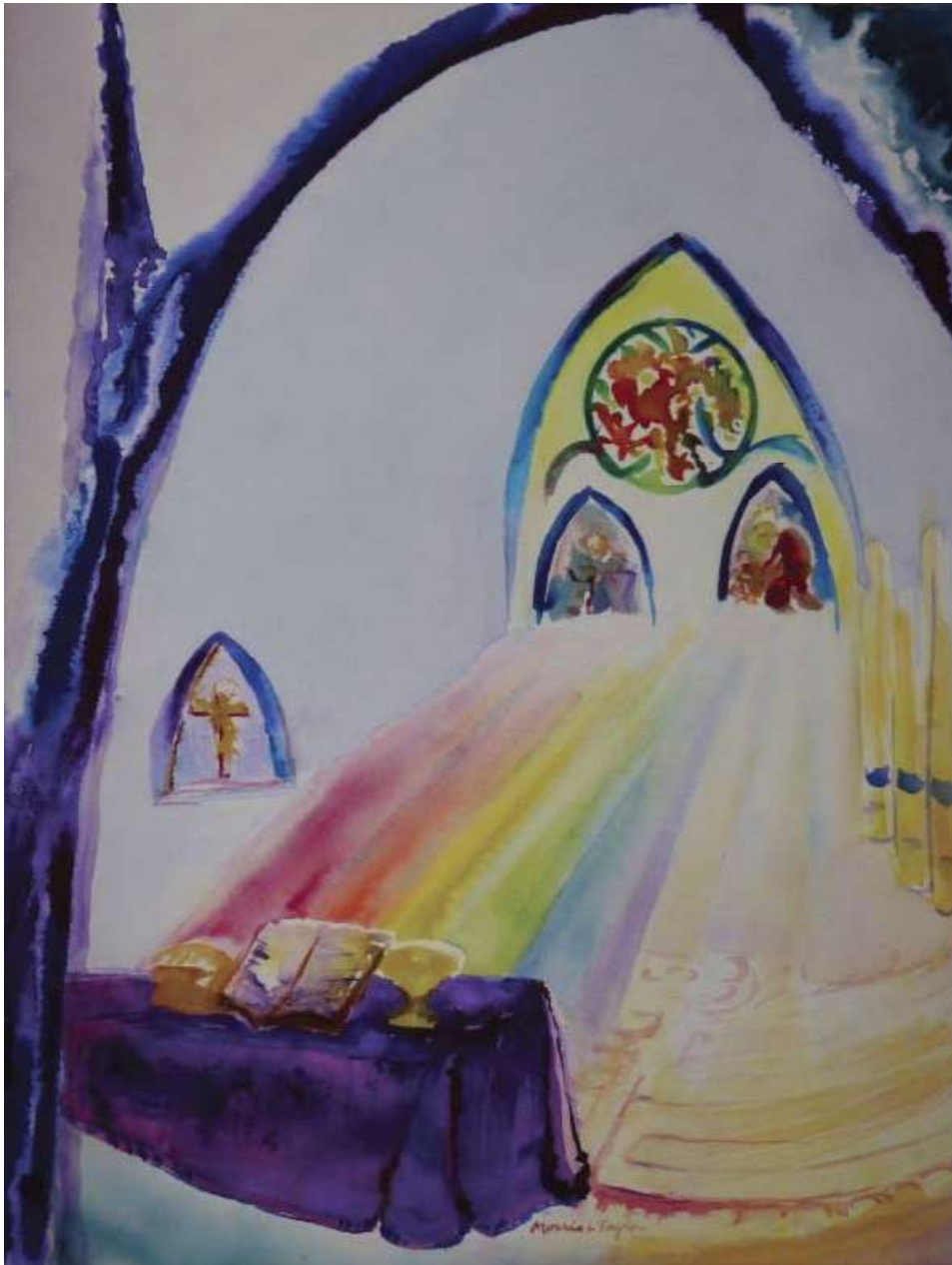


 community through conversation

SPECTRUM



Rising Above a Culture of Lies

How to Tell the Bible and its Fundamental Beliefs as One Powerful Story

Adventist Hall of Fame

Luther and Romans: Five Hundred Years Later

Ties that Bind: A Research Report on the Experience of Adventist Youth Coming Out

Protest and Progress: Untold Stories in Adventist History

community through conversation

SPECTRUM

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ABOUT THE COVER ART AND ARTIST

For four decades, Dr. Morris Taylor (1931–2016) was on the faculty of SDA universities. He retired as Professor Emeritus of Music, of Andrews University. In the capacity of his missionary credential, he taught Bible classes for youth and adults, and raised up a Seventh-day Adventist church in Appalachia. In his sixties Morris acted upon his inherent homosexuality; he came out and quickly became a community leader and advocate. He fought for inclusion and mutual respect, key ideas in the featured painting.

The cover illustration titled *A House of Prayer for All People* appears in *Nine Lives of Morris: Great Tales from One Cool Cat!*, the last book produced by Dr. Taylor before his death in 2016. The painting illustrates the chapter *Church Outing No Picnic*, in which he describes his experience at the San Diego Adventist Forum, when he told his personal story of coming out in a public space.

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Rising Above a Culture of Lies | BY BONNIE DWYER

In 2009, Marilyn Chandler McEntyre put on paper her stewardship strategies for those life-sustaining resources known as words, because “language can be depleted, polluted, contaminated, eroded, and filled with artificial stimulants,” she said. “Like any other resource, it needs the protection of those who recognize its value and commit themselves to good stewardship.” Her book, *Caring for Words in A Culture of Lies*, caught our attention and we used it for a series of discussion pieces on the *Spectrum* blog in 2014. Week-by-week we worked our way through her twelve strategies that spelled out things we each could do to take good care of words: practices such as telling the truth, reading well, staying in conversation, sharing stories, loving the long sentence, and praying.

I picked up the book again recently. “Strategy #3—Don’t Tolerate Lies” jumped out at me from the table of contents. What is true, she says, “is not a rhetorical question to ask while we wash our hands like Pontius Pilate. This is a homework question.

Any effort to find reliable reporting needs to start not with questions about the sources but with questions about ourselves. What are my responsibilities as a citizen? As a person of faith? As a consumer? As a leader? As a parent? As an educator? What am I avoiding knowing? Why? What point of view am I protecting? Why? How have I arrived at my assumptions about what sources of information to rely on? What limits my angle of vision? Have I tried to imagine how one might arrive at a different conclusion? How much evidence do I need to be convinced? What kind of persuasion works most effectively for me? How do I accredit or challenge authority?

After her list of questions for ourselves, she had another list, this time for news sources: questions about sponsors, who is framing the question, detectable partisan biases in the language, authorities, credentials, and allegiances. She admitted that these questions take time to address, perhaps more time than any one person has, so she recommends helping each other.

And here is where her thoughtful recommendations run

up against the current bifurcated climate in which we find ourselves. How can we help each other if we can’t talk to one another? This, also, is a homework question.

In this issue of the journal, we address several significant conversations within our community. Researchers at Andrews University detail how Seventh-day Adventists families talk with their LGBTQ+ children, and the effect of their words. The ongoing conversation within the denomination about how to relate to these brothers and sisters makes some uncomfortable, so it often takes place behind closed doors. The title for the art on our cover reminds us of Christ’s desire that His house be “A House of Prayer for All People.” Making that statement true is a homework assignment for all of us.

Prayer is actually one of the strategies that McEntyre proposes in her book. Prayer reminds us who God is, and who we are.

The language of prayer, then, works on multiple levels. It reminds, reframes, and re-awakens; it humbles us and also empowers us to claim and act on God’s promises; it brings our intentions into sharp focus; it engenders intimacy with God and also brings us into alignment, harmony, and unity with the other members of the Body of Christ and with the communion of saints and angels.

Prayer is also one of the strategies that is built into the ongoing conversation between the General Conference and the North American Division unions regarding the ordination of women. We have included the statement that the union presidents drafted for their February meeting with the General Conference president. We await the April Spring Meeting, to see how the prayers for unity may be answered.

In each section of the journal, there is an implied homework assignment in how we talk to and treat each other, a call to excellence, a call to rise above the current culture of lies. ■

Bonnie Dwyer is editor of *Spectrum* magazine.



The Maestro: A Singular Life | BY CHARLES SCRIVEN



HTTP://WWW.CESKAFILHARMONIE.CZ/EN/CONCERT/DETAIL/832-CZECH-PHILHARMONIC-HERBERT-BLOMSTEDT

So, the Swedish maestro Herbert Blomstedt is turning ninety in July, and conducting ninety concerts a year with the world's great orchestras, and the *New York Times* is asking: "Was it difficult for you, as a Seventh-day Adventist, to tell orchestras you would not rehearse on Saturday, the Sabbath?" The question is friendly; the interview audience is one the rest of us could never reach. I'm suddenly thanking God (again) that someone like Blomstedt is one of us.

Unlike ministers and teachers and healthcare executives in church institutions, this man has never thought he'd have to remain Adventist as a condition of employment. He is Adventist because he wants to be. In the 1970s, the Berlin Philharmonic told him that if he could not adjust to Saturday rehearsals, the orchestra would have "no interest" in his services. He did not budge, and looks back on what happened as "an important experience." What is more, he told the *Times* reporter, that issue, now, is "never a problem—I play every year with the Berlin Philharmonic."

Once, I heard Blomstedt conduct in a great hall. Having finished a conference at Friedensau Adventist University, we participants made our way by bus

to Leipzig, Germany, where we heard the Gewandhaus Orchestra play with him at the podium. Earlier he had been the orchestra's music director (as had, among others, Felix Mendelssohn), and he had held similar posts with orchestras in Copenhagen, Oslo, Stockholm, Dresden, and San Francisco. On the way to Leipzig, my Swedish bus seatmate remarked that Blomstedt was eighty-seven and "fully booked" a couple of years or more into the future.

Amazing.

All the while, he has been worshipping with his fellow Adventists, preaching Sabbath sermons, considering his music through the lens of faith, and his faith through the lens of music. Nor has he veered from study of his beloved Scripture, and also of literature and art.

The *Times* interview, which appeared in February, made me recall a theory my graduate school teacher put out in a pioneering book entitled *Biography as Theology*. I stumbled over his title at first, and then it began to seem as lucid as it was provocative.

In any community, and certainly any religious community, certain people—certain "lives"—stand out. Their characters develop under the influence of individuals who precede them, and of the im-

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ages and narratives that their communities emphasize. These influences, my teacher argued, make a difference for everyone, but within each community special, or “singular,” lives emerge that *generate* insight and inspiration. Just think of J. N. Andrews or Desmond Doss from the Adventist past, or from a wider circle think of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King, Jr., Mother Teresa, and Desmond Tutu.

It has become commonplace to suppose that ethics is about deciding what to do in the face of moral quandaries. It is said that you start with moral principles, and from these think your way to a morally proper course of action. But what we notice about singular lives is the rock-bottom importance of character. The people who stand out don’t spend their daily hours consumed by moral analysis. Most often, they act from habits and attitudes built up over a lifetime—and their actions move us. In admirable, and often surprising, ways, they embody the community’s way of life, and they also call it into question.

Consider Martin Luther King. For people who thought Christian life could be summed up as a “personal relationship with Christ,” King provoked re-evaluation. Perhaps Christian life has a social component; perhaps struggling for what Amos called “justice in the gate”—political and judicial justice—matters as much as securing forgiveness or finding hope. Singular lives not only inspire us, they function as embodied theology. Such lives raise questions about convention and suggest pathways to deeper faithfulness. Jesus, of course, was the singular life that mattered most, but singular lives today, though always flawed, keep his story alive and help dislodge us from our self-deceptions.

For us, surely, Herbert Blomstedt’s is such a singular life. Besides his achievements in music and devotion to Christ, there are his accounts of himself and his conviction shared in interviews and sermons. These, too, present pathways to deeper faithfulness.

Wary of self-regard, he himself would blanch at this. I have looked at two interviews he gave, and at several of his sermons and talks, including ones my friend Yvonne Oster (the bus seatmate I mentioned) has just sent me. Blomstedt dwells often on the importance of humility. When the *New York Times* reporter asked him the “secret” of pulling off such a conducting schedule at his age, he said the reason is *not* that he keeps the Sabbath or is a vegetarian. His health is simply a “gift,” something his own life cannot explain. Churchill “drank lots of whiskey and smoked enormous big cigars,” he noted, “and he lived to be 90 or so.”

In the interviews and sermons, Blomstedt comes across as

someone who is at once grateful for his Adventism and secure enough about it to offer constructive criticism. He loved the ministers (including the “fundamentalist” father) he knew in his youth. He loved the music he heard in church, and loved discussions of the Sabbath School lesson. But he is by no means chained to convention.

“The Bible is so incredibly rich—there’s nothing like it in literature,” he says. “I never tire of it.” But he bristles at the sort of literalism that overlooks the Bible’s “poetical language,” found not just in the Psalms and the prophets but also, for example, in the Genesis creation stories and in the book of Revelation. Such literalism misses “the deep mystery” of it all.

