 598.

The primary object of our college is to afford young MEN the opportunity to study for the ministry and prepare young persons of BOTH SEXES to become workers in the various BRANCHES of the cause. 5T Page 60. 

Needed in Various Branches of the Work.--In the various branches of the work of God's cause, there is a wide field in which our sisters may do good service for the Master. Many lines of missionary work are neglected. In the different churches, much work which is often left undone or done imperfectly, could be well accomplished by the help that our sisters, if properly instructed, can give. Through various lines of home missionary effort they can reach a class that is not reached by our ministers. Among the noble women who have had the moral courage to decide in favor of the truth for this time are many who have tact, perception, and good ability, and who may make successful workers. The labors of such Christian women are needed.-- Review and Herald, Dec. 10, 1914.

Stephen Ferguson
7 days ago

How do you know Ellen White wasn't an apostle? What is an apostle? I believe the word ‘apostle’ comes from the Greek word apostolos, and literally means ‘to send forth’. In Latin, it is translated as missio, from where we
obtain the English word ‘missionary’.

Ellen White never called herself a prophet - or any other title other than Lord's messanger. From the EG White Estate:

http://www.whiteestate.org/issues/faq-unus.html#unusual-section-b2

Ellen White didn't claim any sort of title because she was too humble. It is in that spirit we should consider why she didn't demand ordination, which is the Church's public recognition of a spiritual calling bestowed by God - not men.

I would argue Ellen White clearly had all 5 of the spiritual gifts mentioned in Eph 4:11, which includes apostle, prophet, teacher, evangelist and pastor. Ellen White was clearly our premier charismatic leader, undeniably possessing spiritual authority as an apostle (missionary trips to Australia and Switzerland), prophet, healer and medical missionary, literature evangelist, preacher, Bible worker, teacher, pastor and counsellor.

Ellen White made clear that she wasn't just a prophet, but that her role was much broader, which I personally see as a suggestion that she was exercising several of these spiritual gifts listed in Eph 4:11:

"During the discourse, I said that I did not claim to be a prophetess. Some were surprised at this statement, and as much is being said in regard to it, I will make an explanation. Others have called me a prophetess, but I have never assumed that title. I have not felt that it was my duty thus to designate myself. Those who boldly assume that they are prophets in this our day are often a reproach to the cause of Christ.

My work includes much more than this name signifies. I regard myself as a messenger, entrusted by the Lord with messages for His people" (Letter 55, 1905; quoted in Selected Messages, book 1, pp. 35, 36).

On what scriptural authority do you say God can give women 4 of these spiritual gifts but leave out the 5th - apostle? On what basis do you try to pigeon-hole Ellen White, or any other women for that matter, when Ellen White specifically said not to do that to her?

Jean Corbeau
7 days ago

Back about 20 years ago some independent ministries were condemned for ordaining their own ministers. They were called divisive. Where is the condemnation for this rebellious action? This not only divisive, it is flagrant rebellion, and it's more serious than when the independents did it, because it was done by an official church entity, in opposition church policy that was voted in a GC session. "The church will appear as about to fall."

More action like this can only bring it closer.

Elaine Nelson
6 days ago

You are conflating independent ministries with church supported ministries. By the very name, independent they are not a paid SDA entity. Who condemned them? The official church? Or folks like you? Condemnation is free and usually useless as well as ineffective.

Dwayne Turner
Sis. Bochmann,

I'm saddened that you are saddened only by characterizations of the action that took place; such as "apostasy", "flagrant rebellion", and apostacy! Are you equally as saddened by the blatant disrespect for Elder Ted Wilson, that is regularly displayed by many posters on this website?

These "characterizations" of the condition of God's people can also be found in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy. Moses threw down the ten commandments upon seeing the apostasy at the base of Mt. Sinai. Are you troubled by that? Are you equally as troubled by the outright bashing of the call to revival and reformation, that began in 2010 under the leadership of Elder Wilson? I don't spend one minute back-peddling over characterizations. Give me Bible and Spirit of Prophecy for this action!

You say "if ordination is the recognition (by the church) of God's calling - the whole discussion is way out of proportion. What church are you speaking of? The Seventh-day Adventist Church? Or the brand new denomination that began on 7/29/12..... The Columbia Union Conference Church?

I reiterate....the Columbia Union is not a church!......It is a branch of the SDA Worldwide Church! To act like a "sub-church" within the church is wrong!

Butayl

I find it sad that this has taken place. Women's Lib advocates are again rejoicing. This "meeting" was not called by God. It goes completely against the structure of the SDA church. It will only cause more problems. These "delegates" have done Satan's bidding. The only "good" thing about all of this is that there are enough churches out there that we can go to that still stand for Bible truth. The majority of the SDA people (church members) will be lost. God's people have always been in the minority. I believe that is also true in His remnant church. I also feel sadness for those eleven people that abstained from voting. They are just as guilty as those who voted for OW. My husband (who is a head elder in our local church) and myself, a deaconness, will attend an SDA church that holds to the "old standards". Call me old fashioned, call me anything you want. God's people will be persecuted more by those in the church than those without. (Ellen White's words) Those times are beginning to take hold. The Lord is coming soon to take those home who are faithful to His word. Women's Lib is one of the greatest tools of the devil that I have ever seen in our church. Women have a role in the church and men have a role in the church. It has been turned on its head, and that is the way Satan wants it. We had better get back to Bible basics before it is too late.

Stephen Ferguson

On what basis do you claim the right to be a deaconess? In 1833, Lutheran Pastor Theodor Fliedner of Kaiserswerth, Germany, revived the deaconess movement – forgotten for over a thousand years. Despite deaconess being a biblical office, the Council of Orange in 441 revoked female ordination. To put this in
perspective, the Synod of the Greek Orthodox Church only reinstituted the female deaconate in 2004.

If something as biblical as the office of deaconess could be forgotten for sixteen hundred years, how many other ancient truths are yet to be rediscovered – or do we still unwittingly follow Rome?

What is women's lib exactly? I am pretty sure I am no feminist (in the way you probably think about it), but I do take the egalitarian message of the Gospel in Gal 3:28 seriously - don't you? I take the Protestant notion of priesthood of believers found in 1 Pet 2:9 and Rev 5:10 and rediscovered by Martin Luther, rather than Roman Catholic doctrines of Apostolic Succession and Sacred Tradition - don't you.

No doubt similar accusations were once labelled against abolitionists in the 19th Century (including many of our SDA pioneers) and then in the Civil Rights Movement in the 20th Century. No doubt those who preached the curse of Ham likewise argued that such 'modern ideas' were dangerous and a tool of the devil that would supposedly lead to societal chaos.

I do agree though that God's people are often in the minority. No doubt the Unions of NAD, Europe and SPD (when it makes a similar vote) will have to be the brave minority against a culturally conservative majority. The recent action by Unions in the NAD and Europe to uphold scripture above Roman Catholic tradition gives me hope that we might still be a Reformation Church, and not a Tradition-following servant of the Papacy.

I do agree we need to forget the Roman Catholic traditions of the passed and get back to Bible basics. After 30 years of intense Bible study on the issue - I note our top theologians hold the Bible does support WO. It is great to see the NAD Unions being courageous enough to do just that - getting back to Bible basics.

George Tichy
7 days ago

"I find it sad that this has taken place. Women's Lib advocates are again rejoicing. This 'meeting' was not called by God. It goes completely against the structure of the SDA church."

Butayl,

Tell us please, How do you know that this meeting was not actually called by God? Who are you to say something like this?

When you make a statement like that you must be 100% sure, you must have some proof. Do you have any? Did you get any vision about it? Or is it just that you don't agree with the result on a personal basis, and thus you are throwing blame on some "women's lib advocates?"

I am not a "women's lib advocate" but I support the eradication of the shameful, stone age "discrimination against women" that still exists in our church. It appears that so many men, even in 2012, have personal satisfaction in keeping women captive to a second class status, like "almost-a-human-being." And they consider themselves.... followers of Christ!?!?!

Stephen Ferguson
7 days ago
And isn't there a paradox. If she doesn't believe in Women's Lib, then presumably she doesn't believe Women have authority to teach or have authority over men? So on what basis is she doing that right now? Perhaps she pines for an earlier time when women didn't have the vote or a say?

And I am not saying this in an inflammatory sense, merely to illustrate the absurdity of some of the logic. Like people trying to use the spiritual authority and leadership of a woman (Ellen White) to say women can't have roles of spiritual authority and leadership!

Elaine Nelson
6 days ago

"God's people have always been in the minority. I believe that is also true in His remnant church."

By that measure, the CUC is in the minority; ergo, it is Hi remnant church. The large majority is in third world nations. Careful with assigning numbers as truth.

Doctorf
6 days ago

Butayl,

You say the meeting was not "called by God." Are you telling us that the SDA authority as currently assembled and engaging in ungodly discrimination is "called by God"?

J. David Newman
7 days ago

The real issue is why are we debating this issue at all. The General Conference voted that Divisions could make the decision as to whether women could be ordained as local elders. But then one person, Neal Wilson, the father of the current president made the decision and got it voted that divisions could not decide whether women could be ordained as pastors. The argument went like this. Ordination to be a pastor is a universal ordination and if some parts of the world would not accept women pastors then she could not be a pastor. On the other hand ordination to be an elder is only for a local church.

Here is where the argument falls apart. It is true that an elder only serves a local church and if he or she moves to another church they have to be selected again by that church. But it is exactly the same with a pastor. Because I am a pastor does not authorize me to travel to another division and seek to raise up a church, for example, unless I have been invited and authorized by that division. If they don't want me they don't invite me. If a conference or division wants me to speak they have to place a request through the GC down to the local conference for me to go and speak. I cannot just go and speak.

This was debated at a GC Colloquium that I was part of when I was an associate director of the GC Ministerial Assoc. Elder Bradford, the NAD president, and an African American, spoke up against what Elder Wilson was presenting. He said, if what you are saying is true then I could never have been ordained because I could not preach in the white Adventist church across the street. My ordination would not have been accepted there. That is where the mistake was made. It is ironic that in the NT there is no difference between the elder and the pastor. The elders were the pastors. The word pastor only appears once in Eph 4. We have made the difference by following the trifold system of the Roman Catholic Church: Deacon, Priest, Bishop. Adventists: Deacon,
Elder, Pastor.

That is why I am beginning a PhD program to show how the Adventist practice comes from the Catholic Church and not from the Bible and then show what the actual NT practice is. The word ordain does not even appear in the NT. To use a British expression the issue of ordination is a red herring. I am intrigued by the statements of those so strongly opposed to the Columbia Union action because they are constantly repeating the Catholic line, theology, not the Biblical line. I am also intrigued that the texts they quote have nothing to say about ordination but are about the role of women and Paul is very clear that women should not have authority over men see 1 Tim 2. But I do not see these people objecting to women teachers where boys and men might be present whether in Sabbath school or church school. It would be helpful for these people to explain how they decide which part of the text to follow and which part to ignore.

Stephen Ferguson
7 days ago

"That is why I am beginning a PhD program to show how the Adventist practice comes from the Catholic Church and not from the Bible and then show what the actual NT practice is. The word ordain does not even appear in the NT."

Amen.

George Tichy
7 days ago

"That is why I am beginning a PhD program to show how the Adventist practice comes from the Catholic Church and not from the Bible and then show what the actual NT practice is."

This will be an easy task! Smart choice. It will be very easy to show the similarities between SADC and RCC - there are so many!. And the "actual NT practice" will be a piece of cake. You may have your PhD much sooner than you think.

And the product of your research will certainly be very interesting to read. Make sure it becomes a book. Books are a big business among SDAs..., and you may make tons of money as well.

Go for it!

Jean Corbeau
6 days ago

Brother Newman brings up the issue that brought us this unfortunate debacle: the decision to ordain women as elders. Big mistake. The same reasons for not ordaining women as pastors, are equally applicable to the subject of elders; because the Bible makes no distinction between pastors and elders.

Elaine Nelson
6 days ago

Since female elders has long been accepted, by your reasoning, all barriers to female pastors are invalid: "because the Bible makes no distinction between pastors and elders." Were you actively fighting against female elders?
Why are you and others complaining as this was a new development when that decision was made long age: there is no distinction (between male and female) written in Ephesians?

Doctorf
6 days ago

Indeed Jean. That satan is a clever guy. What next? In the end the CUC slapped the GC and these good people would not tolerate scriptural based discrimination. The bible was also used to justify slavery. So what would you suggest we do with Pastor Chris Oberg at the LSU Church? She was ordained. Want to try to take it away?

Kevin Riley
6 days ago

But, to bring up the issue no one opposed to women's ordination wants to face: the NT is talking about what women can and can't do, not how they may be recognised for doing so. It is, biblically. logically and theologically, insane to say the Bible teaches women may engage in any form of ministry but must be commissioned, not ordained, when doing so, when the difference involves activities the Bible never assigns to pastors, or elders. The real debate is 'can women be pastors and elders?', not whether they can or can't be ordained.

Elaine Nelson
6 days ago

That any ordained pastor would need to be able to be employed in any of the world church in order to be ordained is worse than a red herring, those who made such statements should have immediately been called on it and asked if that meant that a Swahili pastor could not be ordained unless he could be positioned in any world division. Language is a much more difficult barrier than sex, but of such fallacious arguments do failed positions continue.

Doctorf
6 days ago

So David are you saying that if we had followed the bible and not the Catholic tradition of equating elders with pastors that would somehow justify the discrimination against women? Why can't we deal with the problem that much of what is written in the bible with regards to the issue at hand comes from a cultural perspective and not "divine" guidance? Using "divinely" inspired guidance to do what is wrong is simply amazing to me. Google how the bible was also utilized to justify slavery.

TruthWave7
6 days ago

@J. David Newman: You can word smith all you want, but that does not negate the very strong biblical example that Jesus left when it comes to only laying hands on male while he was on earth as a God/ Man. What a person does speaks louder than words. If there is any influence of the Papacy in the SDA church of course it needs to be removed, but on balance the Papacy is not wrong in all of its doctrines, in fact when it comes to the Law of God, the view it as being binding on Christians, while most Evangelicals don't view it as being binding. The strongest point against women being put into the Apostolic roles in the church is that Jesus didn't make any changes in the NT, before his death or after his death, therefore according to the law of covenants and wills, it could not be changed after His death.

Hebrews 9:16-18; "In the case of a will,[d] it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, 17 because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living. 18 This is why even the first covenant was not put
into effect without blood." Galatians 3:15 "To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified."

Doctor
6 days ago

Truth wave,

Your arguments are similar to those used in justifying slavery. Long before there was an SDA church St. Augustine supported maintaining slavery where as St. Patrick opposed using the bible to support treating humans as property.

Dwayne Turner
6 days ago

Wow.....we have people here supporting women's ordination who don't even believe ordination is biblical!!!!!
Talk about the epitome of confusion!!!!

Additionally, I can't believe that someone would dedicate themselves to a doctoral degree on proving that the model of SDA church leadership and ordination was derived from the Catholics. This is how driven and motivated people are to debunk Adventism!!! Here the Lord is coming soon and people are getting PHD's to convince the church that we have been all wrong...... Its the educational system that has the church in trouble in the first place!

With all due respect, Bro. Neumann.....you don't have to spend such precious time studying this issue to report your findings with the "progressives" (their words, not mine).... in fact you don't need a PHD to convince the faithful of your heartfelt convictions......

It is clear already that extra-biblical arguments are the preferred method of teaching anyway...

Stephen Ferguson
6 days ago

"It is clear already that extra-biblical arguments are the preferred method of teaching anyway..."

Indeed, like Apostilic Succession and Sacred Tradition of the Roman Catholic Church, being the main argument of those opposing WO.

Sis. Turner, when will you acknowledge you and your fellow opponents of gender equality are little different from Sunday keepers who try to tell Adventists that they keep Sunday even though the clear evidence of scripture shows Saturday is still the seventh-day Sabbath? When will you realise that like Sunday keepers who are still following the Pope in Rome and not the message of the Gospel?

David IJB
6 days ago

We all agree that at Creation both sexes were created in the image of God. Have we not preached for over 100 years that we should strive for the “Eden diet” and not the flesh diet after the Fall? Why not raise women to their pre-fall equal condition of rib-to-rib and side by side, instead of requiring woman to submit to man,
according to curse of the Fall? Was not the Fall the result of failure to work together?

The church should reflect the Eden home model of leadership, Eve was the second self of Adam. Why not reflect a marriage between men and women based on unselfish love, not in authority. Sure, some men and women can perform certain tasks better than the other can, but when they support each other they are stronger.

To reflect the pre-fall condition, we need both male and female leadership. How many women are better at home finances, and overall management? Children are more difficult to rise with one parent, so likewise a church is more likely to be mismanaged without both female and male authority, at the top. Let’s allow a place for women to be Presidents, Treasures, Ordained ministers, and Ministerial directors. According to the heterosexual family model, we should open channels for women to assume at least 50% leadership. This is the Eden family model, in which Sabbath keepers that honor creation and marriage should be foremost in promoting.

Stephen Ferguson
6 days ago

And what does Gen 3:16 tell us about female subordination - it tells us that it was a result of sin; not God's original plan.

Doctorf
6 days ago

The CUC did what was right and slapped Ted Wilson on the wrist. Hua! Using ancient texts to justify discrimination against women and saying it is "Gods word" is foolish. These issues in the early church should be looked at through the patriarchal cultural lense of the day.

