2012 Winter Meeting

Presentation Title:
“A Better World: How compassion and justice can flourish alongside eschatology”

Speaker: David Neff
Editor, Christianity Today

Date/Time: February 18, Sabbath, 9:30 a.m.

Place: Tierrasanta SDA Church
11260 Clairemont Mesa Blvd.
San Diego, CA 92124
Church phone: 858-576-9990

DIRECTIONS
From Orange County:
I-5 south to I-805 south to Hwy 52 east to Santo Rd south to Clairemont Mesa Blvd left (east) to 11260. (SDA church is nicely nestled between a Lutheran and a Catholic church on a hill to the left of the boulevard.)

From Riverside/San Bernardino:
I-15 south to Clairemont Mesa Blvd/ Hwy 52 exit. Turn left (east) and proceed two miles to church on left.

From San Diego/South Bay:
I-5 or I-805 north to I-8 east to I-15 north to Clairemont Mesa Blvd then right (east) two miles to church on left.

From East County:
Hwy 52 west to Santo Road, then south to Clairemont Mesa Blvd, then left (east) one mile to the church.

About the Topic
Historically, Adventists provide a case study in working to make their world better even while living in expectation of the second coming. This is perhaps due to Adventism’s unique blend of this-worldliness with its future-worldliness.

Protestants seem divided between those with a justice-oriented “prophetic eschatology” and those with an otherworldly or future-worldly “apocalyptic eschatology” (Martin Buber’s terms). Spurred by key New Testament scholars (e.g., N. T. Wright, Scot McKnight), Evangelical Protestants are now moving increasingly into a justice orientation. Will they need to abandon the apocalyptic elements of their eschatology? Or can the prophetic justice and apocalyptic elements be held in tension and enable believers work for a better world?

About David Neff
David Neff is editor-in-chief of Christianity Today, a magazine for Christian leaders. He previously edited HIS, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship’s magazine for college students.

Before embarking on his career as a writer and editor, he pastored churches in the Southeastern California Conference and at Walla Walla College. He serves on the boards of the National Association of Evangelicals and the Robert E. Webber Institute of Worship Studies. He participates in interfaith dialogue with Jews, Muslims, and Mormons.

His theological and ethical interests range from the importance of patristics for modern Christians to the interrelationship of compassionate action and gospel proclamation. He and his wife, the former LaVonne Pease, have two daughters and four grandchildren whom they adore.

2012 Spring Retreat
May 4-6
Pine Springs Ranch

John R. Jones, PhD, Associate Professor of Religion, La Sierra University

The “B-List”: Early Christian Writings That Didn’t Make the Cut—and What They Tell Us about the Early Church

Advance registration required: deadline of April 6

Print the registration form below or download it from www.sandiegoadventistforum.org
MORE SDAF NEWS

SDAF has entered the digital age.
In case you haven’t heard, the new SDAF website has been operational (but still developing) since mid-September. Announcements of upcoming events get the most prominent “acreage” but the site is loaded with all kinds of information. Recordings of many meetings may now be downloaded from the website as mp3 files, which reduces the workload of volunteer staff. Downloads sell for one-half the price of CDs and audiocassettes, which also may be ordered online. Likewise, membership applications and media subscriptions may be completed online. While it is now too late to place orders for pre-Christmas delivery, SDAF CDs and audiocassettes make meaningful gifts for all occasions. Order several today using either the Lectures tab or the Archives tab on the homepage—you won’t be disappointed and the recipients will be delighted!

It’s time to renew your 2012 membership and media subscriptions. The free six-month extension of the 2010/11-membership year ends on December 31. The time has arrived to renew membership, media subscriptions and printed Newsletter subscriptions for 2012 (emailed Newsletters are free). New members and subscribers are always welcome! Show your support for SDAF by making a year-end tax-deductible contribution. Since SDAF is a completely volunteer organization, 100% of the funds you contribute are applied to programming. Your generous gifts are greatly appreciated and may you be graced by the prosperity of the Most High throughout the coming year.

October meeting one of the most useful ever. The strongly positive response received following Dr. Paul McGraw’s October 22 presentation is continuing. High praise for this meeting is now being received from enthusiastic media subscribers who, after listening to their CD, are ordering additional copies to share with friends and family members. Many have referred to the practical usefulness of Dr. McGraw’s remarks in dealing not only with their own possibly less than ideal experience growing up in Adventism but also with their children’s and grandchildren’s experiences to which they may have contributed.

Interestingly, much of the presentation was delivered in an appealing, often humorous style not always characteristic of history professors’ lectures. Dr. McGraw’s one-liners included “stop passing on your (SDA) issues to your kids because then I have to deal with them when they come to college;” “it’s easier to not wear jewelry than act like a Christian;” “health reform was given to keep us well here, not to get us to heaven;” “if Adventism is just Methodism on Sabbath we should quit,” and “the challenge of Adventism is not to purify ourselves out of existence.” It’s not too late to get in on the practical information and fun… download the meeting or order your CD directly from the SDAF website today.