For him “present truth” (that time-honored phrase) entails “past truth.” Such an idea, he remarks, may be “annoying,” but it’s “nothing to be ashamed of.” Due “modesty” about whatever happens to be in favor smooths the way to second thoughts, a good thing. So he worries, for example, about the “banality” and “sentimentality” of much of today’s worship music. He says that at some points—not least her misunderstanding of art—Ellen White falls short. He wishes the church would place a higher value on “creativity,” and declares that “conformity” gets in the way. A community has to “protect its identity in order to survive,” he adds, but “if it is overprotective it becomes a jail.”

In short, Blomstedt is an Adventist who lives with questions and uncertainty as well as deep conviction. Truth, he said in remarks from his Charles Weniger Society lecture (that appeared later in the *Adventist Review*), “should never be treated like a possession.” So he reads widely, even in theology. Kierkegaard, Bonhoeffer and Barth matter to him. Heschel gave him a more fulfilling take on the Sabbath experience. If “the eternal one remains out of reach,” we should still try to grasp as much as we can.

We who cannot abide Adventist drift into authoritarian fundamentalism—who fear the way it numbs the mind and threatens mission—may think of Herbert Blomstedt as a gift. He stands out for excellence, passion and humility, for thankful devotion to our community, for eagerness to improve understanding and enhance faithfulness.

So, it’s not too much to think his life is singular. It’s not, certainly, to deny the fragility and imperfection of every human walk with God. The point is only this: to be grateful and attentive when, with our high calling always compromised by self-deception, we stand before a shining light. ■

Charles Scriven chairs Adventist Forum.



From Unity to Poetry

NAD Union Conference Presidents Declare the Basis for Their Unity

BY BONNIE DWYER

When the NAD union conference presidents were summoned to a meeting at the General Conference on January 19 to discuss the governance issue surrounding women's ordination, they spoke in a united voice of their support of women's ordination, while acknowledging "a significant minority of members who oppose ordaining women."

The statement of unity they took to the meeting, begins with the ways in which they stand united with the world church, such as being fully committed to the Twenty-Eight Fundamental Beliefs. Their convictions on the governance issues of the church follow and the first item on that list is that, "We believe the Holy Spirit calls both men and women into ministry and we see no clear biblical mandate against ordaining women." They also acknowledge no consensus within the church on the issue. But they end by saying that the GC is dangerously overreaching its authority and potentially endangering the current and future unity and mission of the church.

In addition to the union conference presidents, those at the meeting included the North American Division officers and vice presidents, General Conference President Ted Wilson, Secretary G.T. Ng, Treasurer Juan Prestol-Puesan, and assistants to the GC President, Mark Finley and Mike Ryan. It was described as an informal meeting, a time to listen to each other and pray together. Future meetings are outlined in the process voted at Annual Council in 2016.

The full text of their unity statement follows:

Dear General Conference Leadership,
As union presidents, we have spent much time in individual and collective prayer over the future of our church driven by implications of governance revolving around women's ordination. We bring the following assurances of our strong personal and collective unity with the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

We are united with the world church in the following:

- a. We are fully committed to all of our 28 Fundamental Beliefs.
- b. Bringing our Remnant Message to a dying world is our top priority.
- c. The partnership of the North American Division with all our sister world divisions is important for both the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and for our own spiritual health.
- d. We affirm the recent TOSC "Consensus Statement on a Seventh-day Adventist Theology of Ordination".
- e. We affirm the necessity in finding the best spiritual/missional resolutions to the challenges of unity we face in order to remove challenges to our mission.

We as union presidents are unified in our convictions regarding the following governance issues of the church regarding the role of women in leadership and ministry.

1. We believe the Holy Spirit calls both men and women into ministry and we see no clear biblical mandate against ordaining women:
 - a. A vast majority of quality conservative Adventist theologians favor ordaining women.
 - b. After a lengthy study, two thirds of the General Conference TOSC concluded a way forward

- to ordaining women.
2. We see no consensus within the church regarding women's ordination:
 - a. After 40 years of study and deliberation, we have not found agreement on this issue.
 - b. The 2015 GC floor vote over division options to ordain, while a small majority, revealed a very divided World Church on this issue.
 - c. Prior to the 2015 GC Session, nine of the 13 divisions' TOSC outcomes stated at least some openness to the option of ordaining women.
 3. North American Division support for women's ordination:
 - a. Quantified votes in some unions and conferences and our personal general observations of the membership within our unions reveal a grass roots support for women's ordination. This ranges from strong support in some unions, modest majorities in others and opposition in a few conferences.
 - b. An inclusive NAD survey taken in 2014 of conference, union and division leadership revealed a 90%-plus approval of women's ordination.
 - c. The North American Division TOSC report was presented at the 2014 Year-end Meeting and was approved with a vote of 178 yes, 6 no, 8 abstaining.
 - d. While we acknowledge a significant minority of members who oppose ordaining women, we reject the validity of surveys taken by independent ministries that claim a majority opposition exists in North America.
 4. Within the context of our Adventist Religious Liberty DNA we acknowledge the conscientious convictions of both sides of this issue and the need to find a way forward:
 - a. We reject the notion that women's ordination is a simple liberal vs. conservative issue. Many deeply conservative and loyal Adventists are convicted that women should have full parity with men in ministry.
 5. Since the rejection of the E-60 request, we have been very distracted from mission and need to move forward.
 6. We believe the GC is dangerously overreaching its authority and potentially endangering the current and future unity and mission of the church (see SOP below):
 - a. Authorized documents and processes leading up to and during the 2016 Annual Council revealed an

- intent or openness to dealing with some unions with an extreme, punitive approach.
- b. Responding to violations of policy or voted actions with similar consequences to a doctrinal violation creates a dangerous precedent that is inconsistent with Adventist/Protestant beliefs and practices and undermines the sanctity of our 28 Fundamental Beliefs, which are the foundation of our missional unity.
- c. Non-doctrinal issues on which we have no consensus are not a basis for splitting the church.
- d. We further believe pursuing severe punitive actions against unions will stimulate additional movement toward embracing the ordination of women (there is significant pressure in additional unions to move forward).
- e. The North American Division is the entity that should work with any NAD unions considered out of compliance according to existing policy.

Principles from Ellen White

"We cannot then take a position that the unity of the church consists in viewing every text of Scripture in the very same light. The church may pass resolution upon resolution to put down all disagreement of opinions, but we cannot force the mind and will, and thus root out disagreement. These resolutions may conceal the discord, but they cannot quench it and establish perfect agreement. Nothing can perfect unity in the church but the spirit of Christlike forbearance. Satan can sow discord; Christ alone can harmonize the disagreeing elements. Then let every soul sit down in Christ's school and learn of Christ, who declares Himself to be meek and lowly of heart. Christ says that if we learn of Him, worries will cease and we shall find rest to our souls"

(Ellen G. White, Manuscript Release, 11, 266).

"The unity of belief in the church is not forced by the church coming together and the majority defining the creed to be believed. The church cannot define doctrine, nor make laws for itself or anybody else. The church of Christ is made up of all who obey the Lord's commands, not a body to issue commands. The Head directs, the body obeys. God speaks; each one must listen to His voice, for faith comes by hearing the Word of God, and no one can give faith to another. 'It is the gift of God'"

(PTUK, July 29, 1897). ■

Ray McAllister — Biblical Scholar, Poet, Coder, Massage Therapist, Doula — and Blind

BY ALITA BYRD

What inspired you to write the poem “The Modern Faithful Adventist”? Had you been listening to Gilbert & Sullivan's work a lot? Listening to some particularly “thought-provoking” sermons?

I wanted to address the issues of how many Adventists major in minors, being really good with doctrinal and dietary issues but not necessarily up on matters like loving one another.

Many science fiction programs like *Star Trek* and *Babylon 5* seem to involve the “Modern Major-General’s Song”, and I got familiar with it through those. It just seemed like a match made in heaven for satire.

Have you written other poetry? Do you have a special interest in poetry?

I write lots of poetry. I published a book of poetry, *Journey of Passion*, in 1998, from Mellen Poetry Press. Mellen says its books never go out of print, so someone could contact the company and order one if it isn’t found anywhere else.

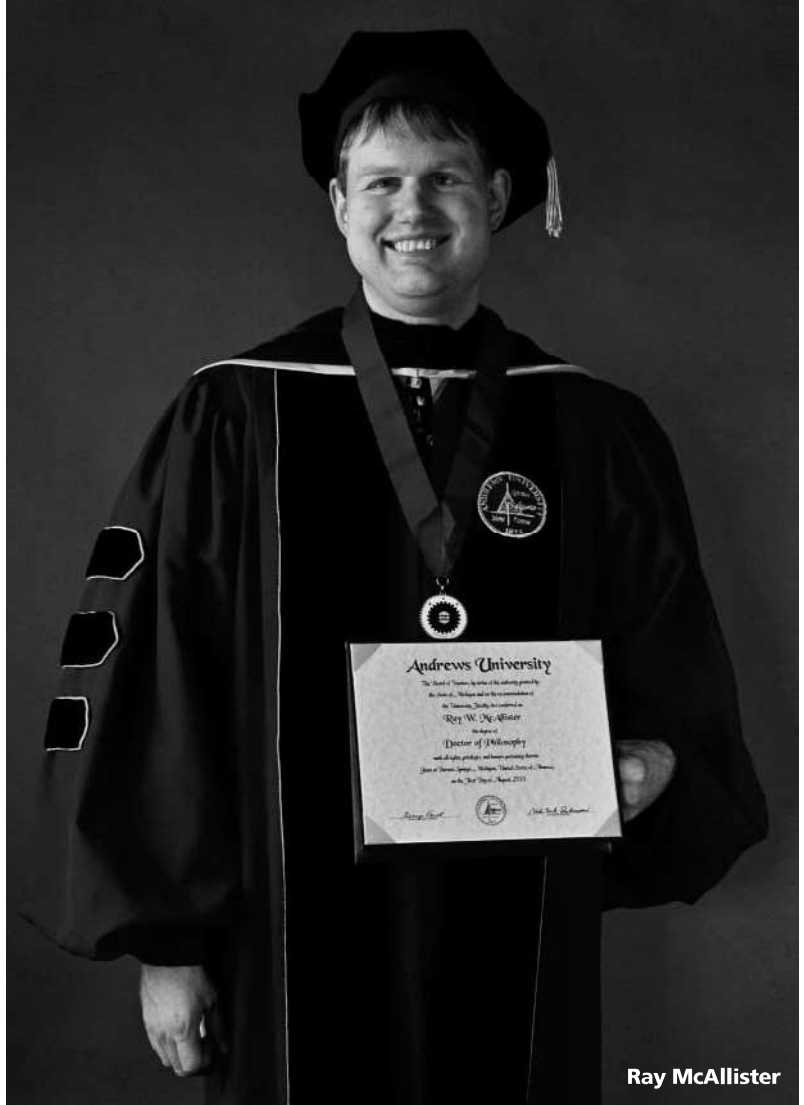
You are the first blind person to get a PhD in Hebrew Scriptures, which you earned at Andrews University in 2010. Can you explain why this was a particularly difficult subject for a blind person to study?

שלום That’s Shalom, in Hebrew. But, I had to handle that in Braille and use texts that weren’t converted into Braille.

The languages we were studying had more technical characters and markings than the standard Braille Greek and Hebrew original language texts provided.

I ended up resorting to using computer-code-style files that used letters, numbers, and punctuations to represent Greek and Hebrew symbols. I had a computer that would convert these symbols into Braille letters and show them on a Braille display: a device using something like magnetic pins that pop up in the shape of Braille.

I was grateful to have these resources, but I knew that other blind people would need



something that would appear more like Braille Greek and Hebrew, just with the extra symbols.

And now you feel a mission to help other blind people study ancient languages, is that right? You and your organization, The Semitic Scholars, were awarded a prestigious prize from the National Federation of the Blind last summer for your work in making Biblical language materials accessible to the blind. I understand you coded Braille in ancient biblical languages so blind people could study the original texts. How did you do that?

More and more blind people have dreams that involve studying the Bible in the original languages. For some, this study is a means to the end of being successful professional spiritual leaders. For others, there is a deep passion for more fully understanding the meaning and beauty of the Biblical texts. Whatever the reason, such a journey presents some difficult obstacles. Developing ways to overcome these obstacles has

Being part of those births was the most amazing experience.

The mothers

all reported that

I helped them

significantly

and that my

blindness

was not

a hindrance.

been the work of the Semitic Scholars group: three blind or visually impaired individuals.

I developed coding for the symbols not already set up in Braille. Hebrew has these accents which help one know when to pause when reading and which also can be used to know how to chant, or sing, the text. Most of these symbols were not already coded in Braille Hebrew. Since chanting is a task a blind person can enjoy, I felt the need to prepare Hebrew Bibles in Braille for the blind with all these symbols. Once I developed these symbols, I needed to have them peer reviewed.

That was where Sarah Blake LaRose, one of the other two Semitic Scholars, came in. Mrs. LaRose is a professional Braille transcriber and professor of Hebrew. In 2007, she developed a Braille table for JAWS screen reader for Biblical Greek, with all its technical markings, and Hebrew. JAWS, then, would enable a computer to show Biblical Hebrew in Braille for blind users.

With her guidance, I completed a system I could use to prepare texts that the blind could use. One notable text is the Aleppo Hebrew Bible, available in the public domain. Using “search and replace” in MS Word, and a lot of other technical tricks, I converted that entire Hebrew Bible, accents and all, into Braille, and, yes, I have chanted Hebrew from it fluidly.