TruthWave7
6 days ago

@Doctorf: Using non-biblical reasoning to make of non-effect the plains texts of the Bible, is not being a Protestant.

Stephen Ferguson
6 days ago

Indeed, the opposition to WO clearly shows you and other opponents are still following Apostilic Succession and Sacred Tradition of the Roman Catholic Church, and you all but admit as such in your other post above. A key tennent of Protestantism is to embrace Martin Luther's rediscovery of the belief in the priesthood of all believers. Our pastors are not priests - either Levitical or Catholic! Pres Wilson is not the Pope, he does not necessarily speak for God outside of the clear teachings of scripture, and his appeal to what his father would say is an appeal to his princling status as a born prince of the Church that has no place within the SDA Church.

Doctorf
6 days ago

Truthwave,

We used "extrabiblical" reasoning to argue with proponents of slavery who at the time used "biblical
arguments" and biblical authority to justify and maintain slavery. Thank heavens for extrabiblical arguments in the abolition of slavery. From a moral perspective discrimination against women who want to serve as pastors is just not right. Yet you want to hide behind the supposed "biblical authority" to defend this discrimination. The CUC did what was right. The Pacific Union Conference has been ordaining women. Ted Wilson and his band of 19th century Adventists are becoming a scourge.

Lamplighter
6 days ago

CUC is the latest among conferences in NAD that has made a unilateral move for WO contrary to the Adventist world church's decision in the General Conference in session. For one thing, such a move do not solve the controversy in the Adventist Church. My guess is that it has complicated and made more pronounce the bitter divide as evidenced by the comments in this thread! I don't know if the prayers for the guidance of the Holy Spirit uttered during the special session in Maryland last Sunday were answered, because what I am seeing by the exchanges on this thread is more heat than light. While the gospel is bringing in thousands of converts every year into the Adventist church in my home country, what I see and hear in Adventist circles in the US is all this polemic on equality and women's rights, etc. There are women I know who serve our Adventist denomination in my home country who work diligently and joyfully without thought or complaint about unfair treatment. And I am sure, there are many more in this country who serve the church who are not perturbed by all the fuss about women's ordination! My heart weeps at the thought that Satan has stolen a march on us. This WO issue is a distraction of the devil. CUC has spent precious time and money for calling this special constituency to vote on WO which is not the biggest and pressing issue of the times. Soul-winning is. It would have been better if a portion of the money spent in calling for the special constituency were given to my church (and other churches) to buy more Great Controversy books to give door-to-door! I weep and pray that the Holy Spirit will enlighten our leaders to see what is most expedient and necessary.

Stephen Ferguson
6 days ago

Change the word 'women' with 'blacks' and 'men' with 'whites', and your post could probably read no doubt like a post from 50 or 100 years ago.

"There are women [blacks] I know who serve our Adventist denomination in my home country who work diligently and joyfully without thought or complaint about unfair treatment. And I am sure, there are many more in this country who serve the church who are not perturbed by all the fuss about women's [black's] ordination! My heart weeps at the thought that Satan has stolen a march on us. This WO [black's ordination] issue is a distraction of the devil."

Do we believe in our FB#14 or not? Is says in Christ we are all equal, regardless of race or gender. Do people in effect want to take out the reference to gender in our FB? If not, then we should follow it. I understand the Pres of CUC make this same argument in an open letter to Pres Wilson.

Fighting for equality, in both race and gender, is not a distraction of the devil. It is the heart of the Gospel, found in Gal. 3:28.

Truth Seeker
6 days ago
Ben wrote: "It is time to focus and build our unity." And exactly how does that happen since the Columbia Union has now defied the SDA church leadership as well as the SDA church in Official Session?

I remember your father and I surmise he would not have ever engaged in such insubordinate action. The leaders were often true leaders who would not countenance rebellion. Isn't a rebellious attitude accompanied by similar actions a basis for disfellowshipping a church member? Are Union officials exempt?

Ben Maxson
6 days ago

Truth Seeker,

I have come to the conclusion after watching this issue for the last 25 years that what we are seeing is a profound failure of leadership. If leadership continues to attempt to control conferences and unions on this issue, the polarization will continue. It is time to lead rather than react.

I am glad you remember my father. He is still living and still preaching at the age of 92. We talk regularly about this and other church issues, and you would be suprised with his conclusions and convictions about what is going on now. He definitely does not see this as rebellion. Instead, he sees this as the natural consequences of the path GC leadership chose decades ago when they began to centralize more and more power and control at the GC.

The reality is that as Union and Conference president in three different divisions, there were a number of times when his conference and union committees had to take actions contrary to policy because of the unique situations they faced. As a leader, he understood that policies were general guidelines and not the law of the Medes and the Persians which could not be adapted and applied with reasonable flexibility.

J. David Newman
6 days ago

To those who have commented on my post. Nothing can justify discrimination against women and our Fundamental #14 expressly forbids it. And yes, local culture must be taken into account when interpreting the Bible. That is one of the reasons we have challenges in agreeing. Even the arch conservatives who use 1 Tim 2 against women's ordination are not consistent. Paul says women are not to teach men. But I do not find conservatives forbidding women to teach in sabbath school or in church school where males are present. I would have thought that they would be arguing for segregated classes. I have not yet read any explanation for why the text is used the way it is by those opposed to ordination of women.

Regarding why I would pursue a PhD in the area of ordination. We, as Adventists, especially the more conservative ones, as evident in some of these posts, have always said we go by the Bible and the Bible only. Ellen White, herself, made it clear that we may have to change some of our ideas and what we have taught as truth may indeed not turn out to be truth. We have also spoken, quite harshly at times, against the Roman Catholic church. So I find it rather ironic that it is the conservatives who want to hold onto the Roman Catholic doctrine of ordination. There is no ordination in the NT. Period. That is why I am pursuing this research so that maybe the conservatives will see that the issue in the Bible is not ordination but the priesthood of all the believers and that God calls us to serve according to the spiritual gifts he has given to each one.

I will seek to show that the Bible tells us that God calls us by the gifts he has endowed us with. There is no hierarchy of gifts in the NT. In fact the qualifications for deacon are the same as for elder. I will seek to show...
that we should dispense with the three layers of ordination and go to the biblical teaching of spiritual gifts. We then commission people, not ordain them with all the false connotations that have come to be associated with that word. The NT is all about selecting, appointing, choosing, people to serve God. We should lay hands on anyone whom God has called to a position of leadership in the local church whether it is the head greeter or the head music person or the head elder, or the head children's leader and so on.

Stephen Ferguson
6 days ago

Amen again - go ahead and do that PhD. The fact that so many try to mock you for your suggestion should be illustrative that it probably is indeed a good idea, and a subject of much relevance.

The use of 1 Tim 2 is bizarre because:

1. It is used by other women to say women can't be pastors, even though paradoxically to follow the text they would be saying they have no authority to speak or teach what they are saying; and

2. Historically Adventist men haven't quoted these text because we have Ellen White, and who clearly did speak, teach and preach. In fact she wrote more than almost any other author in the history of planet earth!

That is why Adventists have never disputed that women can practically perform all spiritual roles in the Church, because Ellen White and others did. The only thing left for misogynists is to try and stop the ordination ceremony, which is all a little pointless, because women can practically serve as pastors by commissioning anyway.

P.S. as to your study, even the SDA Encyclopedia admits the word 'ordination' is not biblical but derives from the RC and then from the pagan Roman legal system; unlike the term commissioning, which is biblical to consider Matt 28.

Doctorf
6 days ago

David,

Like Stephen Ferguson I support your endeavors. This discrimination is not right and the CUC did what was right. I think the delegates looked at the history of SDA discrimination against women in the ministry and came to the conclusion that "this is just not right."

You are a Pastor and a question I have for you. How has the GC dealt with the ordination of senior pastors here in the Pacific Union Conference. Most notably Chris Oberg now senior pastor of the LSU Church? I am good friends with her husband and I wonder what they think of this bru ha ha.

Rachel Pluviose
6 days ago

As a woman, born and raised in NYC, a wife and mother who works outside the home, I am extremely disappointed that the Union has decided to make such a overt act of rebellion when the General Conference has already decided to look at the matter and is studying the issue. Do we feel that we as a Western culture or as a large tithe producing part of the World Church we should attempt to usurp authority and do what we want...
irrespective of the consequences? We live in a society where the roles between men and women are so blurred we no longer know what our original roles are except as biology dictates. Let us not sully God's church with a dysfunctional paradigm that exists in Western culture where a women can do anything a man can do. Though we might be capable of accomplishing a task, doesn't mean that we should. We are not men. Women did not possess the priesthood in the Bible. Nor did God intend them to, which is clear since women were judges and prophets contrary to the common culture during biblical times. That is biblical with clear precedent set from Genesis into the New Testament. Men are women are different, hold different roles and we should celebrate our differences and not try to nullify them to satisfy a warped sense of equality. Let us also remember that the majority of the World Church does not reside in the industrialized world where the roles of men and women are no longer clearly defined. As such, is this issue worth dividing the Church? Are we willing to become like the Episcopalians? Let both sides earnestly seek God's will and be prepared to accept His will especially if it is contrary to ours.

Elaine Nelson
6 days ago

If western culture is so deplorable, would you prefer Middle Eastern culture where you would not be allowed to work outside the home or even drive a car?

You are fighting a losing battle as the G.C. has stated several times that there is no theological reason not to ordain women. That being so, there is only persuasion and threats of "grave consequences" if women are ordained. Church policy has already been established that each union has the right and privilege for ordination; it does not lie with the G.C. How can it be rebellion to act within the G.C.s own provisions?

It is the third world nations that are holding the NAD hostage and attempting to deprive them of their authority, given by the G.C. to ordain their choices within their organization. Reverting back to the OT priesthood is an anachronism: there are no priests in the NT except Christ and the OT priesthood was never part of Christian hierarchy.

When you ask "are we willing to become like the Episcopalians"? this is based on structure and not on doctrine. There has never been an SDA statement made that women should not be ordained, so "what's the beef"?

Dwayne Turner
6 days ago

Wow Elaine,

The Columbia Union is acting within the G.C.'s own provisions!!! So Elder Ted Wilson, Lowell Cooper must have had no idea what they were talking about at the meeting yesterday. Only the Columbia Union Leadership and Members are the smart ones!!!! Really???. You are defining an authority given by the GC to the Unions, not an authority given by the Union to itself. I would think the representatives of the body that gave the Unions authority would understand the "boundaries of that authority". The Unions are only allowed to ordained as is currently defined in the working policy. There are only references to males in that policy. The policy was not developed considering "future cultural demands", but the current biblical reasons for the use of the male as Pastor. Neither was the Bible; for that reason!! The Union is a mere rubber-stamp for the recommendations of the Local Conference Ordination Committee. The "final say/final word" clause that is being touted as
empowering the Unions to act is not a "top-down" authority in its nature, but "bottom up" in its scope. It doesn't mean that in empowering the Unions to have the final say on who is ordained, the GC relinquishes all say as to the criteria for ordination. If the Union has the final say.....can they ordain gays and lesbians, transgendered, or any such? Do you think that the World Church should idly sit by and watch as any type of lifestyle is approved for the pastorate?

Whenever these arguments are made about the power of the Union, those making the arguments know full well that the policy does not allow the Union to expand the criteria of ordination. Discussing this idea is like discussing the content of a Mitt Romney commercial....."The President said, if you own a business, you didn't build it yourself". And then talking heads hit the airwaves to demonstrate "phony outrage" over a comment that they know has nothing to do with what it is being "couched as"....

Doctorf
6 days ago

Dwayne,

How Catholic of you. You are wrong about the unions. The former GC president let the unions decide on the issue of ordination. Like it or not there are ordained SDA female pastors.

Stephen Ferguson
6 days ago

Sorry Elaine, I am largely just repeating what you said - I wholly agree.

Stephen Ferguson
6 days ago

You say you work outside the home. On what basis do you work at all?

You owe your ability to work, to vote and to have a say to 'Women's Liberation' people of the 'Western culture' that you now condemn. What culture would you prefer - the third world, where people are given in arranged marriages against their will, traded like property, not given an education, and treated as a virtual slave? Perhaps there is much in Western culture, which is actually more Christian than you think?

By the way, as Protestants, we believe in the priesthood of all believers. Our pastors are not Levitical priests. Again, this illustrates those against WO are largely relying on Roman Catholic tradition - not scripture.

Kevin Riley
6 days ago

Rachel

But this argument is not about what women can do. There is general agreement that employment as a pastor is not dependent on gender, but that once employed, women and men will be recognised differently. And the difference in recognition will not impact on 99% of a pastor's role. How often does a pastor get to organise, or disband, a church? Most places commissioning women have voted to allow them to baptise, and they are included in ordination ceremonies, often with an ordained pastor there merely as a token presence. If this debate was about what women can do, I would see that the conservative argument has some basis in the Bible. But the debate over ordination has little or nothing to do with the Bible texts continously quoted.
Stephen Ferguson
6 days ago

Agreed. Equality goes to the heart of the message of the Gospel in Gal. 3:28. Those who oppose WO seem to be saying women can perform the same work but not receive the same wage and recognition because of their gender? That appears to be denying someone their rightful wages as condemned in James 5:4.

Kevin Riley
6 days ago

I am not sure if it occurs everywhere, but in most places pay does not vary according to whether one is ordained or commissioned. It is solely a matter of bureaucratic authority, not pay or even pastoral function.

All4Him
6 days ago

It's about salvation not roles, quit adding works...it's talking about Grace!

Kevin Riley
6 days ago

No, it is talking about how we live together as children of God. To argue that what is true in salvation is not true in how the church works is incomprehensible. Much damage has been done by teaching Galatians as a book about salvation by grace - dealt with in a brief sentence noting that both sides agree on that - and not about the reality of living as the children of God. It is primarily about life in this world, the result of salvation, not about how we gain salvation. When we are told "In Christ..." it is talking about the Christian life after salvation has come. We are now children of God, and as such our life within the church is to be different, and that difference includes the old distinctions between Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female, no longer applying. Yes, they still exist, but they don't control what we can do, because Christ has set us free and made us all sons of God. We would happily use this verse to argue that race and social class should play no role in choosing church officials, but insist that gender still does. That is twisting Scripture at its worst.

J. David Newman
6 days ago

Rachel,
The world church has already voted that women can be pastors. The texts used against ordination are really texts against women being pastors, as some interpret them. So the issue of ordination is a very small issue because the world church has voted that women can be pastors, even senior pastors, with men as associate pastors. All the Columbia Union has done is deal with a moral issue of fairness and equality. Since men and women are both serving as pastors they should hold the same credentials. Your argument is really against the world church. Are you prepared to say that the world church is in apostasy?

Doctorf
6 days ago

David,

I have asked this question before. Is Chris Oberg, Senior Pastor at LSU Church ordained? I thought the Pacific Union Conference was the el rigeur on this issue.
As for others stating you do not need a doctorate to understand the bible. I support your endeavor. It appears that the answer is "yes we do." All this "praying" for guidance seems to me to be a circular effort. If one is on his/her knees long enough and praying fervently often times the answer of the "holy spirit" reinforces a predisposed position. The problem here is that people like Mr. Turner think that the guidance of the Holy Spirit supports a particular position. Interesting rubric.

Dwayne Turner  
6 days ago

Brother Newman,  

You don't need a doctorate to understand the Bible, you need the Holy Spirit!! The homeless man on the street, who has next to no education and can't read, should be able to pick up the Bible, pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and read as though he was a linguist. Do you agree?

And let me just say.... I don't subscribe to such classifications as "Conservative". What on earth does that mean? Define it for me? What does that have to do with the word of God? My brother, get out of that reasoning, steeped in educational plaba (my word), loaded with polysyllabic words, that make people feel good about themselves in academic circles *(And I'm serious about that).* As soon as one takes a position on any issue, his thoughts are lumped into a "theological grouping". The problem is, there are so many "theological slants", that the plain word of God cannot get through. The word of God is not best understood at Andrews University! It is best understood in your own private study, when the heart is right and ready to receive "Thus Saith The Lord".

Again, I extend the question....what does Liberal, Moderate, and Conservative have to do with understanding God's word. I challenge you and all others to compare the term 'Liberal', with the term, 'Conservative'. These terms are usually associated with one's political ideology, lifestyle, dress etc. If one wishes to apply these terms to matters of faith, I think that you should think twice about that, after you have reaquainted yourself with what they mean. 'Scuse my language.... but ain't no defintion of the word 'liberal' that any God-fearing Christian should be happy to associated with....

Patti Grant  
2 days ago

Dwayne Turner, you say there "ain't no definition of the word 'liberal' that any God-fearing Christian should be happy to be associated with." Really? I suggest you consult your dictionary again. My dictionary lists, among other qualities, "Open minded, Accepting, Generous, Bountiful, Munificent, Giving freely, Openhanded, Ample, Broad minded. Strange, but that sounds like Jesus to me.

J. David Newman  
6 days ago

Dwayne, since I am retired I have more time to respond more quickly. I agree totally with your first point. Anyone can understand the Bible. The challenge is how we let the Holy Spirit guide us. We all have filters that the Holy Spirit works through, that is why there are passionate Adventists who believe that Jesus had the nature of Adam before the fall and other equally passionate Adventists who believe He had the nature of Adam after the fall. For whatever reason the Holy Spirit has not seen fit to convict all of us to the same position.
Regarding the use of the word conservative. I apologize for offending you. Yes, it is better not to group people into camps. We all have to interpret the Bible. I do not believe there is anyone who takes every statement literally. There is always a context and it is finding the context and agreeing on it that gives us the challenge. Just one example. Paul tells us to provide for widows over sixty who have been faithful to their husbands but do not help those under sixty (1 Tim. 5:9-11). I do not know anyone in the Adventist church who teaches that should be a church practice yet it is a categorical statement of Paul. There is a principle there but who should sixty be the dividing line?