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San Diego Adventist Forum
Membership / Subscription Application
Name(s) ________________________________________________________________
Address ______________________________________________________________________
City __________________ State ___ Country ________
Postal Code ______ Phone (___) ___________________
Email _______________________________________________________________

2012 membership
(single $30/couple $40) $________

2012 quarterly meeting recordings (4 sets)
___ Compact disc format
(US address $60 / others $80) $________
___ Cassette tape format
(US address $60 / others $80) $________

SDAF Newsletter
___ Email version (free)
___ Printed version
(US/Canada $20 / others $25) $________

Tax-deductible contribution $________

TOTAL ENCLOSED $________

Mail with payment to:
SDAF, PO Box 421320, San Diego, CA 92142
SAN DIEGO ADVENTIST FORUM—13th ANNUAL RETREAT

LOCATION:  PINE SPRINGS RANCH, MOUNTAIN CENTER, CALIFORNIA

DATE:  MAY 4-6, 2012

THEME:  The B-List: Early Christian Writings That Didn't Make the Cut—
         and What They Tell Us about the Early Church
         (details on reverse side)

SPEAKER:  John R. Jones, PhD, Associate Professor of Religion, La Sierra University

REGISTRATION FEE: rates listed below depend on number of occupants per room and include

- five meals per person
- two nights lodging (two double beds per room—maximum occupancy = 4 persons)
- five presentations
- Saturday night entertainment

REGISTRATION FORM

PRIMARY CONTACT ______________________________ ________________________________

MAILING ADDRESS ____________________________________________________________

CITY _________________________ STATE _____ ZIP _____________

TELEPHONE (______) ____________________________

EMAIL ________________________________

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TOTAL DUE for room, meals & meetings $________ / _______

Please make check payable to SDAF and mail by April 6 to:

San Diego Adventist Forum
PO Box 421320
San Diego, CA 92142-1320

Note: CHECK-IN TIME—3:30 p.m. Friday
Friday evening: “So what was Leigh Teabing talking about, anyway?”

*The Da Vinci Code* is built around the claim that there were many early gospels, which the patriarchs of the Church eventually suppressed—and which would surprise us if we had and read them. Parts of this theory are true, and parts are not—but which is which? First, a quick overview of non-canonical “gospels:” general characteristics, variety of viewpoints, connections back into various aspects of Jesus’ life, driving motives. And a look at the stages in the preservation of the memories about Jesus.

Then we’ll look at the actual text of certain of the earliest non-canonical gospels—a process that’s both entertaining, intriguing and serious. We sample materials from the only two serious contenders for pre-New Testament gospels: (a) *The Gospel of the Nazareans*, and (b) that fascinating, mysterious source called “Q” – a pretty clear example of a “gospel behind the gospels.”

So what do we learn from these sources, that we didn’t know before?

Sabbath morning: “The Other Muhammad Ali”

An amazing discovery in the sands of Egypt that rivals that of the Dead Sea Scrolls—yielding a treasure-trove that includes the *Gospel of Thomas* and 45 other early Christian documents not included in the New Testament. What are we to make of these?

Sabbath morning: “Peter, Paul and Mary”

We’ll look at the *Gospel* and the *Acts of Peter*, and then turn to especially consider two women who obviously bothered the early Christians a lot: The story of the *Gospel of Mary* is itself an episode of discovery and recovery in the midst of two world wars and other tragedies. And it preserves the early Christian intrigue with the relationship between Jesus and Mary, and its influence in the early Christian movement. Three fragmentary copies of this text exist, dating from the 3rd and 5th centuries; but the material they preserve has been dated on linguistic grounds to the late 1st to early 2nd centuries. Definitely worth a look!

The second story of an early Christian woman derives from the *Acts of Paul*, and takes place in Iconium. It too records material that, while not traceable back to Paul, appears to be in circulation by the end of the first century AD. Not only is the story of *Thecla* a rattling good yarn, it reveals much about early Christianity’s appeal to the female half of the human race. How to relate this tradition to the appeal for public respectability and conventional conduct in the epistles to Timothy and Titus?

Sabbath afternoon: “...and last but not least, Judas”

One of the most despised figures of history, Judas too has his own early document—completely unknown until one threadbare papyrus copy was discovered by some peasants in Egypt in the late 1970’s, and then subjected to a bizarre series of cloak-and-dagger misadventures until finally deciphered in 2000. We’ll view a bit of the National Geographic video tracing this strange story, then read what we have of the actual text in English translation. Then we’ll ask ourselves what motives prompted the composition of this strange and haunting work.

Sunday morning: “So what can we conclude about all this?”

We complete our survey of these early non-canonical Christian materials with a look at the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, the earliest attempt at a church manual, regarded by some scholars as predating the canonical gospels.

There is much more: *The Epistle of Barnabas*, dating from the turn of the 1st/2nd century; *the Epistles of Ignatius* bishop of Antioch, written to a half-dozen churches as he was passing through them en route to his martyrdom in Rome (108AD), the *Shepherd of Hermas*, a visionary Christian apocalypse written during the first half of the 2nd century, and more. Each of these works was regarded as sacred scripture in some early Christian circles, and functioned as part of their Bible. At the same time, certain of our New Testament books—most notably the *Epistle to the Hebrews* and the *Revelation of St. John*—were seriously doubted in certain Christian groups. As the canon gradually took shape in the 5th century and beyond, we consider anew the influences that gave it shape—and what we can learn about the first believers from *all* of their writings.