Dear Lexie,

Image Is Everything

As a child, whenever my mother caught me doing something, that in her mind was completely outrageous or over the top, she would always say to me as only she could, "Boy, have you lost your mind?" I am sure that many parents have posed this question to their children as well. Now, of course, my mother didn't mean this literally; at least I don't think she did anyway. But in essence she was simply checking to see whether the behavior I was engaged in was because I had gone crazy or whether it was simply the result of my having thrown all common sense out of the proverbial window. Today we see this type of behavior exhibited by the so called rich and famous. Without calling any names, we have all heard of these "young stars" that find themselves engaged in certain types of behavior that can definitely be classified as being, "over the top." And, of course, our media follows these so-called stars around, documenting every insane act they commit so that we can have a detailed report, whether we want it or not. In the words
of my mother and parents everywhere, "Have they lost their minds?"

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Rare Photo Provides a Walk With Ellen White Down Memory Lane

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Why So Many Churches Hear So Little of the Bible

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As a child, whenever my mother caught me doing something, that in her mind was completely outrageous or over the top, she would always say to me as only she could, “Boy, have you lost your mind?” I am sure that many parents have posed this question to their children as well. Now, of course, my mother didn’t mean this literally; at least I don’t think she did anyway. But in essence she was simply checking to see whether the behavior I was engaged in was because I had gone crazy or whether it was simply the result of my having thrown all common sense out of the proverbial window. Today we see this type of behavior exhibited by the so called rich and famous. Without calling any names, we have all heard of these “young stars” that find themselves engaged in certain types of behavior that can definitely be classified as being, “over the top.” And, of course, our media follows these so-called stars around, documenting every insane act they commit so that we can have a detailed report, whether we want it or not. In the words of my mother and parents everywhere, “Have they lost their minds?”

In Paul’s letter to the church at Philippi, he too addresses this same issue. Listen to his words in Philippians 2:5. “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.”

When he says that we should have the “mind of Christ,” he is simply saying that we must possess the same attitude or mindset that Christ possessed. And what was that, you ask? He elaborates further in verse 6, 7. “Who being in the form of God did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness men.”

In our culture today, reputation is everything. It’s not that important when it comes to who you really are any longer but instead it’s all about who we want others to think we are. The media has a field day with pouring this idea into the minds of many a consumer with ads with slogans like, “Image is everything!”

But the apostle Paul makes it perfectly clear that Jesus possessed an attitude or a mindset of humility. In other words, although Jesus was fully God, in order to save fallen humanity, he was willing to “empty” himself of the fact that he was God and allow himself to be lowered so that He might become one of us in order that he might save us. In essence, Christ was willing to empty himself of himself which meant that He was willing to get out of his own way. Someone once said that if you want to progress in life, then it means getting out of your own way. Wise words for all of us; wouldn’t you say?

(by Pastor Charles Tapp)
Rare Photo Provides a Walk With Ellen White Down Memory Lane

Essay: Here’s what you might not have noticed about the recently discovered photo of the Adventist Church co-founder.

Posted November 4, 2014

By Ronald D. Graybill, retired Adventist historian

A previously unknown photo of Adventist Church co-founder Ellen G. White provides a rare look back at a time when the General Conference was settling down in the U.S. capital, its business meeting was held in tents, and a U.S. president bowed to White as he passed her in his carriage.

The photo, the first new picture of White to surface in decades, turned up a few weeks ago among the papers of a California physician who died in 1966.

It shows White with her son William “Willie” C. White and his wife, May Lacey White, walking across the campus of what was then the newest Adventist college. The date 1905 is scrawled on the bottom left-hand corner of the print.

Several telltale clues indicate that the picture was taken during the 1905 General Conference session of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The General Conference session took place in a large tent on the grounds of the newly founded Washington Training College (now Washington Adventist University) in Takoma Park, Maryland. A smaller tent of the type that housed delegates is visible in the background of the photo.

Moreover, Ellen White’s nurse, Sara McEnterfer, normally accompanied her on travels, but Sara was ill during the General Conference session, so May took her place.

The General Conference and the Review and Herald Publishing Association had moved from Battle Creek to Washington in late 1903, but they were still housed in rented quarters near the U. S. Capitol building in 1905. The location of the building is now part of a park on the north side of the U. S. Capitol.

So the General Conference session was held on college grounds in Takoma Park, Maryland, a suburb immediately bordering the District of Columbia.

Ellen White stayed in a bedroom and study in the newly built men’s dormitory, while her son and daughter-in-law shared a third room.