Truth Seeker
6 days ago

Newman - "Nothing can justify discrimination against women and our Fundamental #14 expressly forbids it. And yes, local culture must be taken into account when interpreting the Bible."

You know as well as the rest of us that this has nothing to do with discrimination and is merely a peg for liberals to hang their hats on. Local culture is another argument that has absolutely no substance when it relates to matters of principle and Scripture. Why not just admit that the CUC acted unilaterally and in defiance of the church and that you approve of such divisive action?

Stephen Ferguson
6 days ago

"You know as well as the rest of us that this has nothing to do with discrimination and is merely a peg for liberals to hang their hats on."

Rubbish - with respect. This has everything to do with discrimination. We already allow women to perform the functions of a pastor, and we always have, in large part because Ellen White and others pioneer women did. We are only discussing whether such women, when performing the same work as men exercising spiritual leadership through a spiritual gift should have the official title 'ordain' rather than 'commission'. Equality goes to the heart of the message of the Gospel in Gal. 3:28.

Are you saying women can perform the same work but not receive the same wage and recognition? If you say yes, then that indeed is a clear sign of the end times, because to deny someone their dues is clearly contrary to the teachings of the OT and NT - see James 5:4.

Rachel Pluviose
6 days ago

Dwayne,

I do agree that as a church, we have erred when we created the title of "commissioned" ministers in order to accommodate the sensitivities of Western culture. I agree that fighting over women ordination is a mute point. We were wrong as a church to allow this accommodation because we felt that we could not tell a women she is not able to do something because of her gender. Why not? Is that discrimination? Then my children discriminate against my husband when they are sick and call for me when he is just as capable. The God discriminated as well against men because they are unable to bear children. We all have different roles which are defined in the Bible and EGW's writings. When we look at her writings holistically, women should be
"ordained" (prayed over/laying on of hands) to visit the sick and care for the poor, not to lead congregations. As a strong, independent Black women, I don't like the idea of being "submissive" to my husband, but since God has called me as a women to hold that role then I do it gladly because I want to be right with God. If we all agree that we are sola sciputra, then everything we do must be biblical based and there is no clear biblical support for female pastors. Why do we feel that women must be equal to men in all things? Men are not equal to women and vice versa. We are different and have different roles. Can we not work together in the different roles God has made for us to further His kingdom? Why must I, as a woman, do everything a man can do? When do we as women start to fully embrace and accept our roles as "help mates" and stop trying to be the men? We do it at work, at home and now we want to do it at church? Will we do try to do it in heaven as well? Let us teach, preach, do God's work, just like EGW did. We need to let our men do the work God has called them to do. That is Biblical and does not diminish in any way from my role as a women working to further God's cause.

Stephen Ferguson
6 days ago

On what basis do you say women can preach and teach as EGW did? Are you perhaps selectively quoting scripture?

olive hemmings
6 days ago

Rachael, the roles God gave you are different from those religion/tradition/society gave you. Your God-given roles are written in the function of your body and nothing can change that. Being a truck driver will not alter your womanhood unless it was already altered. The roles society assigns are always changing. In Saudi Arabia it is not your role to drive a car. In fact in some countries its is not your role to say "no" to a man who proposes to you. If you take on that role he may throw acid on you. If Sis. White heeded the role society assigned women in her time (claiming it to be God-assigned) we would not have the gift of this awesome servant of God available to us today. If you want to apply scripture literally you have no business in this conversation. "Be silent!"

Your sick child comes to you because she/he is conditioned that way, not because that is how it is supposed to be. The child will as quickly turn to the father if he were as involved with the raising of the child. (I have three children who also cling to dad when sick because as two working parents we divide time in raising them)

Do not let religion/tradition disable your mind sister. Step away from it and glorify God with a clear mind, then go back to it and make the world a better place. Change can be painful, but it makes you grow and it makes you strong, it makes you comfortable with who you are, and perpetually excited about what you are becoming.

Stephen Ferguson
6 days ago

Is there a lesson for us in the fact that God chose a white man (who said no), then a black man (who also said no) and then a woman to be our movement's spiritual leader? In fact, God didn't even chose an ordinary woman, he chose a sickly women! People keep talking about trying to listen to the spirit and following examples - well perhaps there is something in that fact. Don't try to limit who God chooses - He chooses not the way mankind does.

Rachel Pluviose
6 days ago
I apologize, my comment should have been directed to Bro. Newman.

Dwayne Turner
6 days ago

Bro Newman,

I am not, in any way, offended by your classification of myself as Conservative. That was not a statement that "I happened to pick up and was offended by".... I am used to such statements! I have been giving seminars around the world talking about the prophecies. In one of my presentations I talk about words that have been inserted into our "Adventist vocabulary" that did not exist in years gone by. My sensitivity centers around the existence of such phenomena; that I believe has erased critical thinking. The aggressive approach from which I wrote on it was do to my strong belief that such classifications have eradicated the notion of "right and wrong"; hence my strong writing. It's not personal to you!

I am troubled by the notion that "the Holy Spirit has not seen fit to convict all of us to the same position." I don't believe it is possible to have a completely sincere heart, approach issues without reservation, use the bible method for study, (line upon line, precept upon precept) and then be lead by the Spirit into factions. I think we allow too much "slack in the rope" for ourselves and don't give enough credit to the convicting power of the Holy Spirit.

Bro. Newman, I believe God is in the process of galvanizing a people into one thought......so that when He comes..... those who have submitted to his inner workings, will not spend one day of adjustment in the Kingdom......Not one day!!! (although there are no days or nights there) We will join people we've never seen before, coming from places we've never been, living in ages we've only read about in history books...... and yet there will be no strife or division for even a split second. I don't want to preach....but that tells me that the Spirit must be doing that now.....bringing us together......not grouping us by ideology.

I do believe that there are some contextual issues we can consider... but they would be matters of minor consequence.... that have no bearing on salvation.....I certainly don't believe that the Spirit is guiding us all to be divided on Women's Ordination....

J. David Newman
6 days ago

Bro Turner:

Regarding differences and the conviction of the Holy Spirit. When Paul and Barnabas disagreed so fiercely over John Mark and they could no longer minister together who was not following the Holy Spirit? Even good people disagree.

Are all the denominations outside the Baptist group not listening to the Holy Spirit when it comes to the proper method of baptism? This is an important doctrine but, it seems to me, that good people who love the Lord can still disagree. Has the Holy Spirit only convicted us and the Baptists in this manner?

Or how about when I traveled to preach in a certain country. I left my jacket in the hotel because it was so hot. But when I got to the church I could not preach until I had borrowed a jacket from another person. No one in the congregation was wearing a jacket. That is not a point of doctrine you might say but you never answered my question on the nature of Christ which is fiercely debated by some. Is the Holy Spirit only convicting one side?
Or, what happens after probation closes? Some believe we must be sinless. Other believe the issue is loyalty. Has the Holy Spirit only convicted one side?

Dwayne Turner  
6 days ago

Brother Newman,

The issues of Paul and Barnabas, as it relates to John Mark; is inconsequential to salvation. I cannot explain why every individual does not reach the same conclusions that we and the Baptist do, with respect to baptism. But I will say that many churches are wedded to their creeds and may very well abandon the notion of "new light" as it does not conform to their churches ecclesiastical creeds and dogma. The problem I have is with the idea that there is could be any fault attached to the Holy Spirit for not reaching mutual conclusions and that the Holy Spirit does not convict everyone the same. 1 Corinthians 1:10 tells us that we are to be perfectly joined together in mind and judgment. Only the Holy Spirit can do that!

On the question of the Nature of Christ....

I maintain that the we utilize a hodge-podge or mixture of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy when we try to reason some questions out. There are those who will not contemplate issues using the volume of corroborative evidence in the Spirit of Prophecy; that amplifies the subject initiated by study of the Word. Questions on the nature of Christ can easily be settled using both aforementioned entities. But I think that most "theological discussions", especially in academic circles, will not even allow the counsel of the Spirit of Prophecy to enter into theological discussion. They think this is a weakness! Instead they turn to "scholars" of other faiths, who often end up raising more questions, than answers. I think, from personal experience, that Andrews University is undoubtedly of this view.

I won't get into the actual debate centering around the nature of Christ; as it is a subject for another forum.

Stephen Ferguson  
6 days ago

"The issues of Paul and Barnabas, as it relates to John Mark; is inconsequential to salvation."

Are you trying to say women's ordination is a salvation issue? I don't recall reading it in our fundamental beliefs anywhere? In fact, the only fundamental belief that comes close is FB#14, which clearly confirms the principle of equality in Christ, not just between races but between genders.

James Lanning  
6 days ago

It has been a debate for years, within Christianity at large, over the issue of female pastors. It stands to reason, as many other denominations fall in line with this issue, that the SDA church would do the same.

I have no animosity toward women, nor would I attempt to discourage them, from their desire to serve God and support the Church, in their many efforts. How that equates to holding an ordained office, is the big question? Because they are ordained by the Church, does NOT mean such an ordination is acceptable to God.

It has also been my observation, that when other denominations choose to allow females to hold ordained
offices, the next step usually is, the acceptance of gay ordination. While some may say my views are a bit extreme, one need only to review the histories, of nearly every denomination, that has accepted females holding the offices, that God had only authorized men to hold.

Of course, in these times of economic stress, opening the doors of the Church Seminaries, to a flood of, "Would-Be-Female-Pastors," may be a boone, to church coffers. And I do question GC motivation.

Maybe someone would say, that this matter has no place for the topic of money. But I say that the Church Conference on any level, is no place for politics. And this vote, in my own opinion, "Which I know means little," is a reflection of what is going on in Christianity at large. And one step in bringing the SDA Church closer to worldly opinion.

Perhaps the SDA Church, is closer to the, "Christian Coalition," than most members realize.

Stephen Ferguson
6 days ago

"Because they are ordained by the Church, does NOT mean such an ordination is acceptable to God."

I would put the opposite to you - just because in most of the world the SDA Church does not ordain women does NOT mean God doesn't call women as wholly acceptable spiritual leaders.

It is also interesting that apostles, together with prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, are not necessarily positions of status but more appropriately listed as spiritual gifts bestowed directly by the Holy Spirit. (Eph 4:11) For example, when Matthias was appointed as a replacement for Judas, the fact that he was chosen by lots emphasised that it was God, not human beings, who made the selection. (Acts 1:21-26).

If you look at both the OT and NT, God called women to all these spiritual leadership positions, including as apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers and pastors. For apostles, there was Junia (a woman’s name); for prophets, we have Anna, Elizabeth, Mary and the four daughters of Phillip; and for evangelists, pastors and teachers, there was Phoebe, Priscilla, Euodia and Syntyche. Furthermore, a keystone text for Adventists is Joel 2:28-29, which says that in the Last Days women, and not just men, will be bestowed with spiritual gifts, including prophecy.

Finally and ironically, our claim to be the Remnant Church of the last days is a fulfillment of this prophecy, in the person of Ellen White, a women who these spiritual gifts. Ellen White was clearly our premier charismatic leader, undeniably possessing spiritual authority as an apostle (missionary trips to Australia and Switzerland), prophet, healer and medical missionary, literature evangelist, preacher, Bible worker, teacher, pastor and counsellor.

Stephen Ferguson
6 days ago

"It has also been my observation, that when other denominations choose to allow females to hold ordained offices, the next step usually is, the acceptance of gay ordination."

I think this is the elephant in the room - that by ordaining women next we will be ordaining gays. It is a very unjust argument to make, contrary to the clear teachings of scripture, which say:

“Do not spread false reports. Do not help a guilty person by being a malicious witness… do not show favoritism to a poor person in a lawsuit.” (Ex 23:1-3)
In effect you can’t bring injustice to a person because of fear it might aid another. You can’t discriminate against women because you fear that might aid homosexuals, another whole class of people. You need to look at the issue of women ordination on its own merits, without any scare mongering.

Anyway, I believe the fears are paranoid. I for one would call myself a ‘moderate’, and whilst I totally support WO, I certainly wouldn’t support the ordination of homosexuals. We don’t on the whole and in practice even really accept homosexuals as members (whether you agree with that or not), so fears about gay pastors is pretty unfounded. No doubt similar ‘slippery slope’ arguments were used by white Christians when the issue of abolition of slavery and civil rights were made.

Stephen Ferguson
6 days ago

“Maybe someone would say, that this matter has no place for the topic of money.”

I agree money is wholly relevant. As we already do and have paid women as ministers since the days of our pioneers (including Elle White herself), and given we have allowed women to perform practically the same role of male ministers, all we are talking about is denying women the same rewards and recognition of their male counterparts. What does the scriptures say about such discrimination:

“Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by you, cries out against you; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.” (Jam 5:4)

What did Ellen White say about paying women ministers:

“Injustice has sometimes been done to women who labor just as devotedly as their husbands, and who are recognized by God as being necessary to the work of the ministry. The method of paying men laborers, and not paying their wives who share their labors with them is a plan not according to the Lord's order, and if carried out in our conferences, is liable to discourage our sisters from qualifying themselves for the work they should engage in.” (Evangelism pp 492-493).

“The tithe should go to those who labor in word and doctrine, be they men or women,” (Evangelism, p. 492).


James, you have made quite honest – the discrimination against WO is largely built on money and power.

Bill Garber
6 days ago

Dwayne Turner ...

You rightly elevate that which is consequential to salvation.

It would be most helpful if you could provide an explanation of how a person comes to be saved that you may bring to a conversation with one inquiring regarding your relationship with the Seventh-day Adventist church and that which the church teaches is consequential to salvation.
This truly puts into perspective the conversation at hand, as you so appropriately note.

Dwayne Turner
5 days ago

Bill Garber....

Got away from posting.....now returning......could you restate what you were requesting of me.....didn't quite understand.....

Doctorf
6 days ago

After reading all of these "brother and sister" comments of which I just do not "feel the looooove" I wonder what would happen if good SDA people with "their blood up" (meaning pumping adrenaline) would do if we engaged in the same argument but each of us had one shot deringer pistols in our pockets.

greg prout
6 days ago

'Adam' means man and woman, yet we exercise to death our attempts to distinguish by diminishing the Other. And we do it in the language of religion and 'God' thereby anethetisizing ourselves from our dark deed..We create the 'Stranger,' the Lesser while relishing we are not like them. Absorbtion of corporate Self bent on setting ourselves above 'them.' We worship our God of 'Identity.' We are the ones the Lost need to know; our list of 29 characteristics; our 'divine' beliefs. Meanwhile we can't even allow our female counterparts their rightful place at the table of ministry. This debate sickens me. It suggests we might be 'Satan's counterfeit' to a world dying for love and embrace. Thank God for Jesus who reminds us 'we are neither Jew or Greek,...neither male or female; for all are one in Christ Jesus.' (Gal 3:28, 29). But we persist to major in inequities in the name of God while Rome burns. A sad state my Church is in.

Bea
6 days ago

While a GC brother was waiting at an airport for his flight, he was reading the book "Who Watches?, Who Cares" (banned from Adventist Book Centers). An author of another banned book called out to him stating, "if you're going to read that heresy, put it between blank pages so no one can see you reading such a controversial book". The GC person said, "I'm watching this entity implode.

Did I hear correctly that there are 100,000 converts to Adventism each year but 300,000 exiting - and who knows how many just disappearing? Perhaps a solution for Ted Wilson would be to do away with Unions and thus take over decision-making of Women Ordination.
Union Presidents have a seat on the GC executive committee and at GC sessions. Can you really see the GC voting to do away with Unions?

TruthWave7
6 days ago

Back in the late 1970's when I baptized in the SDA church, it was much more conservative and biblical than now. Case in point, a few years ago, when I visited the Santa Rosa SDA church, I went to the young adult Sabbath School Class, and they were not even using the GC SS Quarterly, they were using instead Bill Hybels of Willow Creek Sunday School Lessons! The worldly liberals have indeed taken over control of the NAD. There is a definite liberal bent that most of the Union Presidents have in common, and appears that they go which ever way the majority of their constituents desire. In other words, they follow not lead. Our GC President Ted Wilson and other overseas Division and Union Presidents our are only hope now, if somehow, some way Ted Wilson can crush the flagrant rebellion of the Aaron like Unions leaders in the NAD, who are unilaterally doing what they want, when they want, when it comes to WO.

Stephen Ferguson
6 days ago

If if the NAD has a distinctively liberal bent, the GC has a distinctively conservative bent, as do most of the Divisions and Unions in the Developing World. There are bents both ways. A bent doesn't in itself prove anything, except that there are theological and cultural differences between regions of the SDA Church, which is exactly what you would expect from a worldwide movement.

Your single example of a young people's SS class hardly proves anything. I am a 'young adult' who attends a 'liberal' Church, and I can tell we do use the SS pamphlet.

As to saying the SDA Church was more 'biblical' back in the 1970s, I think you are in danger of equating social conservatism with scriptural truth. Everyone may have worn a tie to church (your church probably still does, whereas everyone wears jeans and t-shirts to mine), but such a dress-code is hardly scriptural but cultural. In fact, I would claim our easy-going dress code is a far better fulfillment of James 2:2-3, because we have quite a few non-Adventists at our Church who instantly feel comfortable.

