



Confronting Prejudice | BY BONNIE DWYER

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Racist, prejudiced labels are getting thrown around a lot by politicians in this election season. But I was surprised to find them in the Sabbath School lesson recently, as the study on the Great Controversy moved to a discussion of the Early Church. The quarterly called out the national prejudices of the disciples, with Peter being the poster boy whose prejudice God confronted with a vision. That was followed for Peter by a visit to the home of the centurion Cornelius, where Peter greets his host and the other guests by saying that according to Jewish law he shouldn't be associating with them. He tries to take the sting out of his remark, however, by saying that God has shown him that no man should be considered impure or unclean. Makes you wonder what the people were muttering under their breath after that.

My take-away from the lesson was that the Great Controversy plays out not only on the cosmic canvas, but in our hearts and minds. To wit, the teachers' edition of the quarterly summarized the lesson with this sentence: "We cannot overcome our own prejudices or withstand the forces of evil except by the power of the Holy Spirit."

With that lesson ringing in my ears, I turned on my computer and was disappointed to see prejudice rearing its ugly head on social media after a Black Christian Union vespers presentation at Southern Adventist University. The University administration shut down Yik Yak, and expressed its disappointment on Twitter saying, "Southern's administration is appalled and deeply saddened by the hurtful, insensitive comments

regarding race that have been recently expressed in our community."

Next came news that in an attempt to fight on-campus racism, Andrew Ashley and his friend Jordan Putt set up a hashtag #LivetoListen and asked people to post photos and tributes to people of a different race who had made a difference in their lives. Their commitment to fighting racism by listening helped restore my faith in Adventist college students.

Racism in our community, in our hearts; here we thought we were beyond all that. The stories in this issue, about the Paradise Valley Church and the work of ADRA, are meant to provide hope from within our community about how we treat one another, but also to help us address the issues of prejudice that divide us. The conversation continues online with an article by Tom DeBrun titled "I Was a Refugee." ■

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Correction: In Richard Rice's article "When Philosophy Killed God: Analytic Philosophy and the Death of God—What the Sixties Have to Tell Us" in Vol. 43, No. 4, on page 28, the paragraph about Paul M. van Buren should read:

According to van Buren, secularity is simply a given for people today. It is not something we may or may not choose to embrace; it is part of what we are. So, the choice facing modern Christians is not whether or not to be secular. It is whether or not they can find a meaningful understanding of their faith within this perspective. Their choice is either a secular Gospel or no Gospel at all.

Our interpretation of the Gospel must be "secular" because modern thought is grounded in the "empirical attitudes" (20, 84) that characterize believers and unbelievers alike (79).