This was not Ellen White’s first visit to Takoma Park. In 1904 she spent several months there, thus giving support to the General Conference’s once-controversial move out of Battle Creek, Michigan. During that visit, on a carriage ride through Rock Creek Park, she actually passed President Theodore Roosevelt’s carriage coming in the opposite direction.

“He bowed to us as we passed him," White reported.

But for most of the General Conference session delegates, it was their first visit to the town that would be home to church headquarters for the next 80 years. The college and adjacent hospital (now Washington Adventist Medical Center) would be planted in the Maryland section of Takoma Park, while the General Conference and Review and
Herald Publishing Association would be based just over the line in the District of Columbia.

A picture of Sligo Creek and the bridge across it graced the cover of the Review magazine that reported on the 1905 General Conference session. The caption read: “Near the General Conference Encampment,” and an inside article expanded on the wonderful advantages of the town: “TAKOMA PARK! There is a touch of nature in the very name itself—a suggestion of woodland and wild flowers, of winding roads, of hill and dale!”

Just two months earlier, down at the U.S. Capitol, it had been a windy 45 degrees Fahrenheit (7 degrees Celsius) for Roosevelt's inauguration.

Temperatures were still chilly by the time Ellen White arrived, so she, Willie, and May dressed warmly as they left their rooms to attend a meeting. White set her pince-nez eyeglasses on her nose, put a flowered scarf around her neck, donned her hat, and was off to the big tent.

Clutched in her hand was a large journal, the kind that she used to hand-write letters and sermons.

We don't know for sure which of her 1905 journals she was carrying, but it may have been the one that included the talk she gave on the last day of the conference. Her remarks strongly supported the need for the move out of Battle Creek. Concerned about the influences being exerted on Adventists students in Battle Creek, she spoke of the importance of their being educated by those "true and loyal to the truth," that was "delivered to the people of God, under the ministration of the Spirit of God."

White's hat, which may at first glance appear a little ostentatious, was quite modest for the time. This was the Edwardian era—King Edward VII reigned in England from 1901 to 1910. Edwardian hats often swirled and swooped around the head. Lavish brims created an illusion of a hat suspended as if by magic on the head. The hat was often an amorphous mass swathed in stiff lace and smothered in flowers, ribbons or bird feathers.

“But why don’t we ever see her smiling in pictures?” asked one person who saw Ellen White’s seemingly solemn gaze in the photo.

The answer is simple: It was not the custom to smile in pictures. In fact, in the early days of photography half a century earlier, those who sat for their picture were told not to smile lest their expression be reduced to a silly smirk before the long exposure was finished.

And where has this photo of White been all these years? At the time of the General Conference session, a 27-year-old widow named Harriet “Hattie” Allee was working as a secretary in the Review and Herald Offices down on Capitol Hill. Her late husband was Edgar Allee, son of the prominent Adventist administrator N.W. Allee.

Harriet was an avid photographer throughout her life, and it is entirely likely she took the newly discovered picture.

The original print is only 3.5 inches square, but a digital, high-resolution copy shows a blurry reflection in Willie White’s eyeglasses of what appears to be the photographer wearing a large women’s hat.

Later Harriet moved to California and became the registrar at the College of Medical Evangelists (now the Loma Linda University School of Medicine).

During her years as registrar, medical student Leslie Trott graduated at the top of his class—the second graduating class—in 1915. Then, while he practiced medicine in Los Angeles, he served as the first president of the CME Alumni Association. In 1919, Leslie’s wife, Lucy, passed away. Two years later, the widower, Leslie, married the widow, Harriet Allee, who now added Trott to her name, becoming Harriet Elizabeth Allee Trott (1878-1958).

Harriet died in 1958 and Leslie died in 1966 after a long and distinguished career as an ear, nose and throat doctor. Leslie’s papers were eventually handed down to his great-granddaughter, Jacqueline Leslie Trott-Bally of Los Angeles, California.
As Bally worked through her great-grandfather’s papers, she came across a folder labeled “Harriet Family Photos,” and in that folder was the photo of White. Because of her great-grandfather’s early training in the clinic that became the White Memorial Medical Center in Los Angeles, Bally contacted me, the author of a recently completed centennial history of the hospital, *A Journey of Faith and Healing*.

Tim Poirier, the vice director and archivist of the church’s Ellen G. White Estate, then helped to confirm the time and place the photo was taken.

Only about 50 photos of Ellen White are known to exist. With the discovery of this gem after so many years, here’s to hoping that more pictures will be found.