Jean Corbeau
6 days ago

"Everyone may have worn a tie to church (your church probably still does, whereas everyone wears jeans and t-shirts to mine), but such a dress-code is hardly scriptural but cultural."

Interesting. Most people dress their best when attending weddings, funerals; or when meeting important people. So why would they not dress their best when going to meet with the Creator? Very odd. A significant sign of the times, I think.

Kevin Riley
6 days ago

It must be cultural - a suit and tie would be out of place at most weddings and funerals - unless you were the centre of attention. Australia is also a culture where Prime Ministers (and archbishops) are routinely not only referred to, but greeted, by first name. There are many ways to show respect. When we read that Jesus only owned the clothes he wore, you have to wonder what he and the disciples wore on Sabbath.
My point was that many people are more inclined to "dress up" for secular events (whatever they may be) than for church. I think that's backwards. Do we care more about showing respect for secular personages than we do for our Creator?

Kevin Riley
5 days ago

We are in the presence of our Creator 24/7. If we should dress up for church, it has to be for reasons other than being in the presence of God. I have met business men who refuse to wear a suit and tie to church for the simple reason that that is their work 'uniform', and on Sabbath they do not want to be reminded of work. We have accused the liturgical churches of doing the wrong thing in having their clergy wear robes, but we seem to be intent on also insisting on a certain style of dress. I am all for showing respect for God, and for each other, but perhaps a suit and tie - or any other dress code - is not the best way of doing so.

Stephen Ferguson
5 days ago

For me to wear a suit and tie is backwards. As a lawyer, I wear a suit and tie everyday; to wear that to Church would be akin to wearing my work clothes as if the Sabbath is just another day. To me, I take a 'rest' approach to dressing on Sabbath, and it is just a small thing that I do to set it apart from the other days. I don't shave on Sabbath for the same reason (which arguably would be supported by the Mitzvah). I believe Ellen White had similiar little things, such as only allowing the front door to be used on the Sabbath.

I do get wear you are coming from re the best clothes on the Sabbath - as that is indeed a longheld Jewish idea, that is still practiced in some communities today. However, cultural context is important. Before the Industrial Revolution, when all clothing was handmade, many people only owned two sets of clothes. In accordance with the Sabbath principle, there was a 'Sunday best' (or Sabbath) best set aside. In a post-industrial world, with wardrobes full of clothes, the situation is a little different.

Again, we need to ensure we can identify the eternal biblical principle and that adapt that to changing cultural circumstances. We need to be careful we don't confuse a particular cultural practice for an eternal principle.

Stephen Ferguson
5 days ago

And Jean, if you are in favour of liturgical clothing, the Roman Catholics and Anglicans have plenty of traditional vestments. As for me, I prefer the plain clothing in accordance with our Protestant heritage. There was a time when Puritan Protestants even wore plain clothing to their own weddings.

alvaro gutierrez
6 days ago

I wouldn't be surprise with the church giving in to all these pressures the issue of gay marriage and gay men ordination might come up after this it is the sign of the times brothers and sisters Our Lord Jesus Christ is coming back soon
TruthWave7
6 days ago

@Alvaro: So true. But, between now and when the final crisis actually takes place, its going to get ugly. I predict that many of our devout brothers and sisters will be disfellowshipped in their local churches, for simply rebuking their Pastors and Elders regarding the issue of WO.

Stephen Ferguson
6 days ago

I think this is the elephant in the room - that by ordaining women next we will be ordaining gays. It is a very unjust argument to make, contrary to the clear teachings of scripture, which say:

“Do not spread false reports. Do not help a guilty person by being a malicious witness… do not show favoritism to a poor person in a lawsuit.” (Ex 23:1-3)

**In effect you can’t bring injustice to a person because of fear it might aid another. You can’t discriminate against women because you fear that might aid homosexuals, another whole class of people. You need to look at the issue of women ordination on its own merits, without any scare mongering.**

Anyway, I believe the fears are unwarranted paranoid. I for one would call myself a ‘moderate’, and whilst I totally support WO, I certainly wouldn’t support the ordination of homosexuals. I suspect it is the same for many others who support WO. The SDA Church doesn't on the whole and in practice even really accept homosexuals as members (whether you agree with that or not), so fears about gay pastors is pretty unfounded. No doubt similar ‘slippery slope’ arguments were used by white Christians when the issue of abolition of slavery and civil rights were made.

All4Him
6 days ago

No Stephen, when you say "ordain without regard to gender" you will be discriminating against homosexuals if you do not also ordain them. Either you follow what God has written or you go against Him.

Kevin Riley
6 days ago

Gender has nothing to do with homosexuality. 'Without regard to gender' means that both males and females will be ordained. Until 'homosexual' becomes a gender, it isn't relevant.

All4Him
5 days ago

Transgender has nothing to do with gender.... its part of the name! Kevin "gender identity" is relevant. Slipsliding away.......

Kevin Riley
5 days ago

Homosexuality has nothing to do with transgender, so I don't see the connection.

Ella M
All4Him and Jean,

Again, you are talking about homosexuals in general rather than as a practice. They are worlds apart in purity. A celibate gay person would have no more reason than a straight single person to be kept from being a pastor or other church worker.

Ella M would you like a celibate pedophile teaching Sabbath school? A man or woman that says I have strong feelings sexually for kids but I am not molesting them.

Jean Corbeau

"I think this is the elephant in the room - that by ordaining women next we will be ordaining gays. It is a very unjust argument to make, contrary to the clear teachings of scripture, which say:"

It's not an unjust argument, Stephen, because that's what other churches have done. They ordain women, then homosexuals, and somewhere in the regression they adopt evolution as part of their creed. The handwriting is on the wall, but proponents of WO, homosexuality, and evolutions seem to be oblivious to the fact. The even call it "enlightened," and "progressive." Have mercy!

Doctorf

Jean,

Read Dr Taylors comment. Do you really think you live in a world of "certainty"? If you lived within the Jewish culture in biblical times you could get away with murdering homosexuals. After all "God" said it was OK to do so. In other cultures you could not and certainly today you cannot get away with such acts. What history shows is that our attitudes change with time and evolve with the culture. The world of "constants" is an illusion.

Ella M

Again, you are talking about homosexuals in general rather than as a practice. They are worlds apart in purity. A celibate gay person would have no more reason than a straight single person to be kept from being a pastor or other church worker.

TruthWave7

@Stephen Furgerson: The SDAs who are pro WO, are using the same arguments for WO, as did the Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutheran, Episcopalians, etc, etc. We already on many of our University Campuses are seeing gays coming out, and wanting to be recognized as being SDA Gay Christians. Once you have breached the dam: "All hell will break loose".
The comments of our traditional brothers and sisters linking women's ordination with homosexuality and evolution would seem to reveal something about the way the Adventist conservative mind operates. Among other things, clearly they are very uncomfortable with rapid changes in cultural values almost to the level of paranoia. Some have observed that fundamentalist religions both attract and foster certain personality types who need certainty and thus are extremely uncomfortable with change because any changes suggest that things are not as "certain" as they want. The comments on this thread seem to confirm the validity of that observation.

Timo Onjukka
5 days ago

Perhaps, Erv, this permits those concrete thinking adherents to truly believe they are, single-handedly, capable of fighting off culture and the gates of hell and moral turpitude. Its sure easier to adopt this posture, than, like Jesus, walk the gutters and overpasses and meeting all cultures where they were, first with an honest embrace, and then a sandwich.

I for one wonder...given that women were not granted any legitimate and state sanctioned free will, civil rights, or moral autonomy in just the last century-plus, perhaps man (racially) still has some ground to cover before each person has full and free moral agency, and then the time is full. There are still seems far too many who want to either legislate or decide for others, or abdicate their own choice and have it chosen by another man or corporate entity for them. Eve said she did not choose; as did Adam. Doesn't it say somewhere, each will choose, and then will submit to justice, acknowledging ultimate equity in justice and governance to God?

Many are still not choosing-merely going with the flow-whether in the church culture, or without.

Jean Corbeau
5 days ago

My question to Dr. Taylor would be, "Where would you draw the line with these "rapid changes in cultural values?" At some point we will reach spiritual anarchy. Then we can go join the Universalists. But maybe that's what "progressives" are hoping for.

Those who believe as I do, don't have a problem with changes in culture, per se; what we object to is those changes which are clearly unbiblical--as we've so often articulated here and elsewhere. But, we're beating a dead horse, and it won't move.

Timo Onjukka
5 days ago

Can't flog a dead horse without splattering rancid horseflesh on yourself....perhaps one might consider another way to reach people.

Kevin Riley
5 days ago

Every study done over the past 50 years has concluded that ordaining women is not prohibited or commanded by the Bible, or that the Bible does not preclude ordaining women. So how can voting to ordain women be 'clearly unbiblical'?
Those who are pro WO, don't realize that they are following the same path as the Mainline Protestants, but somehow they think that they will reach a different end. That is irrational. The same societal and cultural forces that brought about unbiblical changes in the Mainline Protestant churches are putting the same pressures on the SDA church. We knew it would be coming, but no it is here, and its ugly. Its seems that almost every University Church Pastor is using his pulpit as a "bully pulpit" to promote WO. Only God can Ted Wilson can help us now.

Kevin Riley
5 days ago

The mainline churches did not argue over ordaining women - they argued over allowing women to work as pastors. We were there before them when it comes to allowing women to do the work, we have just gotten a little confused since over what the argument is. In our case, on the conservative side it really comes down to whether women pastors should or should not be given the authority to ordain elders and deacons and be Presidents. The 'liberal' side is arguing that, if women can do almost everything men can do, and for the same pay, why not remove the barrier to the final equality and allow them to ordain elders and deacons? Most won't want to be Presidents, so we can ignore that issue. For us, unlike the other churches, it is not an issue of what women can do, but of what bureaucratic authority they can be permitted to have. When the conservative side starts arguing that women cannot be elders or pastors, then I will accept their claim to be 'biblical'. While it is entirely a matter of ordination and bureaucratic authority, it is simply a cultural/political issue.

Ervin Taylor
5 days ago

Jean and "TruthWave7" both characterize ordaining women as Adventist clergy to be "unbiblical." In their vocabulary "unbiblical" seems to be an all purpose word that means "something I disagree with." I suppose they have a perfect right to create their own special language with words that sound like English but which the two speakers of that language have assigned their own special meanings. They also have another word in their language, "truth." "Truth" means in their language "something I agree with."

Stephen Ferguson
5 days ago

I think we are all talking across purposes. Yes, it is probably true that many people who support WO are the same type of people who might often have a more liberal view on the issue of homosexuality or evolution. However, that in itself is not a valid argument to make. As I said, the Bible is clear - each issue must be judged on its own merits (Ex 23:1-3).

To use a secular example, Democrats usually believe a whole range of things, say higher taxes on the rich and gun control, whilst Republicans often take a contrary view on those two issues, say flat taxation and a strong right to bear arms. And of course there are nuanced positions, and a spectrum of views. However, in a discussion about taxation, given the US debt, it will be erroneously and illogical to say you don’t support higher taxation because that would lead to gun control. It is absurd to think that one will necessarily lead to the other.

Again, the issue of WO must be addressed on its own merits according to scripture – not because of some fear that it will lead to a liberal view on a range of other issues.

Doctorf
3 days ago

Truthwave,

WO has been going on for over 25 yrs in the Pacific Union Conference and more recently the Midwest Union. The female pastors have served admirably. The CUC is just following what has occurred in the Pacific and Midwest Unions of the North American Division.

Edwin A. Schwisow
5 days ago

Neurological observations show indeed that what we know as the conservative mindset is fostered by an apparent hardwired apprehensiveness that seeks reassurance and continuity; as contrasted with the more risk-taking liberal mindset that may at times be too prone, too early, to "just do it."

That's why our church and other responsible organizations operate by committee, seeking a combination of thinking ranging from the very conservative to the very liberal—and when the system works well, we generally find ourselves marching to a "moderate" sort of progressivism that like Goldilocks' porridge, is neither too cold nor too hot—but just right—and I think the God who created us to be corporately moderate blesses those decisions, in fact expects those kinds of outcomes. Sister White quite frequently encouraged those who feared to make change to move forward with the church—yet, in our church today, it has become fashionable to extol conservatives as somehow the benchmark of Adventism, the Prime Meridian of the faith. In my experience, however, the conservatives (self-described, and usually correctly so) are often the most lamblike of the flock, most in need of reassurance and most prone to upset. I have many conservative friends whom I respect and some of whom seem to respect me, and I will from time to time mention, "Brother and sister, I pray especially for you as a conservative, for in my journey as a Christian I have seen my conservative brethren as those most prone to discouragement and withdrawal from the Body of Christ. That's why I pray and minister with extra zeal for you, that your faith fail not. I understand the deep sense of apprehension that comes with the conservative territory."

There seems to be a strong and enduring respect for conservatism on this Web site, and I commend those who show compassion and restraint, on all sides of these issues. Yes, conservatives in their angst can be expected to throw temper tantrums here and there, and these should not be excused. But neither should they prompt overblown reactions from those of us thereby offended. We are brothers and sisters, and worthy to be addressed with kindness, wherever we stand on the spectrum, on any given issue. Some will be more adventurous than others, some more reticent. Perhaps the watchword would be "reassure the conservatives, caution the liberals." This may sound crudely simplistic, but it's probably a fair approximation of the kind of process that works best in the church.

Bea
5 days ago

Do I believe Unions could be done away with? Absolutely. If you go back to Ray Cottrells contribution to SDA history. In the AHS healthcare world, in the interest of cost-savings the Assistant Directors were deleted, fewer directors, etc. As treasurer of a church I was aware of the conversation about the redundancy of having conferences and unions, and in one instance I know of the office buildings were within three blocks of each other.

By the way, it was in the 1970's that the SDA church was in great turmoil with Walter Rea discovering The
White Lie, Desmond Ford on trial regarding the Investigative Judgement, Also the Davenport scandal (Pirates of Privilege). I believe the majority of church-attending SDA's to this day think it is a sin to read all the accounts of what has transpired within our church. In fact Walter Rea had to promise not to publish the book Pirate of Privilege in order to gain back his retirement benefits (he was 60 years old when he lost these well-earned retirement benefits). Indeed I just realized recently that he (WR) felt that his retirement benefits were jeopardized because of the book P of P - I had always assumed it was because of the book The White Lie. P of P is available free, on line where one can see all the names of people and organizations involved in the ponzi scheme using tithe money.

Now this discussion takes the cake!! We are pontificating royally on WO, Gays, and how that even on our college campuses gays are coming out. How can we be so destructive regarding the gay community? They are people too - and it has absolutely nothing to do with choice and immorality but about genetics/DNA. This shameful attitude does not elevate us as a church in any way - and it makes me ashamed to be an SDA. I agree with that "worker of the GC (being discovered reading one of the three banned books at the airport). He is watching this ENTITY implode - meaning the SDA church. It clearly looks as though, unless something drastically happens in our perception the church will split. I believe it already is in the process - we just haven't cleared the fog off our lens. The role of the internet is speeding things up dramatically. So Kudos to those of you who are standing up for WO, Gays, The New Covenant. Continue to speak out, take personal responsibility, urge accountability. I can still hear my husband say,"It is my understanding that the only perfect person that ever lived on the face of this earth was hung on a cross to die - By Religious Zealots. It is my belief that we should be about doing God's work on earth and I believe that work to be caring for people right where they are physically, spiritually, and mentally. That while doing my part to lift those burdens that I can lift, He will do His work upon their hearts wherever that may lead. In the end...God's grace will be sufficient to do what needs to be done to heal the broken heart and to bring people together with Him." And I say AMEN, and AMEN.

Stephen Ferguson
5 days ago

Talking of church structure, a relative of mine, who was high in the Church before retirement, always makes the point that if there is duplication and a waste of money, it is in having Divisions. If anything should be done away with it is Divisions, not Unions. As Pres Wilson himself likes to note, Divisions are not really constitutional entities, as Unions and Local Conferences are. Rather, Divisions are just administrative outposts of the GC.

George Tichy
5 days ago

At this point it looks like the entity that we could just dismiss is the GC... Completely irrelevant, just a nest of people who do nothing else than overlooking what is going on around the world. And they travel a lot to do the "overlooking."

Just a waste of money! I wonder how much the GC costs the church every year...

TruthWave7
5 days ago

If you think the conservatives are religious "Zealots", pray that you don't fall into the hands of liberal psuedo religious Zealots!
**It is NOT appropriate to call an individual, or a group, pseudo-religious.**

Certainly you would not call your mother, your sister, your daughter, or your wife such, even if they did not ascribe to your particular conclusions on deed or doctrine. Your admirable zeal to state your beliefs is apparent, but offensive, and shall not be tolerated on Adventist Today. If you cannot treat someone you disagree with in respectful manner, perhaps it might be better for all that you withhold such comments.

Adventist Today welcomes comments from people who hold diverse opinions about our faith community and the issues which we necessarily are needful to corporately and personally address—but we do hold the right to censure, block, or edit when the manner these opinions are presented lacks even modicum of Christ like respect.

Perhaps Brooks, you wish to submit a column on a relevant Adventist issue? There surely is a better way for you to articulate what you believe and process and present this truth with reasoning befitting a brother than to "crush the liberal/progressives" with continual derision.