I also converted many other Hebrew documents, Semitic inscriptions, and many Greek documents into Braille using “search and replace.” Then, in 2014, I wrote a Hebrew course for the blind.

I began collaborating with Duxbury Systems, a company that produces software to convert documents of various languages into Braille, where I began working closely with Matthew Yeater. Mr. Yeater is the current president of the National Federation of the Blind of Michiana and is the third member of our Semitic Scholars group. He had been working with Duxbury to set up a system for converting Biblical language documents containing many languages, with English included, into Braille. This would allow grammars, articles, and

dictionaries to be easily Brailled. Mr. Yeater and I set up the code for Syriac in Braille, and I coded Coptic. (Syriac is similar to Hebrew but uses a different alphabet. Coptic is a late form of Egyptian but has letters based on Greek.)

It is now possible to use Duxbury to convert many ancient texts to Braille without having to use “search and replace.”

Recently, I have begun converting public domain Greek works of Plato and Aristotle into Braille. It’s definitely a lot easier relying on Duxbury to do most of the translation into Braille.

My dreams for the future of this project are simple: I wish to have more texts in these and more related ancient languages in Braille formats for the blind.

It is my prayer that this award will give me the recognition I need to negotiate with scholars around the world so I can access the text materials I need.

The prize came with \$20,000. How will you use this money to further your goals?

I used my portion to fund the down payment for a house in which I have more space and a central point to work from in anything I do.

How did you become interested in studying Hebrew scriptures?

I just wanted to. I find Hebrew and Jewish roots fascinating.

You teach religion classes for Andrews via distance education on an adjunct basis. Would you say it is easier for a blind person to teach online?

Easier than doing other things, easier than teaching face-to-face, or easier than a sighted person teaching? With my screen reader, I’m able to manage just about anything a sighted person can do, and there’s no commute time or transportation issues.

You are also a licensed massage therapist. Do you currently work as a massage therapist? What led you to this work? It seems very different from working as a biblical scholar!

My main historical mentor is Leonardo da Vinci, who did just about everything well. My mind, to be satisfied, must do many things. I've always enjoyed massage as a hobby, and when I wasn't succeeding as planned in academia, I decided to make massage a profession. Now I don't want to give it up.

And even more unusually, you are also a certified doula, helping women in childbirth! A male doula is very unusual, and maybe a blind doula even more unusual. What inspired you to become a doula? When did you become certified? Do you actively work as a doula? How many women have you assisted in childbirth? Do you have children yourself?

I was turning forty, and my wife and I had no kids. Yet for years I had dreamed of experiencing the miracle of birth.

Since I'm totally blind, sitting in the back of a delivery room wouldn't be helpful. So, in 2014, a year after I became a licensed massage therapist, I began training to become a certified massage doula. (I have never heard of any other blind male certified doulas.)

I had to complete theoretical and practical training to first become a certified prenatal massage therapist. Next, I read all the materials (with my screen reader) for becoming a massage doula. Learning the theory was easy, and I passed the academic test for the doula course.

But then I had to find three pregnant women who would accept a blind man as their doula. That turned out to be a challenge even though I was offering free prenatal and postpartum massage care. Finally, I reached out to a homeless shelter where I had done infant massage previously. A pregnant woman there decided she wanted me as her doula, and she referred me to another pregnant friend of hers, who in turn recommended me to another friend.

I helped those three mothers as they went into labor and supported them through pushing. Being part of those births was the most amazing experience. The mothers all reported that I helped them significantly and that my blindness was not a hindrance.

Later, I was able to serve as a doula for three more women.

How did you lose your sight?

Peter's Anomaly is the condition. In 1987, when I was twelve years old, the degenerative birth defect climaxed, and I lost the limited vision I had in my one somewhat good eye.

Where are you from originally?

California.

Would you describe Michigan, where you now live, as the heartland of the "modern, faithful Adventist"?

They're everywhere.

Where do you picture yourself in five years? What would be your ultimate job?

Well, that's the beauty in all of this. I threw away the "script" a few years ago, turned off "autopilot," and now my mission is at my discretion. I haven't a clue where I'll be. I'm just trying to follow God's lead. I like the adventure better this way. ■

Alita Byrd is a member of the *Spectrum* web team, and is a freelance writer from Dublin, Ireland.



Modern Faithful Adventist

BY RAY MCALLISTER

Based on the "Modern Major-General's Song" from Gilbert and Sullivan's The Pirates of Penzance.

Adventist:

I am the very model of a modern, faithful Adventist.

All 28 beliefs with 20 prooftexts I will gladly list.

I know the GC presidents and quote their works historical
From Byington to Wilson, all in order categorical.

I'm very well acquainted, too, with matters theological

I understand all arguments both founded and illogical.

I can discuss Christ's nature and the pre and post-lapsarian
Post-lapsarian?

Ah, yes.

And I can shoot down heresies both docetist and Arian.

All:

And he can shoot down heresies both docetist and Arian.

And he can shoot down heresies both docetist and Arian.

And he can shoot down heresies both docetist and Ari-arian.

Adventist:

I know the books by Ellen White and their abbrevia-tions

And quote them very effortlessly in all situa-tions.
In short the 28 beliefs and prooftexts I will gladly list.
I am the very model of a modern, faithful Adventist.

All:

In short the 28 beliefs and prooftexts he will gladly list.
He is the very model of a modern, faithful Adventist.

Adventist:

I cook with TvP and tofu, never any meat or cheese.
I'll die before I use unnatural remedies to treat disease.
I've never tasted alcohol or tried to smoke a cigarette.
I don't wear jewelry, and I tithe the half of everything I get.
Then, all day Sabbath I'm at church and gladly sit on every
board.
I help out with the Pathfinders, and never do I crave reward.
I know all 700 hymns and never miss a syllable.
Syllable? Ah, yes.
I make all strive to reach my goals however unfulfillable.

All:

He makes all strive to reach his goals however unfulfillable.
He makes all strive to reach his goals however unfulfillable.
He makes all strive to reach his goals however unfulfill-
ifillable.

Adventist:

I make sure everybody knows their place in bible prophecy
And, then, I know they'll face God's wrath if they resist
or scoff, you see.
In short the 28 beliefs and prooftexts I will gladly list.
I am the very model of a modern, faithful Adventist.

All:

In short the 28 beliefs and prooftexts he will gladly list.
He is the very model of a modern, faithful Adventist.

Adventist:

I kick out all the apostates so they can't infiltrate the church
And on all dark conspiracies I rightly concentrate research.
Each day I check the news to see if Sunday laws are being
passed
And if they are it's fine because the End we will be seeing
fast.
So Jesus will come sooner, all perfection in my life I seek.

I think that I am sinning now, at most, just once or twice a
week.
I'm careful to do everything as done 200 years ago.
Years ago...
Years ago, weers ago; schmeers ago?
Ah, yes.
I'll criticize all who won't follow my example here below.

All:

You'll criticize all who won't follow your example here
below.
You'll criticize all who won't follow your example here
below.
You'll criticize all who won't follow your example here be
here-below.

Adventist:

I feel there's something missing still; I don't know its identity
And so I'll just go on as usual in this blessed insanity.
And still, the 28 beliefs and prooftexts I will gladly list.
I am the very model of a modern, faithful Adventist.

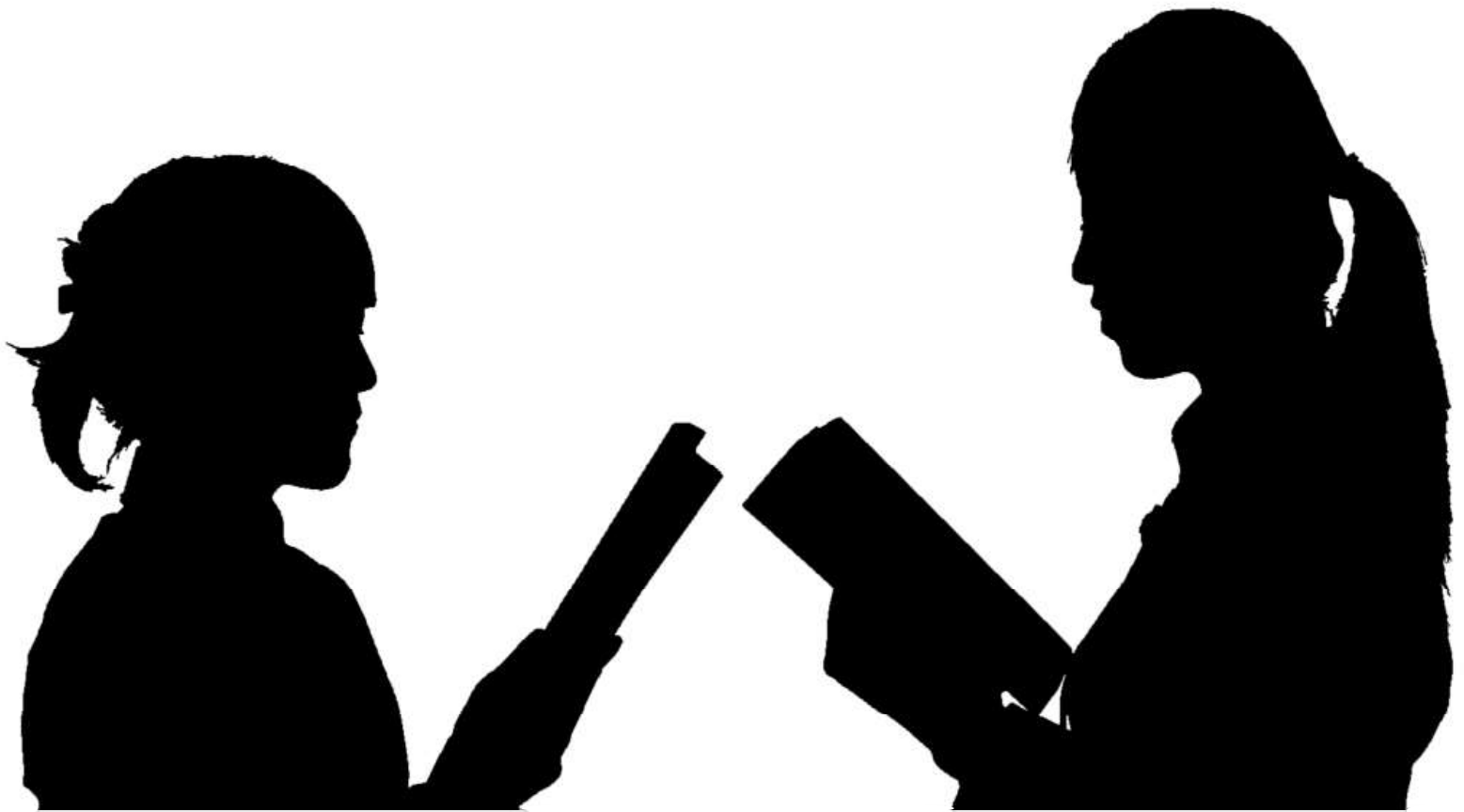
All:

And still, the 28 beliefs and prooftexts he will gladly list.
He is the very model of a modern, faithful Adventist. ■

Dr. Ray McAllister is passionate about his relationship with God. He



enjoys spending time in prayer and Bible study, writing po-
etry, and serving others. In August, 2010, he received a
PhD in Hebrew Scriptures. Dr. McAllister is totally blind, so
he's the first blind PhD from Andrews University's seminary,
and the first totally blind person in the world to get a PhD in Hebrew
Scriptures. He teaches distance-education religion classes for Andrews
University and works as a licensed massage therapist in Michigan. In De-
cember, 2014, he became the first totally blind, male, certified birth
doula, trained to assist a woman during childbirth. In July, 2016, Dr. McAl-
lister, and two other visually-impaired Biblical scholars, received from the
National Federation of the Blind the top-prize Jacob Bolotin Award for
their work making Biblical language materials accessible to the blind. Dr.
McAllister sees his blindness as an opportunity to more deeply see the
beauty of God's love and guide others to do the same.



THE BIBLE STORY

How to Tell the Bible and its Fundamental Beliefs as One Powerful Story | BY JAN BARNA

The confessional statement of Adventism is organized as twenty-eight stand-alone definitions.

I dream of a day when the Seventh-day Adventist church will have a narrative confession of faith which will be understandable to all inside and outside the church. I should hasten to add that such a narrative confession of faith will grow out of the Bible's own story and will place the church inside that story. This is, for me, the ideal that the church should be pushing for unceasingly. Here, I will try to sketch what it could look like.

How far or close the current form of our Fundamental Beliefs is away from the ideal, could be a good starting question. How well do the twenty-eight articles, which represent the current confessional stance of the church, tell the story of God (what I call the Bible story)? How close do the two narratives—the biblical and our confessional—stand to each other? We may well think that the Fundamental Beliefs are biblical—derived from the Bible and representing Bible truths. But are they also close in the overall shape, structure, and content to the Bible's meta-narrative?

To get to the bottom of some of these key questions, I obviously need to explain more about the function and nature of the Bible and, if indeed it is possible, to piece together a comprehensive overall narrative from its many and varied books and, if it is possible, to detect a narrative within our Fundamental Beliefs. So here's what I will try to accomplish in this paper:

First, I will address the nature of the Fundamental Beliefs and analyse the narrative they try to tell and whether their structure and content help or hinder an effective utili-

sation of our confession, be it by the church or the world.