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Why So Many Churches Hear So Little of the Bible

Albert Mohler  President of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

“It is well and good for the preacher to base his sermon on the Bible, but he better get to something relevant pretty quickly, or we start mentally to check out.” That stunningly clear sentence reflects one of the most amazing, tragic, and lamentable characteristics of contemporary Christianity: an impatience with the Word of God.

The sentence above comes from Mark Galli, senior managing editor of Christianity Today in an essay entitled, “Yawning atthe Word.” In just a few hundred words, he captures the tragedy of a church increasingly impatient with and resistant to the reading and preaching of the Bible. We may wince when we read him relate his recent experiences, but we also recognize the ring of truth.

Galli was told to cut down on the biblical references in his sermon. “You’ll lose people,” the staff member warned. In a Bible study session on creation, the teacher was requested to come back the next Sunday prepared to take questions at the expense of reading the relevant scriptural texts on the doctrine. Cutting down on the number of Bible verses “would save time and, it was strongly implied, would better hold people’s interest.”

As Galli reflected, “Anyone who’s been in the preaching and teaching business knows these are not isolated examples but represent the larger reality.”

Indeed, in many churches there is very little reading of the Bible in worship, and sermons are marked by attention to the congregation’s concerns, not by an adequate attention to the biblical text. The exposition of the Bible has given way to the concerns, real or perceived, of the listeners. The authority of the Bible is swallowed up in the imposed authority of congregational concerns.

As Mark Galli notes:

*It has been said to the point of boredom that we live in a narcissistic age, where we are wont to fixate on our needs, our wants, our wishes, and our hopes—at the expense of others and certainly at the expense of God. We do not like it when a teacher uses up the whole class time presenting her material, even if it is material from the Word of God. We want to be able to ask our questions about our concerns, otherwise we feel talked down to, or we feel the class is not relevant to our lives.*

And Galli continues:

*It is well and good for the preacher to base his sermon on the Bible, but he better get to something relevant pretty quickly, or we start mentally to check out. Don’t spend a lot of time in the Bible, we tell our preachers, but be sure to get to personal illustrations, examples from daily life, and most importantly, an application that we can use.*

The fixation on our own sense of need and interest looms as the most significant factor in this marginalization and silencing of the Word. Individually, each human being in the room is an amalgam of wants, needs, intuitions, interests, and distractions. Corporately, the congregation is a mass of expectations, desperate hopes, consuming fears, and impatient urges. All of this adds up, unless countered by the authentic reading and preaching of the Word of God, to a form of group therapy, entertainment, and wasted time—if not worse.

Galli has this situation clearly in his sights when he asserts that many congregations expect the preacher to start from some text in the Bible, but then quickly move on “to things that really interest us.” Like . . . ourselves?

One of the earliest examples of what we would call the preaching of the Bible may well be found in Nehemiah 8:1-8 (ESV):
And all the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses that the Lord had commanded Israel. So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could understand what they heard, on the first day of the seventh month. And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law. And Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform that they had made for the purpose. And beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah on his right hand, and Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam on his left hand. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people, and as he opened it all the people stood. And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, “Amen, Amen,” lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground. Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law, while the people remained in their places. They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

Ezra and his companions stood on a platform before the congregation. They read the scriptural text clearly, and then explained the meaning of the Scripture to the people. The congregation received the Word humbly, while standing. The pattern is profoundly easy to understand: the Bible was read and explained and received.

As Hughes Oliphant Old comments, “This account of the reading of the Law indicates that already at the time of the writing of this text there was a considerable amount of ceremonial framing of the public reading of Scripture. This ceremonial framing is a witness to the authority of the Bible.” The reading and exposition took place in a context of worship as the people listened to the Word of God. The point of the sermon was simple: “to make clear the reading of the Scriptures.”

In many churches, there is almost no public reading of the Word of God. Worship is filled with music, but congregations seem disinterested in listening to the reading of the Bible. We are called to sing in worship, but the congregation cannot live only on the portions of Scripture that are woven into songs and hymns. Christians need the ministry of the Word as the Bible is read before the congregation such that God’s people—young and old, rich and poor, married and unmarried, sick and well—hear it together. The sermon is to consist of the exposition of the Word of God, powerfully and faithfully read, explained, and applied. It is not enough that the sermon take a biblical text as its starting point.

How can so many of today’s churches demonstrate what can only be described as an impatience with the Word of God? The biblical formula is clear: the neglect of the Word can only lead to disaster, disobedience, and death. God rescues his church from error, preserves his church in truth, and propels his church in witness only by his Word—not by congregational self-study.

In the end, an impatience with the Word of God can be explained only by an impatience with God. We all, both individually and congregationally, neglect God’s Word to our own ruin.

As Jesus himself declared, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

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