There have been some comments that some believe conservatives have been singled out by moderating team with bias here—but interestingly the progressives posters who have been warned have apologized, moderated their subsequent comments, and are willing to play nice.

I pray you may demonstrate this characteristic is not exclusive to only one segment within our mutual faith community. Thank you all for your contributions, and your desire to maintain a respectful and healthy environment for dialog.

---

**TruthWave7**

5 days ago

@Moderator: I have stated things the way that I see them. I apologize if I have offended. I have not tried to target anybody in particular, I target the issues. I have learned to ignore those who react emotionally. Those who complain to you, need to grow up, and not cry to you when they are rebuked. I have posted in much more hostile Web based forums that this one. As a Moderator your over protectiveness of people on this forum doesn't help, let free speech reign, and only deal with people who threaten to kill people, or use vulgar and obscene language. I used the word "crush" in the context of Ted Wilson doing the "crushing", at the GC level, of the rebellion that is bursting forth in the NAD, in the form of Union Presidents being fired from the positions, and putting in new leaders of the stature of Joshua and Caleb.

---

**Ervin Taylor**

5 days ago

Would "TruthWave7" care to define his terms? Would he or she like to state what are the characteristics of a "liberal pseudo religious zealot" (In the interest of being kind to conservatives, I'm not going to point out the misspelling of "pseudo.") I will be waiting with eager anticipation.

---

**TruthWave7**

5 days ago

@Ervin: Regarding: "liberal pseudo religious zealot" I think that you would fit the definition Sorry for the misspelling error regarding the word: pseudo. I only have two years of college education. :-))
Moderator
5 days ago

Truthwave, comments disallowed at this time.
An apology followed by immediate and specific repetiton is not submitting to the simple rules on AToday.
Email moderator at Atoday@Atoday if you wish to discuss privately.

Stephen Ferguson
5 days ago

I totally disagree with what TruthWave7 says, obviously, but I didn't find his language any more offensive that what many of us 'liberals' use from time-to-time. I am not sure exactly what the problem was in calling a group of people or individuals 'pseudo-religious', when people on the 'liberal' side routinely call the groups or individuals a cult (even used once in a post on this article), or question the beleif in God, Jesus or the Bible, or suggest groups and inviduals are absurd for remaining in the SDA Church, or implicitely suggest people should leave the SDA Church (supposedly against the rules).

That said, perhaps it was more of TruthWave7's delivery, rather than just the words? I do think there can be a bit of a perceived double-standard on AToday against conservative comments, especially given ex-Adventists appear to be given a much freer hand to even say nasty things and get away with it. Again for the avoidance of doubt, I am certainly no conservative myself.

However, no doubt you have good reasons.

Ervin Taylor
4 days ago

I realize and appreciate it that the moderator is attempting to keep the dialogue civil. However, I'm still curious about what the definition from "TruthWave7" is of "liberal pseudo religious zealot" or LPRZ. I know that he or she thinks I'm a LPRZ, but that's not a definition. How do you know if you have met a LPRZ? (By the way, I wonder why individuals such as "TruthWave7" never seem to want to use their real name? Hmm)

Edwin A. Schwisow
5 days ago

This may be parenthetical to the theme of this blog, but it took a coalition of liberal and conservative zealots pulling together to seal the mortal doom of the Savior. The tendency for one group of zealots to pull against the strength of zealots on the other side does waste a lot of energy. But to really, really mess Adventism up will take zealous ambidexterity—enthusiasts of both teams tugging together on the same end of the rope to trample and dispose of the gentle goodness and loving kindness of Christ that remains the central trait of a viable church. Extract this, and the Adventist house will be left to itself, desolate....

Edmund & Ruth Jones
5 days ago

Ellen White at Elmshaven, Thursday morning, January 14, 1904.
"That is how it is, and my mind has been greatly stirred in regard to the idea. 'Why, Sister White has said so and so, and Sister White has said so and so; and therefore we are going right up to it.' God wants us all to have common sense. Circumstances alter conditions. Circumstances change the relation of things."
Dwayne Turner
5 days ago

Let me tell you what proponents of WO and Homosexuality share in common.... Both mindsets ignore plain scripture and attempt to tell us that "this doesn't mean what it says"...... "Romans 1 and Genesis 19 (dealing with homosexuality) are not repudiations of this behaviour," they say. But at the end of day.... I will stick with the Bible......You who advocate for WO and Homosexuality..... there is no "extrabiblical heaven"..... do not attempt to get to heaven incorporating extrabiblical beliefs....

Elaine Nelson
5 days ago

For those who never wish to see a woman pastoring THEIR church, you aren't being forced. For those who never wish to sit next to a gay person, you also better not attend church as heaven know, you might be sitting next to one--and become infected.

Heaven will be big enough for all; thankfully, it is not left to us to be gatekeepers there, so why start now?

Kevin Riley
5 days ago

I have no problem with people 'sticking with the Bible', but too many seem not to be able to separate what the Bible actually says from their own beliefs. It seems to me in the question of women's ordination that conservatives who argue that women can do anything, but cannot be ordained to do so (although commissioning is perhaps OK), are ignoring a few plain Bible verses. We all read the Bible through our own biases, we just find it easier to see, and more annoying, in others.

Joe Erwin
5 days ago

I doubt that there is any heaven for those who pay more attention to the behavior of others than to their own behavior. There is such a rush to judge others without even knowing anything about their private lives. And I'm pretty sure that scripture does not advocate judging others. I'm just saying, if people would just mind their own business and make sure their own relationship with God is on good terms.

Kevin Riley
5 days ago

God gave everyone a clear test of who is his people: John 13:34, 35. He also told us clearly what to do if we want to go to heaven: Matthew 22:37-40. If we fail at those tests, no amount of riches or knowledge of correct doctrines or good works will matter one bit.

Kevin Riley
5 days ago

I suspect one reason salvation is entirely by grace is because we all fail the important test miserably and often.

Bea
5 days ago
I'm a little confused, someone criticized those of us who believe in WO and gay rights are likened to the mainline churches - Methodists, Lutherans, etc. and yet want to be recognized as a church rather than a cult. Can we have it both ways? Just curious - have any of our SDA churches replaced the King James Bible with The Clear Word (in the pew with the Hymnal)?

Elaine Nelson
5 days ago

The Clear Word is such a distortion of the Bible just as is the JW translation. KJV is still the favorite of most Adventists and texts from KJV are usually the translation in Review articles. It has long been replaced by superior translations but because it is only the KJV (wrongly translated) that is used for a few prophecies that are essential to SDA doctrines. This presents a dilemma: if a very important doctrine can only be "proved" in one of many and better translations, what would happen if this were widely known?

Stephen Ferguson
5 days ago

The Clear Word is a paraphrase – it is not intended as a Bible in the proper sense of the word. I haven't actually seen anyone use a Clear Word version at all. The older folk seem to use the KJV and NKJV, and younger fold tend to use the NIV. Most younger folk today, at least in my Church, are using their I-Phones and I-Pads and you can't access the Clear Word from sites such as biblegateway.com.

Many denominations and individual scholars produce paraphrases from time-to-time, which have no official standing for scriptural authority. For example, paraphrases commonly used by other Christians include The Message (Bible), written by Presbyterian Eugene H. Peterson, The Living Bible, written by Baptist Kenneth N. Taylor, and Phillips New Testament in Modern English, written by Anglican J. B. Phillips. Furthermore, the Clear Word Bible is not officially endorsed by the SDA Church, although it is admittedly published by Adventist publishing organizations – but only for devotional purposes in a similar manner to The Message Bible.

I largely agree with Elaine that KVJ is still a favourite for many denominations, including Adventists, but it is hardly superior and arguably a lot inferior to some modern translations. Re Articles, my impression is that NASB and NIV are usually the versions quoted. For any serious doctrinal study, I would hope our theologians are using Greek and Hebrew - not any English translation.

greg prout
5 days ago

To Elaine,
'Heaven will be big enough for all; thankfully, it is not left to us to be gatekeepers there, so why start now?'

Amen and Amen. Just like those who were upset Jesus would eat with 'scum' like Zaacheus and those upset He would dare associate with those who were drunkards and gluttons (Matt. 11:19), or 'touch' a leper; upset He would speak to a Samaritan woman, so there will be those today annoyed when He extends the hand of love and fellowship to other more current 'undesirables.' Indeed heaven will be big enough 'for all' and many a church-goer and religiously faithful will be angry when Jesus includes those they esteem as perverse and vile. Tax-gatherers (worst-of-the-worst in Jesus; day), lepers, whores, outcasts of every description, wine-bibbers, addicts, and gluttons, you name it, will be around the table. Good news: even those who complain about Jesus' inclusive love, who feel defiled to be associated with those whose life-style they have condemned, even they are invited. We are so busy excluding and condemning, and qualifying who measures up and who doesn't, (hence
this hub-bub about WO), we forget we are here to learn to love and embrace. Indeed grace is scandalous. Thanks, Elaine.

Bea
5 days ago

I agree that the Clear Word is inferior and distorted. I was just testing the water to find out if it had found its way into the pew - replacing the KJV.

Gailon Arthur Joy
5 days ago

An entire Union has now gone on record in opposition to the World Church's General Conference in Session and revolted against a world church policy, a biblical standard and the NAD working policy.

In a shocking rebellion the Columbia Union Conference has voted to allow the ordination "REGARDLESS OF GENDER" in the first step of many that will INEVITABLY lead to the adoption of Fallen Protestant theology. As predicted so many years ago it is just "The Tip of The Iceberg" and a matter of time before we see the abrogation of the biblical stand not allowing the fellowship of practicing gays and lesbians in the FORMER biblically sound Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In my lifetime, I have seen this purported forerunner of the Remnant allow the absolute disregard of the 7th commandment and allow fallen ordained ministers to continue their ministrations under SDA conferences, despite open and notorious adultery in direct disregard of the spirit of Prophecy warnings on this issue and the NAD working policy. We have gradually adopted incrementalism into the body politic and seen "Creeping Compromise" warned of by Joe Crews nearly 30 years ago put us behind our evangelical brethren in biblical standards. We can no longer claim to be a Bible Based church.

Just how far this will go will rely heavily upon the "Revival and Reformation" movement we hear so much about but little practiced.

It is imperative that this "Iceberg" Crisis be "met head on" and resolutely with a firm and open call for the disbanding of ANY UNION OR CONFERENCE IN REBELLION TO THE WORLD CHURCH IN GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION lest we begin to take on the characteristics of BABYLON.

It is now time for the General Conference and the North American Division Church to step forward and take a direct and firm position, and if they do not do so then we must have a special session of the General Conference to consider disbanding the entire North American Division to regain the purity of the FAITH. We must move expeditiously to cut out the cancer of rebellion against the biblical standards we have stood on for one hundred and sixty-eight years.

Gailon Arthur Joy
AUR reporter

Timo Onjukka
5 days ago

Mr Joy, (rather ironic, the moniker), may i offer you a match so your rhetoric can start the flames of inquisition? This is a sad day indeed-and ice may be apropos apellation. I pray attitude so cold even be warmed by Jesus.
love. Nothing but that can save us from ourselves.

Ervin Taylor
5 days ago

Oh. my - A call to disband the North American Division. We all hope that no reasonable individual will take any such a "suggestion" seriously. Even our current GC president has been around long enough to know that even hinting at considering such a strange idea would be the beginning of the end for him politically. But that someone -- even someone like Mr. Joy -- would say something like this, does suggest that some reactionary elements might view the actions of the CUC and those upcoming at the PUC session as an opening to undertake some mischief in the name of purifying the church. Under some circumstances, e.g., the World Wide Church of God splits two decades ago and the Missouri Lutheran problems of a generation ago, these things have been known to spin out of control in an unpredictable manner. But let's hope that reasonable people in positions of responsibility at the GC prevail.

Stephen Ferguson
5 days ago

Talking of church structure, a relative of mine, who was high in the Church before retirement, always makes the point that if there is duplication and a waste of money, it is in having Divisions. If anything should be done away with it is Divisions, not Unions. As Pres Wilson himself likes to note, Divisions are not really constitutional entities, as Unions and Local Conferences are. Rather, Divisions are just administrative outposts of the GC.

How would disbanding the NAD, or divisions in general, change anything? The Unions would still continue to operate under their constitutional authority, including their authority re ordination within our framework of Church Governance.

As to people arguing this may be a sign of a prophetic 'near fall' of our Church, that may be well so. But it would only be a fall caused because Pres Wilson wasn't doing his primary job, which is to keep the Church together. Trying to 'crush this rebellion', to use some of the more extreme language cited, would be the cause of this 'near fall' and a greater problem - not the solution.

Pres Wilson should be doing his job and playing this issue down. No one in other Unions are being forced to ordain women. No fundamental belief of the SDA Church has been challenged - in fact, as the CUC Pres argued, current FB#14 in fact supports the move. All that has been affected is the practical administration of the Church.

Everyone just needs to calm down a bit.

Elaine Nelson
3 days ago

Among some there seems to be almost a deathly fear of schism. History shows that a schism only occurs when the time is ripe; if there are insufficient numbers to create a schism, it is considered apostasy, or a "falling away" which is dependent of the numbers on either side.

The largest schism ever in the Christian church was the Reformation. Was that such a dreadful thing? It all depends on which side you stand. Was the schism created when the head of England, old Henry VIII, defied the
Catholic church and eventually made England free of papal rule?

A future schism in the SDA church depends on a number of factors, but currently, Ted is at the helm and the direction he turns the sail may determine whether there will be schism, or just difference of opinions. He has the power to deflect those who are crying "rebellion" and "apostasy," and show his true colors as a real statesman or a mere figurehead.

Dwayne Turner
5 days ago

Gailon Arthur Joy,

Your comments are right on target! Discipline must take place! Many on this site hold the actions of the CUC as heroic and courageous; while others hold these actions as rebellious and divisive. If CUC's actions are "heroic" then those voting in the affirmative are "heros!" Therefore, as I believe their actions are reprehensible and worthy of discipline, others think that the "heros" are trailblazers; blazing trails for other Unions to follow.

I maintain, the same discipline that is expected to be exercised by local churches, must now be exercised in "higher profile" situations, or else the local churches will begin to do as they please!

And by the way..... to the myriad of posters......who take people's words and couch "strawman arguments" ...... you 'll get to know this about me...... I am never concerned about "strawman arguments"...... they only help the one making them to feel better about their unsustainable positions; with respect to scripture..... I do recognize that many really don't make scriptural arguments to prove their points......mere logic and rationalizing.... Romans 1:26-27 absolutely condemns homosexuality..... Genesis 19:6-9 absolutely calls homosexuality "wickedness"......and this coming from a man who "made it out of Sodom"...... those men had no interest in women........ neither do the men and women of Romans 1.......

But Elaine has homosexuality as being accepted in heaven? The bible, in any version, does not say, "the wages of sin is eternal life"....... but death...... anyhow....this topic is supposed to be on Women's ordination....

Stephen Ferguson
5 days ago

As a question of theory, on what basis to could there be discipline? No fundamental belief of the SDA Church has been challenged - in fact, as the CUC Pres argued, current FB#14 in fact supports the move. All that has been affected is the practical administration of the Church.

As a question of practice, how could discipline occur? As was noted elsewhere, the GC could try to terminate the employment of the leaders of a Union. However, given some 80% of delegates in CUC supported this proposal, it is likely that they would simply be re-elected at the next constituency meeting.

If on the other hand the GC tried some sort of legal move, to expel CUC, PUC or the North Germany Conference was the Adventist Communion, anyone can see what a legal and practical minefield that would be. Who owns the property of the Church? What would be the legal and communion status of local conferences? What would be the legal and communion status of Adventist members, given it is at local conference level people retain their membership? What would be the legal and communion status of the GC's own official,
including Pres Wilson, given his own Church Membership is held at a local Church in a local conference in the CUC?

It is one thing to use inflammatory rhetoric about 'crushing a rebellion' - it is an entirely another matter to actually think those words through to their practical end.

P.S. Enough with the pointless references to homosexuality - it is an entirely different issue!
Yes, it is probably true that many people who support WO are the same type of people who might often have a more liberal view on the issue of homosexuality or evolution. However, that in itself is not a valid argument to make. As I said, the Bible is clear - each issue must be judged on its own merits (Ex 23:1-3).

Kevin Riley
5 days ago

Membership is in the local church. That is also where authority starts, being delegated in some things to Conferences, in others to Unions, and in others to the GC/Divisions. The centre is the local church, not the GC. The GC in session is the highest authority because it is there that those representing the church in all its local forms come together. The GC in itself has no power, except that delegated to it by the church. We are not like the Roman Catholic church where power flows down from God to the Pope to the bishops to the priest and then to the local church. The GC can act only within the bounds of the authority which it has been delegated. If it had the authority to prevent or overturn the vote, it would have used it already.

Property is not held by the church per se at any level, but by a legal entity set up to hold land, usually at national level. AFAIK, no local church, Conference, Union or Division holds land in its own right. I suspect if a Union was disbanded, the Conferences would be placed temporarily under control of the Division. I don't believe we have a precedent to follow, and there may not even be a policy for such an event. There is probably something in the Union constitution about how it is to be brought to an end.

Stephen Ferguson
5 days ago

So based upon what you are saying, how practicable would it be for the GC to 'crush this rebellion' to try and dissolve a Union - near impossible what you're saying?

Furthermore, you seem to be suggesting that it is hardly 'a rebellion' when it is grassroots, because the people of our Church are the Church; not the GC.