Second, I will look at the nature of Scripture and will argue that the Bible at its core tells a simple yet powerful narrative. However, it has not been natural at all for us to allow the Bible to tell its own story *on its own terms* because—ironically—many classical Christian and Protestant confessions have utilized philosophical and propositional language (often apologetic in nature) which is foreign to the Bible's own conceptual world, thus leaving the impression that the Bible is a collection of propositional statements. We do not find it strange to have philosophically and carefully worded definitions of doctrines. And, consequently, we do not find it natural to look at the Bible as essentially a book telling us a story.

And so, finally, I will propose a narrative reconstruction of the Adventist confession which strives to be faithful both to the Fundamental Beliefs' outlook and to the Bible's own narrative structure and narrative content. This paper will argue that the church of God's dreams is a church that is capable of locating its own confession within the Bible's core story.

Twenty-Eight Fundamental Beliefs and Their Narrative

What kind of message do the Church's Twenty-Eight Fundamental Beliefs tell? If we analysed the direction and the content of what they actually portray, what kind of shape and content would that narrative take?

The confessional statement of Adventism is organized as twenty-eight, stand-alone defini-

tions. That is twenty-eight articles of faith, if we wanted to use classical dogmatic terminology. Each of these statements is carefully defined and each stands alone as a statement or article. Each of the articles references Bible verses to indicate that the definition is derived from the Bible. Such is the obvious shape of the articles.

The Structure and the Direction

What, however, is not so obvious is the direction the articles then travel. Where do they start, what is in the middle, and where do they end?

What essential plot do they present?

Let's start first with the structure and the direction of the statements. Interestingly, at the very beginning, there are two preliminary statements, even though they have different weight and form. We may call the "Preamble" and Article 1, "The Holy Scriptures," the Church's *methodological* confession.

They both express the church's epistemological and methodological commitment to the primacy of Scriptures over and above confessional articles, and that trust lies in the Bible's divine origins. Following these are the specific articles defining the *theological* confession.

For easier recognition of their structure, I have organized the articles under the following major theological themes (Table 1, *right*).

So, what is clear from this brief analysis is that the twenty-nine articles (including the preamble) can be organized under eight theological themes and one core methodological point. But, when we look closer, even among the eight theological themes there is some overlap. The motif regarding "salvation applied" appears twice. First, as statements 10 and 11, and then in a second group of articles from

19 to 23. Theologically they address the same theme, but they are separated by seven ecclesiological articles, 12–18. Thus, overall, we can really identify seven major theological emphases that the Twenty-Eight Fundamental Beliefs contain: (1) Doctrine of God, (2) Doctrine of Creation, (3) Doctrine of Sin,¹ (4) Doctrine of Salvation Achieved/Work of Christ,

Table 1

"Preamble"	The Epistemic and Methodological Confession (2)
(1) The Holy Scriptures	
(2) The Trinity	Doctrine of God (4)
(3) The Father	
(4) The Son	
(5) The Holy Spirit	
(6) Creation	Doctrine of Creation (1)
(7) The Nature of Humanity	Doctrine of Sin (2)
(8) The Great Controversy	
(9) The Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ	Salvation Achieved (1)
(10) The Experience of Salvation	Salvation Applied/Sanctification (2)
(11) Growing in Christ	
(12) The Church	Ecclesiology (7)
(13) The Remnant and Its Mission	
(14) Unity in the Body of Christ	
(15) Baptism	
(16) The Lord's Supper	
(17) Spiritual Gifts and Ministries	
(18) The Gift of Prophecy	
(19) The Law of God	Salvation Applied/Sanctification (5)
(20) The Sabbath	
(21) Stewardship	
(22) Christian Behaviour	
(23) Marriage and the Family	Eschatology (5)
(24) Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary	
(25) The Second Coming of Christ	
(26) Death and Resurrection	
(27) The Millennium and the End of Sin	
(28) The New Earth	

**The church
of God's dreams
is a church
that is capable
of locating its
own confession
within the
Bible's core
story.**

(5) Doctrine of Salvation Applied/Sanctification, (6) Doctrine of Church, and (7) Doctrine of Eschatology.

What does this tell us about the direction of the statements? The twenty-seven theological articles (if we leave out Number 1—the methodological one) can be grouped as seven major leading theological motifs.

Apart from the division of the theme of salvation applied (the sanctification motif), and omitting the fact that the doctrine of sin is not stated outright, the articles move in a clear direction.

The Plot

When we zoom out and focus on the level of major motifs, the confession may display a narrative. First, it is introducing the main actor God, His peculiar attributes, and His unique nature as Triune God. Importantly, He is the God of love and service (articles 2–5).

Second, the confession introduces the creation. Creation is the resulting act of God and it was very good (article 6).

Third, the confession begins to outline the problem, the predicament into which humanity fell by removing itself from the relationship of dependence on God, their Creator, resulting in the loss of God's image and the experience of death. The predicament of humanity is also linked with a larger cosmic issue which transcends this earth and relates to the character of God and the nature of His government (articles 7 and 8).

Fourth, the confessional articles then jump quickly from the predicament scene to a depiction of the solution through the mission of the Messiah. Through His life, death, and resurrection the problem has been undone, the lie about God has been broken. Salvation has been achieved for humans by Christ. They can live with assurance of eternal life already now (article 9).

Fifth, while one article of the confession depicts the victory of salvation achieved by

Christ, there are an additional seven articles (10–11 and 19–23) which paint a broad panorama of situations and responses of how salvation is applied and appropriated by us humans. While the topics range from the Law of God, Sabbath, Marriage, Stewardship, Christian Behaviour, or Victory over Evil Forces, their common theme is sanctification and practical, everyday appropriation of salvation into every aspect of our experience through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. This is the major emphasis of the confession.

Sixth, the life of a follower of Christ is also depicted through another major emphasis of the confession—the theme of Ecclesiology. A Christian is a member of God's church, which is recognized in particular by the signs of baptism and the Lord's Supper. The church is a place for service and praise. It is a unique community where all are equal in Christ. The church at some point, in the end-times with widespread apostasy, will also take on an additional form as a remnant community. This will call all to full faithfulness to God and to His commandments and will announce the arrival of the judgement and the nearness of the Second Coming of Jesus. The Remnant's specific mission is connected with the message of Revelation 14 and its particular sign is the presence of the Gift of Prophecy, which the confession links with the ministry of Ellen G. White (articles 12–18).²

Which brings us to the grand finale of the confession.

Seventh, the statements conclude by logically extending the discussion from salvation applied to salvation confirmed, which we more often call eschatology. The grand finale of the confession is indeed the grand finale of God who, through several steps, will undo all evil on all its levels and open up a new future for His people through a new creation (articles 24–28).

In terms of the plot then, the articles do present a story. However, and this also has to be emphasized, one can only begin to discern the Twenty-Eight Fundamental Beliefs' plot

and its direction, after going through the kind of theological zooming out I have done here. The general direction of the Adventist confession of faith, and the underlying narrative within which the individual statements are located, may not actually be discernible immediately, or at all, to people who read it. If readers have never formulated the Bible for themselves as narrative, or never think of the Bible as telling a story, they simply may not discern any story behind the statements. The articles would be then stand-alone definitions without a narrative glue holding them together.

The Local Adoption

Because the Seventh-day Adventist confession contains twenty-eight articles, I have noticed that many of the local Adventist churches have a shorter version of these on their webpages. Many indeed do not choose to go with the full version. Interestingly enough, at times the statements or articles of faith on such webpages are put together in a random order, or in the order that the web editor or church board thinks is important or relevant. However, if our own churches choose to go with shorter versions and organize the articles in various orders, does it not perhaps tell us that there could be a problem with our twenty-eight articles in that their direction and the overall plot is not immediately and obviously discernible? Perhaps it raises the interesting question of whether we are not overdoing the confession by having too many articles which give the impression that they are all on the same level. Would not a similar kind of grouping of the articles under major theological motifs be helpful in bringing out their underlying unified message?

The traditional Christian confessions are very much aware of the direction and the underlying story they want to portray and hence they order their articles very carefully.³ In this regard, is the Adventist confession as effective as it could be?⁴

Would the current form of the confession

therefore benefit from a full blown narrative story accompanying it? As I have demonstrated, the confessional articles attempt to make a coherent impression, but they do it very clumsily, and some readers without a narrative notion may not even discern the attempted message of the statements. So, would it be desirable to have a Biblical narrative upfront, sitting next to the articles? I happen to believe it is.

The Bible and Its Story

As it has been pointed out by ancient scholars and modern philosophers alike, there is something about stories and how they are able to capture reality. Story is not a weak way of depicting what one thinks or believes about the world. It is, in fact, a very powerful means of capturing and transmitting one's own beliefs and, indeed, worldviews.

Tom Wright has pointed out that when Paul thinks Bible he thinks, in fact, story.⁵ It was the habit of the first Christians, and in fact it was the habit of the Jews and the ancient near east generally, to utilize narrative as a major vehicle of meaning and the means of preserving confessions.⁶

It is therefore not surprising that Bible scholars have increasingly recognized that the Bible itself as a whole is "not only irreducibly narrative in form ... but also displays an extraordinary ... overall storyline of astonishing power and consistency... [F]rom Genesis to Revelation, [there] is a massive narrative structure."⁷

If that is the case, what does such Scriptural structure and narrative look like? While we cannot go into any serious detail in this paper, after teaching on this subject for the last fifteen years, this is how I would propose a simplified Scriptural narrative could look, which could be useful in our attempt to formulate an Adventist narrative confession.⁸

The Biblical drama could be organized into seven acts. These acts or stages themselves are discernable by major transitional events which advance the narrative plot.

When we zoom out and focus on the level of major motifs, the confession may display a narrative.

Their common theme is sanctification and practical, everyday appropriation of salvation into every aspect of our experience through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

Act One: The story begins with a beautiful image of *creation* and *paradise* (Gen 1–2) being brought into existence by an omnipotent God. The creation is full of life, variety, and movement, and importantly harmony. There is no hint of evil or deficiency, all was “very good” (Gen 1:31). The Sabbath rest is the expression of this initial harmony.

Act Two: Then the narrative enters a new stage, when the serpent deceived humanity because he lied to Adam and Eve about God and their dependency upon Him (Gen 3). Something goes horribly wrong and the plot develops as the predicament unfolds. As a result of *the Fall*, humanity is exiled, excluded from the possibility of participating in the Creator’s immortality (Gen 3:22–24).

Act Three: But then in the middle of this tragedy, a *promise* is given to Adam and Eve (Gen 3:15) to defeat the serpent and what he brought to the human experience—his lies and death. This promise will be fulfilled through one of their seed or descendants. The first promise is in this stage being progressively developed throughout the Old Testament books with some astonishing details, from the promise to Abraham (Gen 12, 15, 17), through Israel (Ex 19), to David (2 Sam 7). The narrative becomes preloaded with expectation in the third act which, from the time of David, is narrowed down to one of his descendants.

Act Four: And then the expectation is fulfilled. Jesus is immediately presented as the promised descendant of Abraham and David (Matt 1:1). His life, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension are all part of the “great exodus” from the continuing exile in which humanity had been ever since the Fall (Luke 9:31, John 8:33–36). In Jesus, the big *reversal* has arrived and the serpent is defeated.

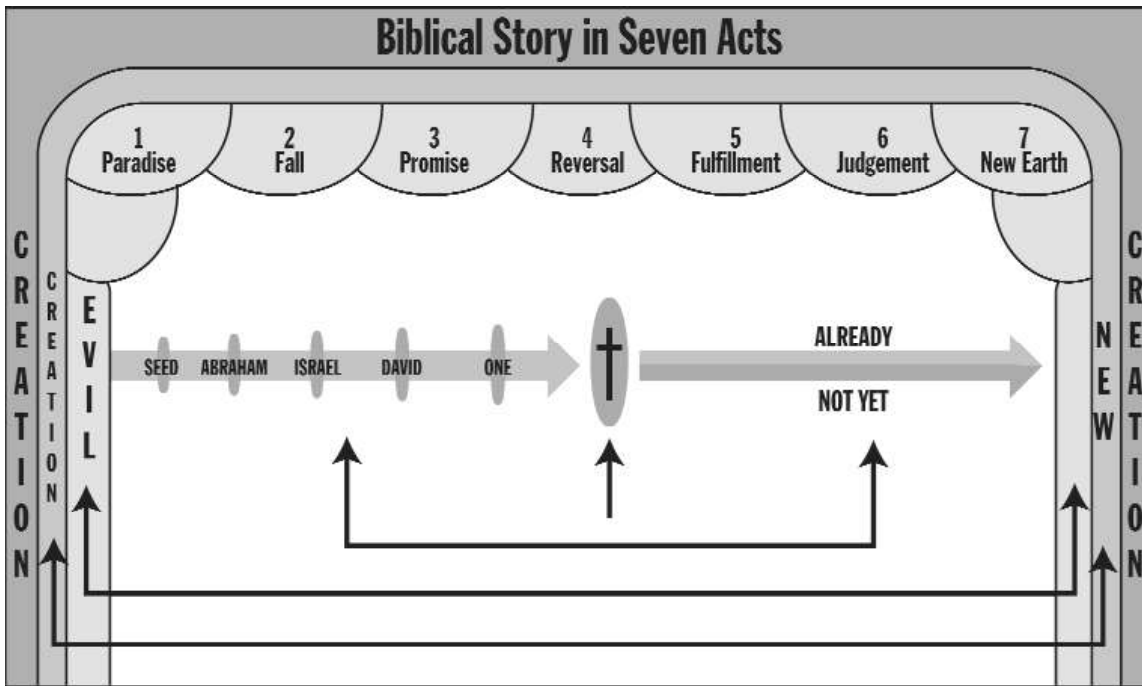
Act Five: From now on, according to the Biblical narrative, there is time to once again gather God’s people and re-establish Israel—now with a new disposition of hearts towards God. In this scene, we see God re-launching

His new community (Acts 2–4, 10; Rom 3:28–29; 9–11). People become part of the new Israel, no longer through national or blood connections with the seed of Abraham, but through the faith connection with the Seed. In this stage, the newly constituted community of believers now tells the story of God-Creator, humanity, the Fall, and the U-turn in Jesus who now mediates to humanity the benefits of His past work so that as many as possible may be part of His future work.