Kevin Riley
5 days ago

The GC can only really deal with the Union administration, not the session. It can only undo a session vote by showing it to be unconstitutional or against clear policy. Could either have been done, the GC would have done so, as it did with the NAD move to allow the election of unordained workers as President. No level of the church chooses to clean up a mess when it could avoid the mess. I doubt there is a way to undo what has been done. We should, whatever we think of their theology, at least credit our leaders with some political ability and common sense. We would not see three (perhaps more) Unions moving to put this issue to a vote unless the leaders believed they had the right to do so. We would not see the GC allowing it to happen if they believed...
they had the right and/or authority to stop it. Our leaders are not stupid.

There is dispute over whether the Union vote goes against GC policy. I doubt it is clear, for the same reason as above: if it were, we wouldn't have seen this happening. If no GC voted position has been ignored, no policy clearly broken, then there is clearly no 'rebellion' and certainly no 'apostasy'. The Union session has clearly gone against GC advice, and no doubt caused angst and embarrassment - not to mention no end of trouble - for the GC, but that alone is neither a sin nor a breach of policy. Could a GC session nullify the vote? I don't know. Would it do so? Probably, if a special session were called. Will one be called? I doubt it, not unless demand for such an action from the world field becomes irresistible. I cannot see most Western Unions accepting such an action, because members would find it intolerable.

Ben Maxson
5 days ago

Just a point of clarification.

Ownership of property varies from country to country. In the US, the ownership of church property is by the local conference legal entity. This used to be called the association. The conference was the operating structure and the association was the legal ownership structure. This division of structure goes back to the original organization in the 1860s in Michigan. At that time, the church wanted the lowest possible level of organizational structure and the association was that structure.

In recent years, most conferences have moved to a unified structure where the operating and owning aspects are combined in one legal entity--usually called the conference. I believe that each union also has a legal structure for ownership of its property.

Elaine Nelson
3 days ago

Sir Turner:

For someone who openly declares "I am never concerned about "strawman arguments"..... and then proceeds to accuse me of saying homosexuality as being accepted in heaven, introducing a topic far afield from the subject under discussion: Women's ordination. For some confused individuals, there is a connection between these two entirely different subjects that are so frequently joined, that it defies both logic and common sense and the impossibility of addressing an issue without introducing some pet dissent.

Dwayne Turner
2 days ago

Elaine Nelson....

Sir Turner? Sir Turner?

Don't know where that comes in..... but anyhow.....

I reiterate your words....

"For those who never wish to sit next to a gay person, you also better not attend church as heaven know, you
might be sitting next to one--and become infected.  **Heaven will be big enough for all; thankfully, it is not left to us to be gatekeepers there, so why start now?**"

Now if that's not saying that the sin of homosexuality will be allowed in heaven..... then I don't know what is...

I'll not let you, and others on this site, get away with trying to make the issues of WO and Homosexuality mutually exclusive of each other.... They are kissing cousins!!!  In fact, one need only examine topics on this site and its sister site, to know that whenever the topic is on homosexuality, directly or indirectly, there is an overwhelming endorsement of such behavior on the part of most participants..... The assertion that I and others are raising, concerning going to "the next level" beyond WO; that being acceptance of gay priests in the SDA church is bolstered by Romans 1:32. **Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.**

This text unmistakably points out that those who believe there is nothing wrong with homosexuality also take pleasure in all other deviations from truth. They "take pleasure" in those who do wrong, because it soothes their conscience; with respect to their own "wrongdoing" or "upholding of wrongdoing". Others wrong course serves as "positive reinforcement" to their own wrong course. The fact that the biggest and most vociferous supporters of WO are also the supporters of acceptance of homosexuality tells me that Romans 1:25-32 is playing out before our very eyes. One only has to look at the upcoming 2012 Adventist Forum Conference on August 31- September 2 in Portland, Oregon. Look at the Saturday night movie that will be shown: Seventh-Gay Adventist? Really???

Oh no!.....won't let you and others get away with trying to separate the two subjects.... A blind man should be able to discern the volume of writing on these two subjects...and draw his/her own conclusions...

Both issues completely obliterate God's original design for the male and the female!

Jean Corbeau
2 days ago

And don't forget belief in volution, along with disbelief in the SOP, and the IJ. They all seem to be one package. This is clear from the comments here and on another well-known quasi-Adventist site.

Timo Onjukka
5 days ago

Arthur, your calls for force to rout Babylon....is perhaps more congruent with Babylon calling itself. Surely we as Christian brethren have learned to love as only God's remnant will be known by this peculiarity, or we have no claim to be bearers of truth whatsoever.

billypk311
4 days ago

Everyone involved should go back and read all the entries. Pure craziness. And the christian tone, well, I need not say more!  I am curious where all the SDA 'women' are in all this. Based on my limited reading on this subject, it appears to be male driven. I would think if the 'women' of the church have a strong conviction concerning the role of women and the ordination of women within the SDA Church organization they would be front and center. Carrying the flag of discrimination and unfair treatment!  I havn't witnessed that in this blog or...
in any publications. So who is really carrying the pro women torch on all this? If the women in the SDA church are not carrying the torch then the subject is mute. How we humans make such a 'do' about much of 'nothing'. Just curious.

Kevin Riley
4 days ago

Women who speak up are accused of being self-serving and seeking power. If they don't speak up, they are told they obviously don't really care. I have heard one man say on one occasion that no woman should be ordained if she wasn't prepared to say she wanted to be, and on another occasion declared that the clearest sign a woman shouldn't be ordained was if she said she wanted to be. Either way, he was sure no woman should be ordained. I am not surprised most women, especially those in church work, do not speak up. Whatever they say or do can and will be held against them.

Stephen Ferguson
4 days ago

Billy, I believe there are some women who have commented throughout this post and below. I believe a woman was the last and most passionate speaker at the CUC session, who talked about the discrimination against her as a woman pastor, and she may have helped sway the vote.

When the civil rights movement happened (and I am quite young, whilst many of your older folk remember it), it was actually both white and black people working together to make lasting change. It all started with a black women who refused to give up her seat on a bus, but it ending with white people (mainly from the north) coming down to just be with their black brothers and sisters.

Ending discrimination in any society and community usually requires a coordinated effort. I think many men, who aren't personally affected, should be commended for standing against the discrimination of their sisters.

Elaine Nelson
4 days ago

Could it be from the long tradition that women are less than equal to men? Otherwise, there would be no ordination question.

Women have spoken out, but not in as large numbers, which should not be taken as no interest. But honoring their numbers in the church should give their voices equal value: throughout history, women have preserved religious belief through their children and good works, largely silent, while the men were the doers and talkers. Since there has been no church-wide vote, it is incorrect to assume that women are disinterested.

Edmund & Ruth Jones
4 days ago

_ No one in the General Conference, The Division, the Union, or the local Conference has the authority to discipline one member of the Seventh-day Adventist membership. The only place that can be done is in the local church congregation._

Bea
4 days ago
I am a woman and I agree with Elaine's comment. Regarding the remark "Where are the Women? - if they had feelings about this topic they would be part of this discussion and the majority commenting are men". Those of us who are married to men in administrative positions whether in the church or medical institutions, have been aware of the importance of being politically correct. We aren't muzzled but at the same time we don't want to be a liability to our spouses career. When you include AHS North America, GC, Divisions, Unions, Conferences - all the way down to the local pastor's wife the number of administrative wives are significant. Thank you to the men who are speaking out in support of WO.

The Church is hemorrhaging (100,000 added/year - 300,000 exit/year). In addition are those who are consciously slipping away and at peace with their decision. The consequence of this is less in tithe and offerings. This leads us to the earlier discussion of Divisions, Unions, Conferences. People (women in particular) are watching (according to the introductory piece the 1881 GC gave the ok for WO - what happened?) - and asked to wait longer. Will more people exit due to failure to allow WO? Lack of funds causes leaders to go back to the drawing board, tweek the administrative chart and decide what can be deleted (divisions and unions).

Jean Corbeau
4 days ago

Ellen White warned that most Adventists were really not on board the ship, and that most would abandon it before the end. She called it The Shaking. It began some time ago, and seems to escalating more rapidly of late.

Kevin Riley
4 days ago

She also gives the impression that she did not blame only one side of the church for that, and she seems to have some out in favour of innovation more often than siding with the conservatives. She certainly saw 'conservative' as a negative term. There is a great deal of danger in deciding that those who disagree with us are Laodicean and the cause of all problems, while those who agree with us form the 'faithful remnant'.

Bea
4 days ago

Jean - may I ask for clarification? Do you mean that the SDA's aboard that ship are those who will be saved and those out in the water will be lost along with the rest of the world who do not believe in the prophetess EGW?

Jean Corbeau
4 days ago

Read what she says about the shaking. Either you believe it or you don't. But her bottom line is that most Adventists are in a Laodicean condition. She speaks of clouds of chaff blowing away, when it looked like there was nothing but wheat. She also says that most of God's true people are outside the SDA Church, but will accept present truth before the end; coming in to replace those who have been shaken out..

Elaine Nelson
4 days ago

When one considers all the women comprising the NAD membership, only a very, very small number of women are even aware of this decision until it was made. The R&H didn't inform members of this coming event until very shortly before, and the women in the pews neither knew nor had a chance to voice their opinions. Where would they other than in such blogs as this? The Review Online does not have a comment forum such as this for member feedback; do they really want to know what members think?

Stephen Ferguson
4 days ago

Great point. I live in Australia and I am really wondering if the upcoming Record (our SDP Division magazine) will mention anything about the WO decision in CUC? I suspect not, and that the internal Church media blackout will continue. Most people in the SDA Church don't know what's going on at all!

As another example, I shared with some conservative African friends of mine (GYC types) the story about Dr Pipim, which was much followed on AToday and Spectrum. They didn't know anything about it - not the original affair, the disfellowship, the book, the proposed re-baptism, the second victim etc. They still thought Dr Pipim was leading out in charge of GYC.

I know there is a fine line sometimes between news and gossip. However, the official SDA publications don't just censor gossip - they censor news. That is why I thank God (and I mean that literally) for publications such as AToday. We may not always agree with what is reported, or how it is reported, but at least they are trying to report things, and providing a forum for people to discuss things.

Kevin Riley
4 days ago

Let's just wait and see. You may find support for the ordination of women is greater among our Australian administrators than you think. I have been told quite confidently that one particular Union President (naming no names) is very conservative and totally against women working as pastors. As his wife is one of my pastors, I find that a little difficult to believe. I am not sure where he stands on the question of ordination for his wife, or any other woman. But it's easy to jump to conclusions without having enough information. I personally expect to see the news in the Record (and letters of protest and support), but if you remember they are printed up to a month before you see them, it may take a few more weeks.

A link to the news is currently on the AUC site. Hardly a media blackout.

Elaine Nelson
3 days ago

How long after the Davenport, Harris Mills, Folkenberg fiascoes before the official SDA journal: the Review, post any news of these? If it were not for the independent press (Thanks, AToday) we would be the last to know, and it would not be the whole picture, but only what they chose to publish--which is how the old Pravda, ironically which meant truth) operated.

Bea
4 days ago

This is not trumpeted from the most-high of places - the GC. The truth is, if this WO topic had been sent to the
local church, overwhelmingly the word would have been "We are for WO".

The sad thing is that the fog of information is over the entire congregation when it comes to a host of issues. Men and women are not apprised of information, and because of that, there is no dialog. Pretty strange. As for me, I am all for solely using the Bible and the common sense my Creator gave me.

So again, I agree Elaine.

Kevin Riley
4 days ago

That is true of many churches in the western world and some parts of the developing world, but not everywhere. In the South Pacific Division, where the ordination of women as elders was left to the local church, not only did many churches in Australia and New Zealand choose to do so (and it usually required 2/3 or 75% vote in favour), but quite a number of churches in the Pacific Islands have also done so. I am not convinced you would get the same result in Africa or some parts of Asia.

That is why the ordination of women in any position should have been left to the Unions to decide. All the GC really should have done is what it did many years ago: accept the report that the Bible neither commanded nor prohibited the ordination of women. What it should have also done but didn't do, is to declare that therefore there was no reason not to ordain women where the local church so desired. It could then have referred all decisions to the Unions for discussion. It would have saved a lot of time that we could have devoted to other matters.

Stephen Ferguson
4 days ago

I also agree and again want to extend my appreciation for AToday and other groups who are not 'mouth organs' of the official Church.

greg prout
4 days ago

It is interesting: we are encouraged 'to be thinkers and not reflectors of other men's thoughts' as long as our conclusions 'agree' with the Church. Anyone who might challenge or suggest a crack in the party-line, or perceive a problem with long-held church-approved theology, is quickly labeled 'liberal' or 'rebellious' or 'not on board,' etc. The church wants us to think as long as we think as instructed. Evidently if you are a free-thinker and not reflecting the established point of view (sacred of course), you are unholy and offensive and need to be 'shaken' from the community. The message: God will rid Himself of honest seekers who are are contrary to Church dogma. But I read where God says: 'Present your case, bring me your arguments...Come, let us reason together.' (Isa. 1:18; 41:21). Apparently God seeks our opinion, the results of our inquiring minds, our efforts to understand. But more, He seeks a dialog, a conversation, our fellowship. Was EGW wrong when she encouraged believers to comprehend for themselves? Was she really saying there's no room for different interpretations or conclusions about our encounter with Truth? Was she stating the Truth as packaged by the Church is static and un-challengable? Is God dishonored by inquiring/questioning minds? The Church seems to say, 'Think...but only if you believe as we have programmed you, and if you don't, start shaking.' This attitude reminds me of the Pharisees and their anger at Jesus for thinking and living differently and it fundamentally undermines the freedom purchased by the precious life of our Lord. (2 Cor. 3:17).
We actually don't need an "imprimatur" stamp from EGW to be thinkers. This is common sense.

God already created us with this ability. What we need is wisdom to push away from us those people that want to control our thinking. They are the big danger to our thinking and to our spiritual sanity.

I am always amazed how SDAs rely on EGW for everything. Can I eat this? Can I say that? Can I do this? Can I believe this way? Can I vote this way? And on and on and on.... always asking EGW for permission to think. Any person with a normal (or exceptional) IQ does not have to depend on EGW. Those with a too low of an IQ will not understand her anyway.

Admit it George, you need to push EGW under the rug if you are to permit WO.... No where in her writings, if taken in context, does she promote the annulment of Godly headship and submission. Your last paragraph mirrors what many people say about God's Word. And the Bible was written so a person with a low IQ could easily understand it.

A person with a real "too low IQ" will not be able to grasp the majority of concepts written in the Bible. I gave this test to over 1,500 people, so I know what I am talking about.

Please don't hesitate to substantiate your statement, "the Bible was written so a person with a low IQ could easily understand it."

".... The Bible is God’s word to you. The poor man needs it as much as the rich man, the unlearned as much as the learned. And Christ has made this Word so plain that in reading it no one need stumble." The Upward Look page 52

Those with a too low of an IQ will not understand her anyway.

A very telling comment, George. So, you admit that she was a very intelligent woman. That being the case, maybe you should pay more attention to what she said--and in context. I'm sure you're IQ is more than adequate to understand what she meant. But maybe that is part of the problem. Most of her detractors understand only too well what she meant--and they don't like it.
Isn't it time we got past the personal attacks? Honest, intelligent people reading the Bible writers and Ellen White in context can come to different conclusions. Women's ordination is one such time. Very intelligent theologians with a profound knowledge of the Bible and Ellen White have taken opposing sides on this issue. So have ordinary people. It is not the first time, and I doubt it will be the last time. But if our commitment to either side makes us treat others in an un-Christian way, then we are getting our priorities wrong.

George Tichy
4 days ago

One of the best written statement of the year!

Jean,
Of course she was an intelligent person!
A very intelligent person indeed.
A capable writer, and a smart "copier" as well.
An idiot would never write 100,000 pages and be able to convince so many people that they are as sacred as the Bible. She was literally able to convince people to add her writings to the sacred canon and use them with the same (sometimes higher) biblical authority. Most Adventists pastors cannot deliver a sermon without quoting her. I once heard a pastor's sermon full on EGW's quotations but he forgot to provide one single verse from the Bible. An exciting sermon, indeed.

Many people can't participate in any conversation without quoting her to just add "authority" and "validity" to what they are saying. For those, the Bible is never a sufficient source of information or authority. They are a lot in the business of "whitotation."

Stephen Ferguson
4 days ago

What is the Bible? Many arguments used against Ellen White could and are well be used by modern scholars against biblical writers and redactors. Be careful that you don't judge Ellen White by a standard different from other claimants of spiritual gifts.

George Tichy
3 days ago

I hear you basically saying that EGW's writing should actually be considered being "s
Addictions have become the new normal. The variety of addiction boggles the mind! If it is possible to eat it, snort it, inject it, feel it, see it, or do there are people addicted to it. How to respond to those who are entrapped by the every-multiplying products is a challenge to health providers and others who care about human health. This includes faith-based organizations. We Adventists were pioneers in development of programs to assist people to conquer tobacco addiction. The more recent addictive agents demand more sophisticated response. For example, the digital world is a new form of addiction that draws in people of all ages and economic levels. The impact on physical and mental health is worrisome to health professionals and should be of concern to religious organizations.

On March 15, 2012, Jason Russell, an evangelical Christian, was filmed running naked in the streets near his Southern California home. San Diego police were called as Russell ran about screaming incoherently. He was taken to a local hospital where, according to a family statement, he was diagnosed with reactive psychosis brought on by exhaustion, stress and dehydration. The story does not end here. According to a recent NEWSWEEK article (July 16, 2012, p. 26) there may have been more to the story than the irrational behavior of an obscure film-maker.

The article goes on to suggest that the negative response to his documentary about the African warlord Joseph Kony may have put Russell into a mental funk. In response he entered an intense swirl of bizarre twitters that, after eight days of sleep deprivation and text messaging, he sent a final tweet—a quote form Martin Luther King Jr. “If you can't fly, then run, if you can't run, then walk, if you can’t walk, then crawl, but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward.” At this point he took of his clothes, went outside, walked to the corner he is reported to have begun slapping the concrete with both palms and ranted about the devil. The video of this event went viral. Russell left the hospital after more than four months of treatment.

The NEWSWEEK report of Jason Russell’s “reactive psychosis,’ a form of temporary insanity, was one segment of a larger article: How connection addiction is rewiring our brains. The article reports that there is now scientific evidence from around the world to document that “…the current incarnation of the Internet—portable, social, accelerated, and all-pervasive—may be making us not just dumber or lonelier but more depressed and anxious, prone to obsessive-compulsive and attention-deficit disorders, even outright psychotic. Our digitized minds can scan like those of drug addicts, and normal people are breaking down in sad and seemingly new ways,” (p. 26). As a result of studies like this and others, when the new Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders is released next year, Internet Addiction Disorder will be included for the first time.

In less than a generation, the NEWSWEEK article observes, we have become people merged with our machines. We sit transfixed before our screens more than eight hours a day. The average person sends or receives some 400 texts p; the average teen some 3,700 texts per month. And many of us suffer from “phantom vibration syndrome.” We feel our cell phones vibrate, when in fact nothing is happening.

It is not the Internet, the technology, nor the content that drives us crazy. It is the effect our electronic gizmos have on our mental and emotional health that has caught the attention of researchers around the world. “Peter Whybrow, the director of the Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior at UCLA, argues that ‘the computer is like electronic cocaine,’ fueling cycles of mania followed by depressive stretches. The Internet
‘leads to behavior that people are conscious is not in their best interest and does leave them anxious and does make them act compulsively,’ says Nicholas Carr, whose book *The Shallows*, about the Web’s effect on cognition, was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize,” p. 27.

An article in the journal *Pediatrics* noted the rise of ‘‘a new phenomenon called ‘Facebook depression,’ and explained that ‘the intensity of the online world may trigger depression.; doctors, according to the report published by the American Academy of Pediatrics, should work digital usage questions into every annual checkup,” (p. 29).

Elias Aboujaude, a psychiatrist at Stanford University School of Medicine, where he directs the Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Clinic and Impulse Control Disorders Clinic, says School of Medicine, ‘‘I’ve seen plenty of patients who have no history of addictive behavior—or substance abuse of any kind—become addicted via the internet and these other technologies,’’ (p. 28). In his studies of our digitized world he wonders some digitized selves should be counted as a legitimate, pathological ‘alter of sorts,’ like the alter egos documented in cases of multiple personality disorder,” (p 30).

The Gold brothers, Joel, a psychiatrist at New York University, and Ian, a philosopher and psychiatrist at McGill University, are investigating technology’s potential to sever people’s ties with reality fueling hallucinations, delusions, and genuine psychosis, Researchers at Tel Aviv University last year published what they believe are the first documented cases of ‘‘Internet-related psychosis,’” (p. 30).

Health, for Adventists, has been a traditional strong point in our belief system. Eat right, drink right, live right. The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. We promote abstinence from harmful habits and foods. Should we pastors in our sermons address the use and misuse of the Internet and Social Media? Studies document that excessive Web use is detrimental to mental health. Is there need to design a Five Day Plan to Stop Texting? Is there a opportunity to hold retreats that provide help for those who wish to free themselves from their addiction to Facebook? Or ought we get on with our lives and stay merged with our technological wizardry? What do you think?

Join in the discussion:

**William Noel**
6 days ago

Lawrence,

Your question about what we can offer as a solution to internet addiction is timely. Our past ability to help people was possible because we offered a solution instead of just a complaint about a problem. I believe the answer is staring us in the face: discovering the power of God. Every former addict I know tells of how the power of God was essential to and inseparable from their ability to break their addiction. Do we in the church know the power of God in our own lives so others will be attracted to it and we can introduce them to God? Are we willing to make that discovery for ourselves. Or, will we be satisfied with mere knowledge about God, but which leaves us powerless?

**Elaine Nelson**
5 days ago
Pseudo-psychologists attempting to diagnose addictions? Where will this end?

I've traveled several times on two-week overseas excursions with HMS Richards, the elder. He was certainly addicted to reading: one never saw him without a book in his hand, often reading while walking! (the old form of texting while walking?).

Speaking of texting, yesterday's news had some not-so-funny pictures of people stepping off into a subway track and into an open manhole while walking and texting.

The internet is a wonderful tool: it keeps us informed in many ways, but it is our choice how we use it. Instant round-the-world news; communicating with family and friends; lightening the day with forwarded jokes; and of course, such blogs as this. Like reading books, it is in what you choose where the difference lies.

Long ago, SDAs condemned movies and TV; today, they are an accepted form of the best communication used by Adventists. It is not the technology, but our hearts and minds that are forced to make choices that may have not been tested previously when so many sports, games, the theater, etc. were condemned by EGW. Teaching our children how to make choices is far superior to "just saying no" to almost everything that is "worldly"—everything is worldly because this is where we live.

Timo Onjukka
5 days ago

Wasn't so long ago, Elaine. Although my academy would show movies (like sound of music) on saturday nights, 'ral" movies were devils spawn, and moviegoers were treated as such. I recall "The Exorcist" cuased many a academite many sleepless and terror filled nights-and they believed they deserved the guilt and anguish because they went to see it. My first "real" movie was Poseidon Adventure-and I had nightmares of Ernest Borgnine drowning, as well the images of the burned corpses he found in one of the ballrooms.

On a lighter note, the projector operator in censor role would slip his hand over the projector during the Sound of Music at the moment Hans kissed Lissel in the moonlit gazebo—thereby plunging the entire Kingsway auditorium into total darkness—and a hundred kisses were exchanged in the seats! I am sure he did not know I was sitting with his daughter!!!
I still grow strangely warm and fond when I hear Julie Andrews sing... ;~)

Edwin A. Schwisow
5 days ago

North American Adventists tend (in my opinion) to do whatever they do with zeal and even over-commitment...as if this were a virtue overall. The tendency to "overdo things," even in "doing good" such as scholastics, moneymaking, sharing faith, etc., is a strong and central theme in our culture (I worked for nearly 30 years, full-time and more, interviewing and writing about such Adventist people, and I've been around long enough to recognize that they frequently burn out and leave spouses, church, and faith).

The "push for performance" goes hand-in-glove with what many seem to identify as "addictive behavior." I remember one pale, wan-looking young woman in a Sabbath school class some time back, who proclaimed that she believed that she was compelled by the gospel commission to spend every possible waking moment (and even if necessary engage in sleep deprivation) because of the dire condition of the world and the need to finish proclaiming the gospel. I admired her dedication, but felt extremely sorry for her as a human being. As far as I
can tell, she is long gone from the church. Why do so many who set out to do good (on social media, on the Internet, in giving Bible studies, etc.) become so intemperate in doing so? Is this what being a good Adventist requires? I ask these questions, not sure I know the answers...

Kevin Riley
5 days ago

I believe we all have trouble accepting that God can achieve anything without our help - or at least supervision. We find it very hard to believe that eternal life is a gift, and that God no more demands we over-achieve to keep it than he does to obtain it. Keeping busy reassures us that we are 'doing the right thing' and God is thereby obliged to look after us.

Elaine Nelson
5 days ago

Could it be the constant "push" to "get out and finish the work" or to "witness" along with the personal stories of those who engage in conversation on a plane, hoping to put in a good work for the Bible and GC SDA theme?

Yes, it has worn out many good pastors who were constantly pushed by their conferences to produce more: members, money, or Bible studies that drove my dad to a hemorrhaging ulcer, several heart attacks and early death at 59--unable to keep the pace.

Joe Erwin
5 days ago

Elaine and Timo, how well I remember the days when movies were so forbidden in the church.... When I was 19 years old, long, long ago, I taught the one-room school at the Iron Spring Campground near Prescott, AZ. It was pretty difficult to find teachers back in those days. It was also a little hard to take the level of scrutiny and judgement and gossip that accompanied the position. My guess is that not everything has changed.

It was rumored that I had been going to movies at the little theater in Prescott. Someone thought they had seen my car parked near the theater, and that was enough to start the rumor. Things got serious enough for the chair of the school board to call me aside and ask me about it. The theater was next to the public library. The librarian had a car the same make and color as mine (four door, while mine was two door). The car was not mine, but some were quick to believe "the worst." I completed one year of teaching all subjects in all grades for $210/month for nine months, but I chose not to consider teaching for another year. It was a good experience for me and, I think, for most of the students, but the few small and nasty minds made it unappealing to continue. The school closed in the middle of the next year.

Ned
4 days ago

It might be surprising to some that I found balance in this (and many other things) in EGW. Somewhere, she mentions that God does not ask us to accomplish more in a day than is reasonable, that it is people's expections and requests that would overload us.

About one pastor I used to mentally wonder who was on the Lord's side, he or I. It seemed as though he would have me (a mother with young children) involved in some kind of church work most evenings of the week. I learned that I did not need to give reasons for declining a request, that often others might not understand or
agree with my reasons anyway. The use of my time was between God and me. Still is now at a much older age.

Kevin Riley
2 days ago

Pastors are faced with an endless list of things that need to be done, and a much shorter list of volunteers to do them. They thus have a tendency to overburden the willing, including themselves. Like you, most of them need to learn to say 'no' to things, including the job of asking others to do those things.

Ned
4 days ago

My above comment relates to Edwin Schwisow's post, but I didn't get it in the right place.

God's Will Paramount
2 days ago

It's all about balance in our lives. If you want to know if you are addicted to anything, just try and do without for some time (I am not talking about the necessities of life such as love, food, water, sleep, etc.). If you suffer severe withdrawal symptoms it's time to seek help. Otherwise enjoy and be blessed!

Jack Hoehn
2 days ago

Larry, you have a lot of chutzpa to warn about internet addiction disorder on the internet! :) Obviously all of us who read you are addicts! Jack

Jack Hoehn
2 days ago

Oops, warn=warn!

Anonymous

You do not have sufficient permissions to post a comment.
The One Project came to Australia this past weekend (www.the1project.org). Having had the opportunity to participate in the gathering in Seattle in February, I was excited to recommend it to many of my Australian friends and contacts, as well as curious as to how the One Project “formula” might be received in my home country. It also gave me the opportunity for a second look at the One Project, and further reflection and interaction with its impulses—and impulser.

And they came. Hosted by the Kellyville church in suburban Sydney, 225 people joined in the One Project—Australia from across the nation, particularly coming in large numbers from Sydney, Melbourne and Perth, together with participants from England and the United States.

And it worked. Generally, participants worshipped meaningfully, resonated with and applauded much of the presentations, experienced a “safe” environment for exploration and questioning, engaged in discussions with enthusiasm and a healthy openness that extended beyond the programmed timeslots, and went home with a desire to somehow share what they had experienced with their home churches. Of course, there were both the contrarians and those with legitimate questions to be wrestled with but there seemed a general enthusiasm for the experience and focus that had been shared.

(You can check out my news report of the One Project gathering in Sydney on the website of Record: http://record.net.au/items/jesus-all-at-sydneys-one-project.)
I'm glad it happened. I'm glad it was a success. And I'm glad I was there. If anything, I was more engaged with it second time around—with mostly the same presentations but a different group of participants and discussions. I am impressed by the chord it has struck with such a cross-section of people and the positive direction the One Project is moving in and calling the church toward.

We need more of Jesus. We always need more of Jesus, personally and corporately. And while the leaders and presenters of the One Project do well at raising questions, they also do a good job at shutting up, stopping talking and creating a space for interaction and response, as well as worship and communion.

Yet, while “Jesus. All.” sounds like a worthy motto—and it is in so many ways—the risk is trying to talk about Jesus without a context. Even God couldn’t do that—thus, the incarnation, a particular expression of a real-person Jesus in a specific time, place and culture. Neither can we follow Jesus without a context because it is only in a context that we function as disciples.

A theologically or practically disembodied Jesus is simply a nice albeit amazing story—and risks a disembodied faith. Jesus in a bottle to be admired might still blow our minds and touch our hearts but might do little more. Rather, He needs to be splashed all over our lives, into the darkest corners. As a living Saviour, He needs to be lived and He needs to transform our lives and world. I only follow Jesus by faithfully living life in my family, my work, my church and my community.

As such, acontextual conversations about Jesus are unsustainable and soon become something less than promised. That’s why, in a such a heavily Adventist setting as the One Project gatherings, the default context becomes the church, with a frustrating tendency to feel like a re-hashing of current church issues and past church grievances. (Perhaps it also reflects the few available “safe” gatherings for this kind of collective venting.)

So, given the necessity and inevitability of context, what we need is a bigger context. We become frustrated with our church-ness sometimes getting in the way of our Jesus-following but restrict too much of our conversations about and expressions of Jesus to our church contexts. The incarnated Jesus described a much broader context for who He was and His mission: “For God so loved the world . . .” (John 3:16), encompassing the everyday and mundane of our lives, as well as the planet-sized beauties and tragedies.

The One Project has a context—the Adventist faith community, with its theology, history and culture—and many people have found and served Jesus in that context. But one important way to discover, experience and live more of Jesus is to see and serve Him in other and larger contexts. That’s where most of us live most of our lives—and they’re also contexts in which Jesus calls us to follow Him.

God's Will Paramount
2 days ago

I am curious. Is the One Project about, or for, Adventists who have had little or no experience with Jesus, or is it for the whole world wide Adventist family? Is the primary Focus and Mover of this "project" Jesus Himself, or not? If both are true, how come our church HQ at GC and its Divisions around the world are not in the forefront of this project? What do we mean by "project"? I thought being a Christian 7th day Adventist was a about a relationship with Christ. What happened to the other Persons of the Divinity? Any reason (s) why they are being
Ken Curtis
2 days ago

Your comments remind me of Jesus' post resurrection statement to His disciples, that He was going ahead of them into Galilee, and that they should expect to see Him there. Seeing Jesus is a larger context seems to be exactly what we are invited to do - and what a great challenge to realize He has gone ahead of us there, and that if we are looking we will find Him already at work there. Perhaps that larger context is where we are called to join Him! Thanks for the reminder.

Stephen Ferguson
2 days ago

Stupid questions for Nathan:

- Is the One Project primarily a Youth-ish SDA Movement?
- Is it similar to or have any connection to GYC (or in some ways is it a somewhat opposite movement theologically and philosophically)?

And I do like the idea. We forget that history in the centre of everything. The Bible itself is not even really the Word or the Truth but only word and truth (lower case). The Bible itself tells us in John 1 that it is Jesus who is the Word and ultimate Truth (capitals), and everything else points to Him and is fulfilled in Him. A Christ-centered theological and practical movement is something the SDA Church well needs, as we can otherwise become focused in orthopraxy.

Nathan Brown
a day ago

Thanks for your responses and questions.

I had been hoping that some more One Project-connected folks might have a go at answering some of these questions but I can offer some responses based on my understanding.

In an official sense, the One Project is a ministry of Andrews University that brings together among its leaders a group of pastors, chaplains and others, many of whom are based on Adventist campuses. So while not intentionally or specifically youth-focused, it has some leanings toward youth because of its campus origins and the "day jobs" of many of those who are involved.

The two web links above give more of a background.

Stephen Ferguson
a day ago

And what about GYC? Why launch this program when there is already GYC, which is increasingly gaining GC backing? Isn't that too many cooks spoiling the broth? Or are OneProject cooking a very different dish?

I have looked at both websites, including the expanded philosophy by Japhet De Oliveira. The more good-natured side of me says One Project is exactly what the SDA Church needs. The sceptical part of me thinks that One Project is indeed motivated by the growing success of the conservative GYC, which again has gone from the fringes to the mainstream by having a powerful patron in Pres Wilson, and that this might be a
counter-cultural attempt to replicate GYC's success on the more liberal wing of the Church.

Kevin Riley
a day ago

Anything that presents a better view of Adventism than GYC is, IMO, to be applauded. The One Project is much closer to where the church is in Australia than GYC.

prbigkev
a day ago

Kevin: Have you attended any of the GYC or AYC conventions? Have you attended any of the One Project gatherings?
In what ways is the One Project "much closer to where the church is in Australia"?

Kevin Riley
a day ago

I have heard reports from people who have gone to both, and watched videos and read transcripts of talks at AYC. I would have liked to attend the One Project, as I have heard a lot of good things about it, and like what I have heard and read from the presenters, but the location was not convenient. As we are leaving Melbourne later this year, I am confident that the next program will be held here after we leave :). I find AYC to be more conservative than most church members I know, or churches I have attended. My recent experience has been mostly in larger city churches, but the One Project seems closer in both style and substance to where most SDAs I know are, even in most of the country churches I am familiar with. I know there are many SDAs who do appreciate AYC (including close family members), but I doubt they will reach the majority of SDA youth. I am openly left of centre when it comes to both belief and practice (although I wouldn't use the 'l' word), so you can hardly expect me to not want an alternative to AYC. I still believe there is room for both - and more - within the SDA church.