Act Six: With the *reversal being applied* to the current experience of humanity, one day God will begin to bring about the final great exodus of all humanity. Through the decisive and revelatory actions of the *Divine Judgment*, evil is finally removed and God and His people are justified. This act in the Biblical story includes visions of pre-Advent, Advent, and post-Advent judicial aspects of Christ’s ministry (Dan 7–9, Rev 14–15, 20). Just as Act Two, the Fall, introduced a certain mysterious serpent who attacked the character of God and brought all the evil to the world of God’s creation, so in Act Six, the Judgment, the story directly exposes the serpent by unmasking his lies, his character, and consequently justifies God’s reign and His people (Rev 12–20).

Act Seven: Only after this is accomplished, the narrative finally arrives at the scene of a *New Creation* (Rev 21–22). This is where the curse is no more, where sin, death, and all evil are no more and instead everything is once again created anew. The redeemed humanity continues its eternal journey with God. But the “old” story is not forgotten. It is immortalized through the names of the twelve tribes of Israel and the names of the twelve apostles on the gates and walls of the New Jerusalem as an everlasting reminder of God’s infinite faithfulness to His creation.

With some over simplification, this is the captivating story the Bible appears to be telling. It depicts the whole of reality, its ori-



A Christian
 is a member of
 God's church
 which is
 recognized in
 particular by
 the signs of
 baptism and
 Lord's Supper.

gins, God, the problem of our existence, its solution, the future, and where things are going. Importantly, it also places us into a particular stage of the story. Formulated in this way, the Bible gives us a unique worldview perspective. What matters in this analysis is the recognition of the Bible's own structure, plot, and direction which, I'd like to propose, should provide the organizational perspective for our Fundamental Beliefs, and for its narrative expression. So, what then would a project of turning the Fundamental Beliefs' plot into a narrative form, which would at the same time be inspired by the Scriptural drama, look like? Here's one attempt.

The Adventist Narrative Confession

Act One: In the beginning, God created the world. The world was good, full of life, peace, and harmony. All living creatures draw life and breath from God who is the loving and caring sustainer of everything that exists. The first people, Adam and Eve, knew their Creator face-to-face and loved Him.

Act Two: The harmony between them and God was sadly spoiled by a cunning creature

who, being created before life on earth was formed by God, now brought his lies about God's character to the innocent first human couple. Propagating a lie about God, the deceiver made humans think of themselves as being independent of God, not needing the Sustainer for their life. They rebelled and became enemies to one another and to God. A new reality of evil, pain, and death entered the world. Paradise changed into an experience of exile. The human heart turned dark and rebellious, just as the deceiver's heart.

Act Three: But God so loved the world that He would not let the humans live forever in the exile with darkness in their hearts. Right there in front of the deceiver, He made a promise that a descendant would be born to Adam and Eve who would clear God's name from the charges and defeat the lie. The patriarchs, including Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, and Israel collectively, and the line of David and his descendants particularly, became the direct descendants of the divine promise. Through them God was clarifying what, how, when, and through whom He would change the fate of humanity.

Act Four: Generations of descendants have come and gone in this manner until, in the

New Testament Gospels, the spotlight is directed onto an individual who claimed all the past promises. It is in the life, service, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus of Nazareth that we recognise the promised descendant. Because He took the sin of the world (John 1:29) upon Himself, He defeated the lies of the deceiver by showing us the true character of God. In Jesus the human story has a new beginning. He is the turning point in the drama. He is the light of the world dispelling the darkness of sin.

Act Five: He is also, even now, the rightful and all-powerful King over all nations, gathering His people, the church, to flood the whole world with the light of God's character. The church is God's new creation, a community built on a new set of values: service, acceptance, and forgiveness. The Holy Spirit is sent from Jesus to empower the church to constantly grow in their knowledge of God and in their unselfish service to others.

Act Six: Not all, however, will want to see the light and will rather choose to live in the darkness. And so,

at the time of the major opposition to God, He calls His church for a special task, equipping it with special gifts of the Spirit to announce the looming defeat of evil. Stubborn evil will not go willingly and thus God has begun the legal path to remove it and to vindicate His people. God has begun to justify His people, His government, His name, and all the truth that was so far being defiled by the lies of the deceiver. This is the good news of the Gospel for the time of the end. The undoing of the exile has begun. At this time of growing opposition to God, when the forces of darkness gather pace, the church is calling all to unwavering faithfulness to all God's commandments, including the Sabbath commandment which specifically acknowledges God as Creator and Saviour. Give your loyalty to God and do not believe the lies about Him. The day of the final consummation when Jesus as King will appear a second time is thus near. At His coming, His people will receive immortality, but those who liked darkness more than light will be judged so that no questions re-



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main unanswered about their darkness and the deceiver who has brought it upon the world.

Act Seven: When the righteous judgement is finished and the darkness, including those who bound their fate with it, will be dispersed and will be no more, God will start where He began initially with this world—creating again, a new creation, a good creation. Harmony will be back and all will see God face-to-face and declare that He indeed is Love. The journey of humanity will restart afresh and this time, it will never end.

This particular narrative confession is about 750 words long. It can be reduced or enlarged according to the needs of the audience. It's an example of how respecting the Bible's inherent structure, plot, and its direction could be preserved alongside the particular theological emphases of our confession.⁹ I hope it shows the potential of such narrative confession which could be used alongside the Fundamental Beliefs or even separately for specific types of audiences. It would frame the mind of the readers of the Twenty-Eight

Fundamental Beliefs to read them within a particular story in mind. The accompanying picture, which attempts to visualize the structure of the narrative, has twenty words, but can in an imaginative way sum up what is effectively the foundation of our statements of beliefs—namely the Bible and its narrative. ■

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Before his academic ministry, he worked as a pastor in his native country, Slovakia. Jan has a doctorate from Trinity College Bristol which he completed under the supervision of world-renown NT scholar, David Wenham.

His research, published as *Ordination of Women in Seventh-day Adventist Theology: A Study in Biblical Interpretations* (2012), is the most comprehensive theological and hermeneutical analysis of the ordination debate to date.

This paper was presented at the 2016 meeting of the Adventist Society for Religious Studies in San Antonio, Texas.

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**From now on,
according
to the Biblical
narrative, there
is time to once
again gather
God's people
and re-establish
Israel—now
with a new
disposition of
hearts towards
God.**

References

1. Doctrine of Sin, even though a major theological theme, does not appear as a separate statement, but is addressed under different headings in articles “The Nature of Humanity” (7) and “The Great Controversy” (8).

2. It is interesting to note that half of the 28 articles are focused on two theological motifs—sanctification/salvation applied, and the church. Both themes receive attention in seven articles and, consequently, they appear to stand out in the confession as carrying the key theological weight.

3. See many examples in Philip Shaff (ed.), *Creeeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes, Volume I: The History of Creeeds (1877)* and also *Creeeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes, Volume II: The History of Creeeds (1877)*.

4. On the effectiveness of the Adventist confession, see Rolf J. Pöhler, “Fundamental Beliefs; Curse or Blessing? – On the Pros and Cons of Adventist Confessional Statements” in *Ecclesia Reformata, Semper Reformanda: Proceedings of the European Theology Teachers' Convention, Newbold College of Higher Education, 25–28 March, 2015*, ed. Jean-Claude Verrecchia, (Bracknell, UK: Newbold Academic Press, 2016), 123–148.

5. Wright argues that “thinking Scripture” for Paul meant “thinking narrative.” N. T. Wright, “Reading Paul, Thinking Scripture” in *Scripture's Doctrine and Theology's Bible*, eds. Markus Bockmuehl and Alan J. Torrance (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), particularly 60–61.

6. For the value of the story in ancient times see for example: Edward Champlin, *Nero* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003); Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (Chicago, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1990).

7. Wright, “Reading Paul, Thinking Scripture,” particularly 60–61.

8. For a more elaborate discussion on the Bible as Story see: Jan Barna, “The Grand Story,” *Ministry* (March 2012): 21–22, 24; Gunnar Pedersen and Jan Barna, “Towards a Biblical Theology Method: A 7-stage Theistic Narrative

Methodology,” Tyndale Fellowship, Cambridge, UK (Biblical Theology group annual conference paper), 1–20, (available on academia.edu); Gunnar Pedersen, “The Bible as ‘Story’: A Methodological Opportunity” in *Exploring the Frontiers of Faith: Festschrift In Honour of Dr Jan Paulsen (Congratulatory Edition)*, eds. Børge Schantz and Reinder Bruinsma (Lueneburg, Germany: Advent-Verlag, 2009), 237–245; and Gunnar Pedersen, “Towards Scripture-Based Theology” in *Ecclesia Reformata, Semper Reformanda: Proceedings of the European Theology Teachers' Convention, Newbold College of Higher Education, 25–28 March, 2015*, ed. Jean-Claude Verrecchia, (Bracknell, UK: Newbold Academic Press, 2016), 149–177.

9. Philip Shaff rightly points out that “[t]he value of creeds depends upon the measure of their agreement with the Scriptures” (Shaff, *Creeeds of Christendom*, Vol. I, 7.). But just what exactly is meant by “the Scriptures” and how we “measure” is often the point of the debates. In this paper I have tried to argue that the agreement of our or any confessional statement should be measured not only on the micro-textual level, referencing specific pertinent passages, but primarily on the macro-Scriptural level. It is on this level that the measure of agreement is crucial. In other words, articles of faith only make sense if we locate them within a specific story context. Apart from that they do not have meaning. Consequently, the language we use in our confessional statement, the form of it, the structuring of it, the plot it portrays, the direction it travels, and the order in which key points are made are, or should be, key measuring points for the confession to be called biblical.

Celebrating Excellence in ADVENTISM



[HTTPS://HENRYTAPPER.COM/2014/12/23/BEWARE-THE-VANITY-MASTER-TRUST/](https://henrytapper.com/2014/12/23/beware-the-vanity-master-trust/)

Who was Charles E. Weniger? | BY ERIC ANDERSON

There must
have been
something
remarkable
about this
teacher.

An Eastern Orthodox funeral service repeatedly invokes a powerful phrase: “Memory Eternal.” It is meant to remind the mourners

that God holds each of us in His memory forever, that our struggles and achievements will not disappear or be forgotten.

Human memory is more fragile, though we strive to sustain it. Despite our best efforts, man’s memory fades. We use ceremonies and memorials to resist gradual amnesia, repeating and highlighting what we fear we might forget.

Charles Weniger graduated from Pacific Union College ninety-nine years ago. It may be necessary, on this day in which men and women are honored in his name, to remind ourselves of who he was, and why so many people work to keep his memory alive fifty-three years after his death. There must have been something remarkable about this teacher.

The outline of his ca-

reer is clear enough. Weniger began teaching at Pacific Union College as soon as he graduated. In the first year after graduation, he took several advanced courses, taught Latin, Eng-

lish, and Greek, and served as temporary dean of men. In the 1919–20 school year, he became a full-time member of the faculty, bearing the title of instructor in English. He taught on Howell Mountain until 1927, when he moved east to become head of the English department at Washington Missionary College. He returned to PUC in 1931, teaching English and speech for the next seventeen years.

Like most Adventist teachers in those days, his graduate education was broken up into short and intense segments. It was not until thirty years after he graduated from college that he completed his PhD in speech and comparative literature at the University of Southern California. In the same year, he was appointed



Charles E. Weniger

In 1974, ten years after the death of Dr. Weniger, three of his friends—Jerry Pettis, Clinton Emmerson, and John Osborn—established the society to honor his memory and the qualities of excellence that were paramount in his life.

Through its award program, the Society seeks to identify and recognize the contributions made to the world by people with similar significant traits of character.

academic dean of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C., a position he held until the Seminary became part of Andrews University and Weniger was appointed Vice President for Graduate Affairs.

This bare outline does not do justice to the full extent of Weniger's achievement as an educator. He inspired passionate loyalty in his students, many of whom insisted that this teacher had changed their lives. They spoke of his powerful and continuing influence long after graduation day. As one former student wrote, years later, "Without exaggeration, I can state that he was the finest teacher I ever had." Describing his mentor as "perceptive, discerning, and kind," he added that Weniger was "that rarity, a teacher who both challenges and teaches."

In short, Charles Weniger is representative of a kind of education that never becomes obsolete, education built on mentors who teach by example. This is the sort of learning and teaching that John Henry Newman defended in his description of the University as a mother who knows her children one by one—"not a foundry or a mint or a treadmill." Today, Newman might say you can't turn the University into a glorified ATM, predictably generating information, if not wisdom.

A man of high culture and perfect manners, Weniger might have seemed, at first glance, a prissy pedant. His diction was precise, his suits perfectly pressed, his expectations high. For a time, he even wore pince-nez spectacles. But his surviving students remember a warm and charming person, with an infectious, booming bass laugh and deep personal humility.

Weniger's last major speech came in 1964 as the commencement speaker for the Loma Linda School of Medicine. He was too ill to attend the ceremony, and Graham Maxwell read the address for him.

He began by remembering his own graduation at PUC. Dr. Percy Magan spoke from the text: "And Peter sat warming himself." Weniger said wryly, "It has been hard for me to sit still ever since."

Warning his audience of various perils, including journalistic hyperbole, academic pride, and mental laziness, Weniger offered a vision of Christian education that is still compelling. The uniqueness of Adventist universities, he said, "lies in the fact that the spirit of Christianity" pervades "all classes and all university activities."

"It is the business of every department, every discipline, to reveal spiritual insights, to recognize spiritual values, so that the student is . . . moved by the 'high purposefulness of intellectual passion' Every investigation in sincere search for truth will end in God."

I close, still thinking of that Orthodox liturgy.

"Memory Eternal for Charles Elliott Weniger!" ■

In December 2016, **Eric Anderson** was elected president of Pacific Union



College. At that time he was the Walter C. Utt Professor of History at PUC. Previously, Anderson had been president of Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Texas, from 2005 to 2014, where he served one of the longer presidential tenures in the university's history. Anderson is the fourth generation of his family to teach at PUC, and has devoted 30 years of his life to teaching at the college on subjects such as Christian history and political studies. In 1912, Anderson's grandmother, Agnes Caviness, was PUC's first baccalaureate graduate.

2017 Award Winners

CHARLES ELLIOTT WENIGER SOCIETY FOR EXCELLENCE MEDALLION RECIPIENTS



Brian Bull



Alvin Kwiram



Verla Kwiram



Sigve Tonstad

Adventist Hall of Fame

CHARLES ELLIOTT WENIGER SOCIETY FOR EXCELLENCE MEDALLION RECIPIENTS

2017

Brian Bull, Alvin L. Kwiram,
Verla Rae (Michel) Kwiram,
Sigve K. Tonstad

2016

Roy Branson,
Robert E. Lemon,
Sandra E. Roberts

2015

Bert B. Beach,
Bert B. Haloviak,
William G. Johnsson

2014

*(Medallions originally awarded the
year after selection)*

2013

William Emmerson,
Elissa Kido, Arthur N. Patrick

2012

Bonnie Dwyer,
V. Bailey Gillespie,
Shelton E. Kilby, III

2011

Herbert Blomstedt,
Alcyon Fleck,
Howard V. Gimbel,
Oliver Jacques

2010

Niels-Erik Andreasen,
George T. Harding,
Loree Sutton,
Bernard A. Taylor

2009

Barry Black, George Knight,
Richard Osborn

2008

Charles V. Bell,
Charles E. Bradford, Fritz Guy

2007

Lowell L. Bock,
Wayne Hooper,
Lawrence O. Longo,
Milton Murray, Vernon P. Nye

2006

Wilbur Alexander,
Dorothy Minchin-Comm,
Kermit Netteburg,
Louis W. Normington

2005

Ray Hefferlin,
Robert M. Johnston,
Donald W. Rigby,
Donnie G. Rigby,
Randal Lee Roberts

2004

John W. Cassell,
Loren C. Dickinson,
Peter E. Hare, Alice Holst,
A. Vernon Winn

2003

Leonard L. Bailey,
Shirley N. Pettis-Robertson,
Ariel A. Roth, Charles R. Taylor

2002

Herbert P. Ford,
Edward Paul Johnston,
Merlene A. Odgen,
Helen T. Zolber

2001

Clinton and Patricia
Giddings Emmerson,
Lawrence Thomas Geraty,
Florence Longway Fisher
Howlett, Helen V. Warren Lee,
Rolland Harold and
Florence Nagel,
Sherman Albertus and Edith
Louise Nagel

2000

William Loveless,
Milton and Murial McHenry,
Jan Paulsen

1999

Elmer Digneo,
Daniel Matthews,
Louis Venden

1998

Charles and
Elizabeth Anderson,
George Lewis Caviness,
Leon Harold Caviness

1997

Sakae Kubo

1996

Donald Malcolm Maxwell

1995

Hulda Crooks, Del Delker,
Granville Gene Wilson

1994

Raymond F. Cottrell,
Donald Vincent Hemphill,
Douglas Carlyle Marchus

1993

J. Wayne McFarland,
Alice Alberta Neilsen,
Ivan Robert Neilsen

1992

Paul C. Heubach,
Gordon and Betty Jenson,
Charles Warren Teel, Sr.

1991

Wilfred J. Airey,
Ronald and Grace Drayson,
Joseph Greenleaf Fallon,
John T. Hamilton,
Richard Hammill,
Narasimiah and Jasmine Jacob,
Axel Clarence Nelson

1990

Walter Bush Clark,
Maurice and Helen Mathisen

1989

Walter Raymond Beach,
Helen F. Little,
Leona Glidden Running,
Russell L. Staples,
Ruth Wheeler, Lois Christian
Randolph Woods

1988

Charles Edward Dickerson, III;
William Milton Lee

1987

Harrison Silas Evans,
Frank and Alice Marsh,
Dorothy Nelson Moore,
Else Louise Nelson,
George Bahn Nelson,
William Fredrick Norwood

1986

Arthur Lacy White

1985

Mercedes Habenicht Dyer,
Thomas Sinclair Geraty,
Robson and Isabel Newbold,
Elton and Evelyn Wallace,
Evabelle Rosamond Winning

1984

Julius Lafayette Tucker,
Theodore Carcich,
George Tyron Harding, Jr.;
Ruth Rittenhouse Murdoch

1983

Godfrey Tryggie Anderson,
Harry Anderson,
Walter Everett Macpherson,
Mary Colby Monteith,
Margaret Vollmer Richards

1982

Cecil Warren Becker,
Ted Webster Benedict,
Reinhold Reinhardt Bietz,
Edward Heppenstall,
Arthur Graham Maxwell,
Calvin Bozell Rock

1981

Francis Alvin Knittel,
David Louis Lin,
Jack Wendell Provonsha,
Denton Edward Rebok,
James Paul Stauffer

1980

Charles John Nagele,
William A. Fagal,
Hedwig Nagele Jemison,
Richard Burton Lewis,
Neal Clayton Wilson

1979

Kenneth Harvey Emmerson,
Siegfried Herbert Horn,
William Martin Landeen

1978

Virginia-Gene Rittenhouse,
Miriam Gilbert Tymeson,
Marvin Ross Walter,
Ellsworth Edwin Wareham

1977

Frank Wilbur Hale, Jr.;
J Paul Laurence,
John Raymond Wahlen

1976

Winton Henry Beaven,
Joan Charlotte Coggin,
Raymond Archie Mortensen

1975

William Gordon Campbell
Murdoch,
Jerry Lyle Pettis,
Harold Marshall Sylvester
Richards, Kenneth H. Wood

1974

Alonzo Lafayette Baker

Luther and Romans: *Five Hundred Years Later* | BY SIGVE TONSTAD

Clinton Emerson Annual Address

Five Hundred Years Ago (1517)

We do not need the Ninety-Five Theses that Martin Luther posted on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, on All Saints Day in 1517, to impress on us the potential of *words* to create waves in the world. For that, we have our own living mentors, whether in the form of an early morning tweet, fake news, or the soaring “I Have a Dream” speech of another Martin Luther in the not-too-distant past. But we need the original Martin Luther to tell us the importance of words more *eloquently* than anyone else. This year, five hundred years after the Reformation, we will pay Luther our respects for a host of reasons. One reason might be to instill in us a renewed respect for words—words in general, and the Word in particular. In a sermon preached in Wittenberg on March 10, 1522, five years after the Wittenberg posting and one year after the confrontation with the emperor in Worms, Luther’s tribute to words stands out.

For the Word created heaven and earth and all things; the Word must do this thing, and not we poor sinners. In short, preach it I will, teach it I will, write it I will, but I will constrain no man by force, for faith must come freely without compulsion. Take myself as an example. I opposed indulgences and all the papists, but never with force. I simply taught, preached, and wrote God’s Word; otherwise I did nothing. And while I slept, or drank Wittenberg beer with my friends Philip and Amsdorf, the Word so greatly weakened the papacy that no prince or emperor ever inflicted such losses upon it. I did nothing; the Word did everything. Had I desired to foment trouble, I could have brought great bloodshed upon Germany; indeed, I could have started such a game that even the emperor would not have been safe. But what would it have been? Mere fool’s play. I did nothing; I let the Word do its work . . . For it is almighty, and takes captive the hearts, and when the hearts are captured the work will fall of itself.¹

Words started the Reformation, beginning with the Ninety-Five Theses.



DANIELLE TAYLOR

In his statement, Luther's compares words to other means of persuasion. In particular, he contrasts it to the use of coercion. This is not a small matter, given that he was an Augustinian monk by vocation, in his way of thinking, and in his love for Romans. Augustine bequeathed to the church the policy that when persuasion fails, coercion is legitimate.² Luther, at least the young Luther, repudiates it.³ Words, he says, have to do it. And the Word will do it because it has the capacity to take the heart captive.

Words started the Reformation, beginning with the Ninety-Five Theses. Words carried it forward, thinking now of Luther's amazing translation of the Bible into German. *Sola Scriptura* may be an ideological and doctrinal slogan, but it is also a tribute to words—and to words *alone*—to make the difference in what we think and how we conduct our lives. Words carved out space for the rights of individual conscience, impressing on Luther the necessity of defending the encounter between the individual and the Word over any other authority, secular or ecclesial.⁴ Democracy and the notion of the consent of the governed owe more than a little to the Protestant Reformation.⁵

We hardly remember the Ninety-Five Theses. I will read a line, just in case. "1. When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, 'Repent,' he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance."⁶ This is a blunt corrective to the controversy over indulgences, but it also works as a mature statement of Lutheran theology. Luther's theology is introspective and self-critical, perhaps to excess. The notion that Luther, not the apostle Paul, is the founding father of "the introspective conscience of the West" has drawn many prominent thinkers to the table, and the discussion is ongoing.⁷

Given that few can recall the content of the Ninety-Five Theses, we can fast-forward to what we do remember. We remember Romans; we are not ignorant of the role of Romans in Luther's experience. We know that Paul's letter marked the turning point in his life story. We

know that Romans became the cornerstone in his theology and legacy. Most of us have heard the story, even though the timeline might be fuzzier than those who tell the story make it seem.⁸ Luther takes from Romans what has been called "the material principle of the Reformation," the doctrine of justification by faith.

We shall fall back on the most familiar version, as told by Luther in 1545, shortly before his death. In his retrospect, he spells out what Gerhard Ebeling calls "the fundamental theological perception of the Reformation."⁹

A strange burning desire had seized me to understand Paul in the Epistle to the Romans; it was not coldness of heart which had stood in my way until then, but a single phrase in chapter 1: 'For in it the righteousness of God is revealed' (Rom. 1.17). For I hated this phrase, 'the righteousness of God', which I had been taught to understand philosophically, from its normal usage by all who teach doctrine, as referring to the so-called formal or active righteousness, by means of which God is righteous and punishes sinners and the unrighteous . . . Was it not enough that poor sinners, eternally lost as the result of original sin, should be cast down in pure wickedness through the law of the Decalogue, but that God should add one torment to the other through the gospel, and even through the gospel should threaten us with his righteousness and his anger? So I returned time and again to this very passage in Paul, burning with thirst to know what St. Paul meant. Finally, thanks to the mercy of God, and thinking ceaselessly of this matter one night, I recalled the context in which the words occur, namely: 'In it the righteousness of God is revealed . . . as it is written, 'The righteous shall live by faith'. Then I began to understand that this is the meaning of the passage: through the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed, that is, passive righteousness through faith, as it is written: 'The righteous shall live by faith'. Then I had the feeling that straight away I was born again, and had entered through open doors into paradise itself. . . .'¹⁰

This is the Luther we know. This is also the Romans we know and the Paul we know, translated and interpreted for us by Luther. And

**But we need
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**Luther takes
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this is Paul and Romans as they *should* be understood, the *Gospel* with a capital G. Paul and Luther together—or Paul and Augustine and Luther and John Wesley and Karl Barth—this towering fivesome agreeing on the most important doctrine in Protestant Christianity.¹¹

One year later, in the year of his death in 1546, Luther gave Romans one last boost to ensure for this letter the position of pre-eminence in the Protestant tradition.