Stephen Ferguson
about 13 hours ago

Sorry I hope my comments didn't start this, but it is illustrative of what I am talking about. I can just see the possibility of dispute between GYC/AYC supporters and 1P supporters. Despite Nathan saying there is place for both ministries, and Kevin saying each ministry reaches a different audience, which I both agree with, I can imagine GYC/AYC asking the legitimate question - why have two youth revival movements?

Moreover, isn't having two youth revival movements a potential waste of resources and efforts, and wouldn't it be better to have one? What would happen if someone tried to start an alternative clone of Pathfinders, with the line, 'There is room for two youth outdoor movements'?

You can spin it all you like in PR and Church propaganda speak, but some in GYC/AYC are going to see 1P as a threat. They are going to see the emphasis on 'Christ-centred' in 1P as a dig as if GYC supposedly wasn't Christ-focused. The discussion between prbigkev and Kevin, after Kevin said "One Project much closer to where the church is in Australia" is case in point.

Kevin Riley
about 10 hours ago
We could ask - and quite a few did - why AYC felt the need to start duplicating programs already provided by the Union and conferences? It was (according to those who support AYC) because they perceived a lack in what was offered, or an emphasis they did not agree with. Your report of what happened in your SS class demonstrates this. AYC strongly supports an emphasis on public and personal evangelism and conversion over all else, and see the rest of us as not taking that seriously enough. And while I don't support some of their agenda, they aren't entirely wrong about that - although I believe they could broaden the methods to be used to do that. Some see an emphasis on law keeping and behaviour by some (not all) AYC presenters that they believe needs to be moderated by alternative views. I also agree with that.

We could see AYC as representing the 'conservative' tradition, and the One Project representing 'progressive' Adventism, and choose our sides accordingly. Or we could see both groups as having needed correctives for the SDA community and listen to both and take whatever action we see as necessary after that. There is no reason why they have to be in 'competition', and I doubt most of the leaders of either want it to be like that. After all, an emphasis on a relationship with Jesus is not in any way in conflict with taking either our mission or our message seriously. Nor is the message as presented by either group the only way to view the SDA message. It may be good for the church to both listen to and embrace both, while knowing that one will more easily reach some people, and the other more easily reach others.

Stephen Ferguson
a day ago

So Kevin, are you agreeing that One Project might be a counter-movement to GYC? For the avoidance of doubt, I have no problem if it is. However, I can see a bit of competition between GYC and One Project, even with different patrons (GYC via GC and 1P via NAD,SPD, Europe etc) which may or may not be a good thing. No doubt GYC will claim One Project is not necessary, because GYC will of course claim it is also Christ-centred and Christ-focused.

Kevin Riley
a day ago

I wasn't make a claim for motivation, simply making an observation. I believe there is a need for a number of revival/reformation movements to reach all SDAs, and if The One Project and GYC both make positive contributions to that, then that is good. I just don't believe that GYC is going to reach the majority of young SDAs, and I obviously object to some of the elements of perfectionism and legalism presented by some of their speakers, so an alternative is welcome, and if it comes from a perspective closer to where many/most SDAs are in Australia, then that is even better. I would hope no one would feel they have to make a choice between the One Project and GYC if they feel both would be helpful to them. That would include church leaders and institutions.

Nathan Brown
a day ago

Stephen, Motivations for initiatives or events come from many sources and are almost always mixed in various ways, so perhaps both your suggestions have some element of truth. However, for the sake of the church and of the One Project, I hope and believe that your positive comment carries the much greater weight. I am aware that there has been some dialogue between leadership of the two groups and a number of GYC leaders were at the One Project gathering in Seattle in February. To see the One Project as a rival/liberal GYC or even an anti-GYC is to misrepresent it, sell it short and miss the core passion of the One Project.
Stephen Ferguson  
a day ago

Nathan I hope your right and if the 1P gains popularity GYC won't see it as some sort of threat. I am all for using whatever we can reach bring revival - unfortunately movements are also composed of people.

Stephen Ferguson  
about 13 hours ago

And further, if GYC and 1P have been in dialogue, why can't both youth revival movements join together - explain that? GYC is already extremely popular, has a degree of momentum, and credibility. The only thing that logically comes to mind is that there is something in GYC that the major proponents of 1P must not like.

At my 'young adults' SS class last week, someone came back from 1P held in Sydney. They ended up having an argument with the presenter of the lesson (who is more conservative), who had just come from a different Church planting course. It was like GYC and 1P going head-to-head right then and there.

The presenter argued that we should not waste too much time on just making friends, but must spread the Gospel first, and then make friends with those who are more receptive to the Gospel. The person who had just come back from 1P said the exact opposite, saying such an approach from not Christ-centred.

Again, I hope I am wrong, but I guess watch this space... It has only been like 1 week, and I have already personally witnessed disagreement between 1P and GYC supporters.

prbigkev  
about 9 hours ago

Those who have attended both the GYC/AYC and the One Project are of course diverse. That is to say within the GYC/AYC group there is much diversity and likewise within the One Project group. To label one group as "conservative" and the other as "progressive" is to risk creating an unnecessary dichotomy. Let us pray that all drawn to attend the various events are blessed and inspired to a closer walk with God and a deeper commitment to sharing God with others.

I recall that two or three years ago a Australian Union Conference youth/training initiative was cancelled because of lack of support. Whereas the AYC attracted record numbers. It seems to me that AYC (and by extension GYC) was/is offering a program that is attractive to their respective target audience.

Stephen Ferguson  
about 8 hours ago

And I recall one year a local lay leader in our Conference sent out a mass invite to a AYC event. It was shortly followed by an email from the Youth Director of the Conference with words to the effect, 'This is not a Conference endorsed event.' Let's face facts that the official Church in Australia has been less than supportive of AYC - for whatever reason.

Kevin Riley  
about 3 hours ago

I suspect that may have had something to do with AYC planning programs at the same time and advertising them as if they were official programs (as in the case of the AUC program), while not really liasing with the
I should add that in more recent times, Australian church leaders have been invited to be part of AYC programs.

Anonymous

You do not have sufficient permissions to post a comment.
The next day, when the people who remained after the feeding of the five thousand saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus. When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal." Then they said to him, "What must we do to perform the works of God?" Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." So they said to him, "What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" Then Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

We're always told Jesus has suffered all the temptation we have. (That's besides all the temptations he suffered that we never have, like the temptation to turn stones into bread, or bring down fire from heaven... I can tell you at least one time he must have been tempted to pull his hair and slap a few people around.

Let's recap.

He goes into the wilderness, but the madding crowd goes after him. He has compassion, so he teaches them and wracks his brain thinking of stories they might understand, a little. He teaches them for hours, until both he and they are exhausted. Then, instead of sending them home for supper, or for that matter, asking them to feed him, he divides them all up neatly into companies and multiplies a little bread and fish to feed them all.

[Sidetrack: I was in a Bible study group where someone said, "I read that wasn't really a miracle, he just shamed all the people into sharing what they had." The pastor and I said in unison, "What would be non-miraculous about that??"]

They like this. They really like this! Someone has a brainstorm. "We could make him king, and he could always miraculously feed armies!" Cool! Let's do that!

Jesus disappears.

Everybody looks around in a bewildered way, then goes home, probably arguing about who saw him last and who offended him and why he doesn't want to be king. Does anybody remember even one of his stories?

Next day, they hear he might be in Capernaum, so they all beg, borrow, and steal boats to go find him. And they do! Yay!
Jesus gives them The Look. (I'll bet Jesus was really good at The Look.) "You aren't looking for me because of who I really am. You're only interested in the free food. Believe it or not, there are more important things."

Here come a couple of gems of questions. Gem #1: "What must we do to perform the works of God?" Does this mean they are making some attempt to convince him they are interested in righteousness? Or is the subtext, "How can we make magic food appear, Jesus? Huh? How?"

"This is it," Jesus tells them. "Just trust me. That's all."

Whoosh! That's the sound of his words flying right over their heads.

Gem #2 (the real diamond!): "What sign will you give us, so we can know you're trustworthy?"

I BEG your pardon?! What sign?? This is where I'm pretty sure the temptation to hair-pulling comes into full force, if it wasn't already. But wait--there's more!! In case he isn't picking up what they're laying down, they spell it out for him. "Our ancestors ate the bread from heaven." And they quote a Bible verse for the real clincher. "Hey, Jesus, why don't you just give us manna? Yesterday might have been a fluke. Maybe my eyes deceived me. If you do it again, I'll know for sure it's for real."

Jesus doesn't pull his hair. He doesn't hit anyone. He probably doesn't even roll his eyes. He leans forward and says in his most intense voice, "Listen to me. That bread wasn't from Moses. It was from God. The true bread of heaven is that which comes down from heaven and brings life to the world."

Does even one person get it? Maybe a bunch do. I hope so. Because the crowd in general just lights up and says brightly, "Yeah, that's what I'm talking about, Jesus! Just give us this bread from heaven all the time!"

Then Jesus does something uncharacteristic. He lays it on the line. All his cards, right there on the table. He looks them in the eyes, and he says, "I AM the bread of life." I feel sure he looks directly into the eyes of whichever one or ones are actually listening. Who knows--maybe the little boy with the bread and fish. "Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

It's the watershed moment of Jesus' ministry, actually. He almost does give in to the temptation to be discouraged, a few verses later.

Truthfully... what do you think you would have said and done, if you'd been there that day?

Join in the discussion:
BubbaJ
2 days ago

I would have done the very same things. We must understand that where we are in time and with our limited understanding of life as we think we know it... with and without God's help... none of us are on the same level of understanding with the maker of everything. (We are so-called so intelligent many of us waste our time (Not studying the Word as we should) and laugh and cry watching and putting our faith in the stupid TV shows (Where nothing is real which has cause many mass murders which no one will admit that violence grows violence!) and the oversexed driven stupidity of the boob-tube. (Which most things watched is Satan Driven) We still don't know what God knows so we must take the goodness of God, His guidance, His training, His
intelligence, His Love for His people, His warning concerning sin and lust and turn from all worldly sin. How many people today read the Bible like they should? WHY because we put ourselves in allowing Satan to in many cases take us over. Mind and soul and we just take Satan's guidance as if it feels good do it? Many even make the Bible read to justify their sins. We are all getting giant dosages of the TV each and every day or in movies or in our magazines. We must understand that we know only what we know on our level without God's intelligence. God is very clear in the guidance of the Bible which we keep us out of trouble the Bible will inform us that nothing has changed and that the 10 commandments, including the 4th Commandment are still in force. Simply speaking folks we are all about to find out what God meant concerning us getting ready for the soon coming of Jesus Christ and that the world should be watching for our Lord to return with clouds of angels in the air. Those that are not ready for Jesus to return or those that are not watching for Christ Jesus or don't care to even learn what's going with all these current events that no one seems to understand are in for a rude awakening very soon according to my Bible. Those that have no idea of what’s going on and how God has provided us the Prophecy of Daniel and Revelation and other books of the Bible to help all of us get ready for the Return of Jesus Christ will be so surprised very soon especially during the rapture of God's Remnant Church. When the dead in Christ are raptured first and those that are alive and in Christ are raptured following WOW! If those that have mocked the Bible and it's people see that the Bible and everything it says is true and real as we all are taken up to heaven for 1,000 years to return in the New Jerusalem with Christ which those that don't won't ever know because they will be killed by the brightness of Christ. Folks please understand that the Bible is true PERIOD! Find a Bible based Church ASAP or Join a Seventh Day Adventist Church (I believe that the SDA Church will be the nucleus of the So Called Last days Remnant Church) this church is and has been for many years well educated in the instructions of the Prophecies of the Bible (GOD'S WORD) Folks look around you is what you see really the way you desire to live and what do you put your faith in? Surely it's not the TV or the Movies? PLEASE ALLOW GOD TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND BEFORE ITS TOO LATE!

William Noel
2 days ago
Debbonnaire,
I love your writing style and how you humanized Jesus in a way we could identify with Him more. Thank you for describing the story that way. God has given you the gift of creative description.

How would I have felt? My frustration would have been at least a bit more obvious in my responses. After what you saw you still want a sign? What more proof do you need to be convinced?

suzi
2 days ago
Im sorry but Jesus indignation in your 'style' raises mine. Jesus never in thought nor action entertained even the slightest sin. The way this is portrayed, in my opinion, is Jesus being tired of their nonsense, annoyed with their not getting it, impatient with their lack of attention. Jesus answered every temptation, from childhood with "it is written". If Jesus was that way with them God help us. Secondly, Jesus used to rise up a great while before dawn to pray. I will submit that the Father filled his head immediately with clarity in 'stories' and understanding of the fact that their point of reference was the false teachings/belief system of the day. I further submit that we are today as your portrayal of them. We have faaaaar more information available for our edification, are we praying as Jesus did? Are we kindly reaching others in spite of what they offer back in response? Are we dedicated to the souls of the lost for the reasons He was?
FredShoey
2 days ago

Deb,

Thanks for your thoughts. Imagining being there with Jesus was priceless. Being here with Him is pretty good too.

Fred S

Anonymous

You do not have sufficient permissions to post a comment.
In the fall of 2010, George E. Peters Adventist School in Hyattsville, MD, had only 42 students and there were concerns about shutting it down. In March, 2011, a story in the Columbia Union Visitor reported that the school now had 94 students and was vibrant and growing. What happened in between? Adventist Today talked with principal John Alberty to find out.

The 2010/2011 school year was Alberty’s first year at the school he fondly calls “GEP,” and it is clear that his passion and dedication are central to the turnaround. However, one of the things he makes clear is that “this was an excellent school before I came.” In 2008, the school was hit by a tornado, and in rebuilding as a bright, spacious, up-to-date facility, it took advantage of new, green technology and a new emphasis on such environmental responsibilities as recycling, rain barrels, and school gardens. Yet it was struggling.

Alberty cites three main reasons for the new growth and excitement at GEP. Of first importance, he says, is “the focus on developing a wonderful academic program. We’re not after kids to come just because they’re Seventh-day Adventist and they get a spiritual background. Of course a God-centered spiritual foundation is central to us. But we also want an excellent curriculum.” He said he had come from a turnaround school [John Philip Souza Middle School in DC] and came in with a vision. “If you improve the academics, they will come.”

So he set out to move in the direction of becoming a STEM school. According to www.stemschool.com, “S.T.E.M. is an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, and a STEM School focuses on these subjects to help our nation's youth gain the skills required to succeed in today's challenging world. This includes the ability to think critically, solve complex problems, and drive advancements in science and technology.” Alberty said GEP encouraged teachers to develop critical thinking skills in their students and to work on inquiry-based learning. They started science and math clubs. They partnered with Washington Adventist University and with Commonweal Foundation, a philanthropic organization which supports educational programs and projects which help underserved children and youth. They obtained tutors for struggling students.

Teachers were asked to focus on differentiation of instruction—that is, teaching all levels in each class and being sure to know each student’s strengths and weaknesses and work to support and grow them. To make these things possible for hard-working teachers, they have capped classes at 20 students. Principal Alberty did not exempt himself. He says one of his first efforts was to learn the name of each child and to become familiar with that child’s abilities. He also does not teach, so that he is free to observe, encourage, handle disciplinary problems, and reach out to publicize the school.

The second ingredient in the new GEP was fostering a new, more positive culture. Instead of worrying about low self-esteem, low school esteem, and discouragement, Alberty simply created what he called “a new mantra: “This is the best school and we’re the best students at the best school.” He would ask daily, “Who are you?” The students would chant, “We’re the best students in the best school!” Attitudes began to brighten. Grades began to improve. Alberty expanded the mantra to parents. “You’re the best parents of the best students at the
“Before my eyes, things started to change. No longer were parents having disgruntled conversations in the parking lot. Instead, they were talking to their neighbors about ‘the best school.’ Parents who had pulled their kids because of dissatisfaction came back. We changed the mindset. People became proud of their school.” In one year, enrollment went from 42 to 96.

The third ingredient was an open-door policy. “This is very big to help grow a school. I say, ‘Don’t talk to your friends about issues you have, come to the principal.’ A lot of times, parents just want to be heard. When you are listening to them, that gives them the feeling that ‘I am part of the school, I am part of the family.’ They know that I’m willing to schedule meetings with teachers if there’s something we need to talk about.”

Most of the increase came from within Seventh-day Adventist families. However, the school also started a pre-K program at the beginning of the 2011 school year, with two children and a capacity of 20. Within one month they had a waiting list, and most of these were not Adventist. Some suggested expanding the program, but Alberty said a waiting list is a good thing. “People want to be a part of something that is growing.” Those parents were so happy with the excellence of the program that they are moving the children on into primary school.

At the end of the school year, Alberty sends home Intent to Enroll forms for the next year. Last spring he talked with a parent who had not returned the form. “Oh,” said the parent, “I always do that at the last minute.”

“This time, if you wait until the last minute, there may not be a spot for your child,” Alberty warned.

The parent brought the filled-out form the next day.

Alberty believes enrollment will continue to climb, and will reach 300. But numbers are not his main goal. “At the end of the day,” he said, “if the [Adventist Today] article doesn’t express anything else, I definitely want people to see that this was all God. This is God’s school, what has happened has been totally God’s miracle, every person that walked in the door did it because the Holy Spirit impressed them to do so. It would have grown whether I was there or not. I’m grateful that God chose to work through me and gave me the ability to do this work, but this is God’s school and God’s work and that’s what I want people to know.”