*This letter is truly the most important piece in the New Testament. It is purest Gospel. It is well worth a Christian's while not only to memorize it word for word but also to occupy himself with it daily, as though it were the daily bread of the soul. It is impossible to read or to meditate on this letter too much or too well.*¹²

Five Hundred Years Later (2017)

What is left of this five hundred years later? Is our task to revisit, reaffirm, and recommit to the tenets of the Protestant Reformation and to Luther's reading of Paul's most important letter? Not a few will respond affirmatively. Among Seventh-day Adventists, too, many will respond affirmatively, even though the Seventh-day Adventist experience has had an uneasy relationship with Romans.¹³ Adventist identity is rooted in Daniel and Revelation, not in Romans. Romans has represented a challenge to key Adventist beliefs, almost as though it is a letter from which we need to defend ourselves instead of a message on which to build our identity. I will ask the question again: Is the task today to revisit, reaffirm, and recommit to Luther's reading of Paul's most important letter? Or—without intending to diminish the importance of Romans one iota—is our task to *revise, rethink, and commit* to a different reading of Paul's letter? If the second option describes our task, as I believe it does, why should we do it, and what will the result look like?

To the “why” question, I will offer two main reasons, one exegetical and the other situational and historical. The exegetical part re-examines Luther's reading of Romans. It is no joke to challenge Luther at the level of exegesis, but this

is precisely what many scholars have been doing for the past thirty years.¹⁴ Scholars who are “Lutheran,” broadly speaking, have been doing it, too.¹⁵

Let us join the conversation at the flash point, Romans 1:16–17, the text that serves as the battle cry for Protestant theology. Let us do it in slow motion, playing by the accepted rules of exegesis. What does the text say? What is the context? Which variables must the interpreter take into consideration? Luther's German translation does not differ much from the one we have in the NRSV.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, “The one who is righteous will live by faith” (Rom 1:16–17).

“Faith” is the theme word in this translation. There is an Old Testament proof text to drive it home: “As it is written: ‘The righteous will live by his faith.’” The case for this reading is so entrenched that the only thing that is left is to memorize it, as many of us have done.

Not so fast, however, and not so certain! “It is written,” Paul says. What, exactly, “is written”?

Paul's source is Habakkuk in the Old Testament. Did Habakkuk write, “The righteous shall live by faith,” as translations of Romans make it seem?

The answer is “no,” he didn't. We need a little context to understand what he did write.

First, what is the problem in Habakkuk?

*O LORD, how long shall I cry for help,
and you will not listen?
Or cry to you “Violence!”
and you will not save?*

*Why do you make me see wrongdoing
and look at trouble?
Destruction and violence are before me;
strife and contention arise (Hab 1:2–3).*

Is the problem in Habakkuk human sin, or is it

divine absence? That is to say, is the problem the bad things humans do, or is it the good things God fails to do? Is the problem that humans fall short of the norm, or is it that God's actions fall short of expectations? Readers of this text, scholars and lay-readers alike, agree that Habakkuk's chief concern is failure on God's part.¹⁶

Second, will God respond to Habakkuk's complaint? I have devoted a whole book to this subject—whether God cares about our questions—in *God of Sense and Traditions of Non-Sense*.¹⁷ Now, we can narrow the subject to ask whether God cares about Habakkuk's question. Does Habakkuk expect an answer—yes or no?

*I will stand at my watchpost,
and station myself on the rampart;
I will keep watch to see what he will say to me,
and what he will answer concerning my complaint
(Hab 2:1).*

Does Habakkuk get an answer—yes or no? If the answer is yes, what is God's answer? Before we read it, let us put two options on the table. Is God's answer to Habakkuk to live by faith no matter how bleak things may look? That is option number one. Option number two is this: Will God address the critical concern in his question, God's seeming failure to make good on God's promises? Is God's answer found in the realm of *faith*—in here, in our heads—or is it found out there, in the world, in the form of a demonstration of God's faithfulness?

*Then the Lord answered me and said:
Write the vision [Hebr. hazon, Gr. horasis];
make it [the vision] plain on tablets,
so that a runner may read it [the vision].
For there is still a vision [Hebr. hazon, Gr. horasis]
for the appointed time;
it [the vision] speaks of the end,
and [it] does not lie.
If it [the vision] seems to tarry,
wait for it [the vision];
it [the vision] will surely come,
it [the vision] will not delay (Hab 2:2–3).*

Option Two wins this one. God's primary answer is *not* found in the realm of faith. God's answer is found in the promise that God will do something; it is found in the realm of *faithfulness*. "Wait for it, it will surely come," God tells Habakkuk. This is the promise.

And now to the text that Paul will quote in Romans. I say in my Romans commentary that the line in Habakkuk runs from *problem* to *promise* to *summons*. What is the summons?

In the Hebrew text, it is this: "the Righteous One by *his faithfulness* shall live" (Hab 2:4).

In the Greek translation that Paul most likely used, the text in Habakkuk reads like this: "but the righteous one by *my faithfulness* shall live" (Hab 2:4, LXX).

There are minor issues in the text that deserve further discussion, but you have heard enough to be able to answer my test question. In the summons to Habakkuk, did you hear the word "faith"? In the summons to Habakkuk, whether in Hebrew or Greek, did you hear the word "faithfulness"? On what basis, now, shall the righteous one live?

By way of summary, the *problem* for Habakkuk is God's apparent absence. The *promise* to Habakkuk is that something will happen to put God's faithfulness on display. The *summons* to Habakkuk, in a (non-Messianic) translation of the LXX, is that "the righteous will live by my faithfulness."¹⁸ This is what is written, in the context within which it is written. When we go back to Romans with this understanding, what is written?

*I am not ashamed of the gospel.
For in it the right-making of God is revealed
from faithfulness for faithfulness,
as it is written,
"The righteous shall live by [my] faithfulness"
(Rom 1:16–17, trans. mine).*

This is not only different from the Lutheran reading. It is different in a consequential way. How can I be saved? Luther's faith message answers *that* question. Can God be trusted?

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thirty years.

**Readers of
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scholars and
lay-readers
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is failure
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The line that runs from Habakkuk to Romans answers *that* question.¹⁹ The exegetical arguments tilt inexorably toward the second of these options. Faith has not disappeared, but God's faithfulness occupies the theological center—here in Romans 1; in the great exposition in Chapter 3:21–26; in chapter 5; in Chapter 8; in the difficult Chapters 9–11, where Luther's exposition must be said to fail dismally; and in Chapter 15, the chapter that confirms that we were not taking things out of thin air in our exposition of Chapter 1. We could say with equal validity that God's *compassion* occupies the center in these chapters, with tremendous and under-appreciated consequences for how we read the wrath-passage in Romans 1 (1:18–32), the groaning of creation in Romans 8 (8:18–23), and the much-misunderstood story of Israel and the Gentile world in Chapters 9–11. I have laid this out in my commentary on Romans. I hope you will devote time to study these things more in-depth, with or without the help of my book.

Before I go on to the second reason why a different reading of Romans is due, let me mention briefly supporting perspectives that have emerged during the past forty years that bear on our understanding of Paul. To Luther, good theology begins with doctrine.²⁰ To many leading scholars on Paul, the tenor of his thought is *story*, not doctrine. To Luther, Judaism is a religion of works. To the New Perspective on Paul, Judaism is a religion of grace.²¹ To many recent New Testament scholars, there is the recognition that the New Testament in general, and Paul in particular, are steeped in apocalyptic conceptions.²² Neither Luther nor the Protestant tradition has had much appreciation for apocalyptic. To Luther, Paul's use of the Old Testament is opportunistic. To Richard Hays and other NT scholars, Paul's use of the OT is sensitive to context. To Luther, divine sovereignty and arbitrary election are key teachings in Romans. To me—and I mean me—the key message in Romans is divine compassion, and there is no

arbitrariness. I say this for much of the Protestant reading of Romans: it fails the compassion test laid down by Paul in Romans. This is the textual case, if only a glimpse.

Reading Romans in Context (1543 and 1943)

The second reason for reading Romans different from the way Luther read it is historical and contextual. It, too, begins with Luther.

In 1543, Luther wrote a booklet that in English bears the title, *On the Jews and Their Lies*.²³ If you have not heard of this book before, you have now, and if you have not read it, this could be one of the things to do before going to bed tonight. Luther devotes a big part to alleged mistakes in Jewish readings of the Bible. Seventh-day Adventists will applaud his lengthy exposition of Daniel 9, especially his defense of a timeline that fits our messianic understanding of Daniel 9:24–27. We have to bypass that, skipping ahead to Luther's prescription for how Christians in Germany should relate to Jews. He asks: "What shall we Christians do with this rejected and condemned people, the Jews?"²⁴

His answer has seven points.

First, to set fire to their synagogues or schools and to bury and cover with dirt whatever will not burn, so that no man will ever again see a stone or cinder of them. This is to be done in honor of our Lord and of Christendom, so that God might see that we are Christians, and do not condone or knowingly tolerate such public lying, cursing, and blaspheming of his Son and of his Christians.

Luther says that our civilization is incompatible with Jewish houses of worship. And I ask you: Does Luther's recommendation pass the compassion test and the vision of inclusion that we find in Romans?

Second, I advise that their houses also be razed and destroyed. For they pursue in them the same aims as in their synagogues. Instead they might be lodged under a roof or in a barn, like the gypsies.

Luther says that we don't want Jews to live in our neighborhoods. Does this pass the compassion test, no room in the inn for the Jews?

Third, I advise that all their prayer books and Talmudic writings, in which such idolatry, lies, cursing, and blasphemy are taught, be taken from them.

Luther says that the sacred books of the Jews should not be circulated or read. They should be confiscated, by force, if necessary. Does he not realize that the very existence and identity of a people to a large extent depend on their books?

Fourth, I advise that their rabbis be forbidden to teach henceforth on pain of loss of life and limb.

If Luther has a "free exercise clause," as we find it in the US constitution, it will not apply to Jews. We hear him say that we don't want a religion in our midst that is incompatible with our values. He advocates the death penalty for those found to violate the ban. I am not making this up.

Fifth, I advise that safe-conduct on the highways be abolished completely for the Jews. For they have no business in the countryside, since they are not lords, officials, tradesmen, or the like. Let them stay at home.

Luther advocates a travel ban for all Jews, whether we see them as an ethnic group or as a faith community. Ordinary rights and civil protections do not apply to this group.

Sixth, I advise that usury be prohibited to them, and that all cash and treasure of silver and gold be taken from them and put aside for safekeeping.

Luther proposes an economic boycott of the Jews (in Seventh-day Adventist terminology) advocating that they will neither buy nor sell.

Seventh, I recommend putting a flail, an ax, a hoe, a spade, a distaff, or a spindle into the hands of young, strong Jews and Jewesses and letting them earn their bread in the sweat of their brow,

as was imposed on the children of Adam (Gen. 3 [:19]).

Luther does not say it quite this way, but the remaining option for the Jews, the career choice open to their young, is forced labor. This is not a return to Adam but to slavery in Egypt. From that slavery, as we know, from that state of being unwanted and oppressed resident aliens, God intervened to set them free.

Luther's conclusion is of one piece with the foregoing.

But if the authorities are reluctant to use force and restrain the Jews' devilish wantonness, the latter should, as we said, be expelled from the country and be told to return to their land and their possessions in Jerusalem, where they may lie, curse, blaspheme, defame, murder, steal, rob, practice usury, mock, and indulge in all those infamous abominations which they practice among us, and leave us our government, our country, our life, and our property, much more leave our Lord the Messiah, our faith, and our church undefiled and uncontaminated with their devilish tyranny and malice.

Do we have a situational and historical reason for reading Romans in a different way, assuming that the exegetical case has been successful? We do—not only a case, half-heartedly pursued, but an obligation; not only an academic exercise left to a few, but a communal enterprise obligating and consuming the many. Luther's reading of Romans is inadequate exegetically and theologically, and his legacy has an enormous compassion deficit. If the two are linked—and they may be linked more than marginally—shall we be at risk, too, of a similar compassion deficit?

Allow me to read the words of Chaim Rumkowski, the chairman of the Jewish Council in the Polish city Lodz, spoken to an assembly of thousands of Jews who have just been informed that they have to surrender their children under the age of ten that day. I have taken the excerpt from the book, *A Brief Stop on*

**I say this
for much of
the Protestant
reading of
Romans:
it fails the
compassion
test laid down
by Paul in
Romans.**

the Road from Auschwitz, published in English in 2015. The book tells the story of a Jewish citizen of Lodz who survived the war and found refuge in Sweden where, sadly, burdened by his memories, he committed suicide. We owe the story to his son, Göran Rosenberg. The date is September 4, 1942.

*I understand you, mothers, I see the tears in your eyes; I feel what you feel in your hearts, you fathers who are obliged to go to your work even on the morning after your children have been taken from you, your darling little ones whom you were playing with only yesterday. All this I know and feel. Since four o'clock yesterday, when the order was first conveyed to me, I have been prostrate; I share your pain, I suffer your anguish, and I do not know how I shall survive this—where I shall find the strength to do it. I must let you into a secret: they demanded 24,000 sacrifices, 3,000 a day for eight days. I was able to reduce that to 20,000, but only on condition that all children under ten be included. Children ten and older are safe. Since the children and old people together amount to only 13,000 souls, the gap must be filled with the sick.*²⁵

“Wait for it,

it will

surely come,”

God tells

Habakkuk.

This is the

promise.

I said at the beginning that there are two reasons for reading Romans differently five hundred years after Luther: one exegetical, the other situational and historical. Our exegetical warrant relies on the line that runs from Habakkuk to Romans. Habakkuk is a post-Holocaust heard in pre-Holocaust times.

Romans stays on topic; its main affirmations are the compassion of God and the faithfulness of God, faith or no faith on our part. The situational and historical warrant is found in the Holocaust and in the mind-numbing absence of compassion in the world. Words are powerful weapons. Words sometimes assert themselves late, as did Luther's words when the Nazis launched the Kristallnacht in 1938, on Luther's birthday.²⁶ In the light of history, the words of 1543 may count for more than the word of 1517 or the word of 1522.

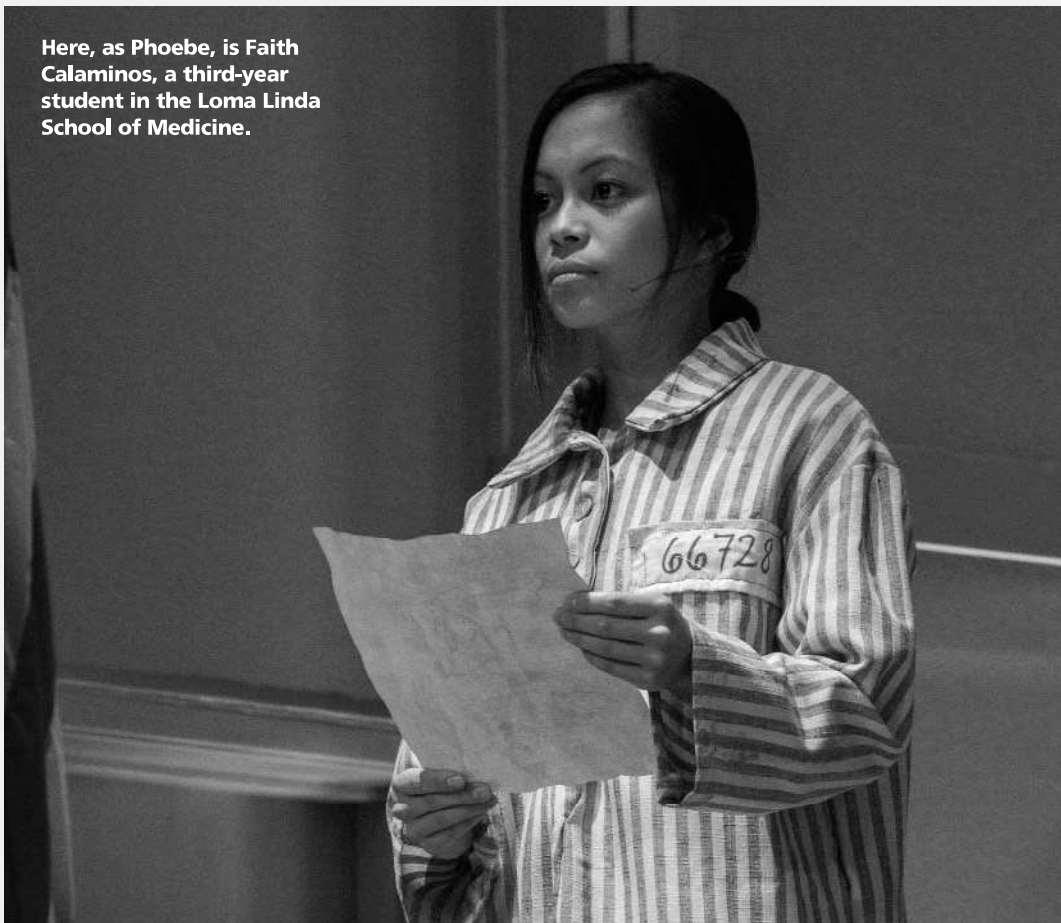
As we are about to close, I'd like you to meet Phoebe. She was a deacon in the Church in

Cenchreae, mentioned first in the greeting section in Romans 16. Scholars agree that she carried the letter to Rome. At the first ever reading of the letter, she read it out loud in house churches in Rome, in 56 AD, during the reign of Nero. It has nourished my reading of Romans richly to imagine that Phoebe mastered the rhetorical twists and turns of the letter that will often be lost on us. Our Phoebe comes to us in 2017, almost 2,000 years after the letter was first read, five hundred years after Luther, and seventy years after the Holocaust. She will read two excerpts from Romans: Romans 1:16–17 and 3:21–26, in my translation.

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel,
for it is the power of God for salvation
to everyone who trusts,
to the Jews first and also to the Greek.
For God's right-making is revealed in it
from faithfulness for faithfulness,
as it is written,
The righteous shall live by [my] faithfulness.
(Rom. 1. 16–17, translation mine).*

*But now apart from law
the right-making of God
has been disclosed,
witnessed by the law and by the prophets,
the right-making of God
through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ
to all who believe.
For there is no difference,
for all have missed the mark
and lack the glory of God.
They have been set right freely by his grace
through the liberation which is in Christ Jesus.
God set him forth publicly
as a means of reconciliation
through the faithfulness of his bloody death.
He did this in order to show his right-making
in view of the fact
that he had passed over the sins previously committed
in the forbearance of God;
that is,
in order to demonstrate his right-making*

Here, as Phoebe, is Faith Calaminos, a third-year student in the Loma Linda School of Medicine.



Responsive Reading (Rom 8:31–39):

Phoebe: He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else?

Congregation: He will! Everything!

Phoebe: Who will bring any charge against God's elect?

Congregation: We know who, the one who brought charges against God! We know who, but the charges are null and void! We know who, but the charges are false and baseless.

Phoebe: God is the right-maker, who consigns to destruction and doom?

Congregation: Right on, sister! Right on! God is the right-maker! And we know who

consigns to destruction because we have been un-deceived by the revelation of God in Jesus.

Phoebe: Who will separate us from the love of Christ?

Congregation: Nothing! No-one!

Phoebe: Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Congregation: No! No! No! None of the above!

Phoebe: In all these things, we are more than victors through him who loved us.

Congregation: Yes, overwhelming victors—super-victors—through him who loved us!

Luther's
reading of
Romans is
inadequate
exegetically
and theologi-
cally, and
his legacy
has an
enormous
compassion
deficit.

at the present time,
 that God may be right
 in the very act of setting right
 the one who lives
 on the basis of the faithfulness of Jesus
 (Rom 3:21–26, translation mine) ■

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Traditions of Non-Sense and *Letter to the Romans: Paul among the Ecologists*.

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2. Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (London: Faber and Faber, 1967), 235. See also Sigve K. Tonstad, *The Letter to the Romans: Paul among the Ecologists* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2016), 28–30.

3. When the Reformation turned political, Luther abandoned his earlier conviction. See Lord (Sir John) Acton, "The Protestant Theory of Persecution," in Lord Acton, *Essays on Freedom and Power*, ed. Gertrude Himmelfarb (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1972), 113–40.

4. Daniel Olivier, *The Trial of Luther*, trans. John Tonkin (St. Louis: Concordia, 1978), 166.

5. This is a large and complex subject. Luther was neither a political philosopher nor a political reformer, but his writings have political implications. See Martin Luther, "Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed" (1523), trans. J. J. Schindel, in *Luther's Works* 45: *The Christian and Society* II (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1962); see also Markus Wriedt, "Luthers Verhältnis zu Demokratie und individueller Freiheit," *Luther* 85 (2014), 149–63. According to Roland Bainton (*The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century* [Boston: Beacon Press, 1952], 228–43), the religious controversy of the sixteenth century contributes to democracy by denying state absolutism.

6. Martin Luther, in *Luther's Works*, vol. 31: *Career of the Reformer I.*, ed. J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald, & H. T. Lehmann

(Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1999), 25–26.

7. Kirster Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," *HTR* 56 (1963): 199–215; idem., *Final Account: Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995).

8. Some scholars point out that Luther does not start talking about his "tower experience" until after 1530, and his most complete account dates to 1545. See Gerhard Ebeling, *Luther: An Introduction to His Thought*, trans. R.A. Wilson (London: Collins, 1970), 39–42; William M. Landeen, *Martin Luther's Religious Thought* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1971), 42–51. Roland Bainton (*Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1978], 39–64) smooths out the wrinkles by locating all the most important elements in the story before 1517.

9. Ebeling, *Luther*, 39.

10. Martin Luther, from Preface to *Complete Edition of Luther's Latin Writings*, here as quoted in Ebeling's translation, *Luther*, 39–40.

11. For a brief overview of the subject, see Tonstad, *The Letter to the Romans*, 23–48.

12. Martin Luther, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, trans. J. Theodore Mueller (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1976), xiii.

13. Seventh-day Adventist works on Romans are few and far between, and none has had a truly formative influence on Adventist thought. A. Graham Maxwell's comments on Romans in the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* might be seen as a slight exception—and not because Maxwell took a Lutheran reading to heart. John Brunt's book, *Romans: Mercy for All* (Bible Amplifier; Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1996), is out of print but available in Kindle.

14. Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: An Investigation of the Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11* (SBLDS, 56; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983. Reprinted Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002). This is the seminal work on the topic.

15. For the historical perspective, see Sigve K. Tonstad, "pi, stj Cristoul : Reading Paul in A New Paradigm," *AUSS* 40 (2002): 37–59. More recently, views pro and con are represented in *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical and Theological Studies*, ed. Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009).

16. To Francis I. Andersen (*Habakkuk: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB, 25; New York: Doubleday, 2001], 123, 125) Habakkuk's outcry is "the passion-

Augustine

bequeathed

to the

church the

policy

that when

persuasion

fails,

coercion is

legitimate.

ate prayer of a desperate man," a person who is anguished by "moral outrage and perplexity."

17. Sigve K. Tonstad, *God of Sense and Traditions of Non-Sense* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2016).

18. For help to nuance this text, see Richard B. Hays, "'The Righteous One' as Eschatological Deliverer: A Case Study in Paul's Apocalyptic Hermeneutics", in *Apocalyptic and the New Testament: Essays in Honor of J. Louis Martyn*, ed. Joel Marcus and Marion L. Soards (JS-NTSup, 24; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 191–215.

19. Thus Richard Hays (*Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989], 53), "The driving question in Romans is not 'How can I find a gracious God?' but 'How can I trust in this allegedly gracious God if he abandons his promises to Israel?'"

20. Martin Luther, *Lectures on Galatians, 1535, Chapters 1–4*, in *Luther's Works* 26, ed. and trans. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1999). The doctrine to be mastered is the distinction between law and gospel. To Luther, "whoever knows well how to distinguish the Gospel from the Law should give thanks to God and know that he is a real theologian" (115).

21. E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1979); see also, James Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

22. To me, the reappraisal of apocalyptic is the most important "new perspective" on Paul. See J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980); J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1997). Martyn's commentary has the best grasp of the apocalyptic tenor in Galatians and is one of the best commentaries in print.

23. Martin Luther, *On the Jews and Their Lies*, in *Luther's works*, vol. 47: *The Christian in Society IV.*, ed. J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald, & H. T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1999), 123–306.

24. Luther, *On the Jews and Their Lies*, 268. The seven points listed here are found in pages 268–76.

25. Göran Rosenberg, *A Brief Stop on the Road from Auschwitz*, trans. Sarah Death (New York: Other Press, 2015), 57.

26. The line from Luther to Hitler is tenuous and possibly non-existent, but the anti-Semitism of Luther's later years can in no way be denied or explained away. What also cannot be explained away, is the effect of toxic speech, even if the toxic speech was not intended to be used a certain way.

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Where will the Antichrist
be destroyed?*

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of his palace between the seas in the
glorious holy mountain; yet he shall
come to his end, and none shall help
him." (Daniel 11:45)**

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ADVENTISM

And the LGBT Community



The Ties that Bind? *Exploring the Impact of SDA Family Response to LGBT+ Children* | BY CURTIS VANDERWAAL, DAVID SEDLACEK, NANCY CARBONELL,

AND SHANNON TRECARTIN

Based on the findings of eleven recent national and international studies, researchers estimate that approximately nine million people, or about 3.8% of the U.S. population, self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT+)¹. More recently, a large 2014 Pew Research Center report found that 4.7% self-identified as LGB². The experience of LGBT+ persons in the general population of the United States has been described and studied for several decades. Among other things, these studies have examined the experience of LGBT+ youth when they come out to their families. Facing many of the developmental challenges common in adolescence, they now find themselves also dealing with a stigmatized identity. Many young people dread sharing their sexual orientation or gender identity with their families for fear of rejection, discrimination, and bullying. They have heard the gay jokes and have experienced the hostile tone of conversations directed at LGBT+ individuals. Often, the last thing many would choose to be is LGBT+, and yet, to be real, they find themselves attracted to persons of the same sex or feel that their body does not correspond with their assigned gender. For many, their greatest fear is that they will be rejected by their family if they come out to them. The strain on family relationships and the parent-child conflicts that pursue such an event are often overwhelming and traumatic. Studies demonstrate that LGBT+ youth who are not supported by their families experience poorer outcomes later in life, including depression, suicide attempts, substance abuse, and poor self-esteem. These harmful health consequences tend to be even worse for ethnic minority LGBT+ populations, who face the intersecting stressors of racism plus their sexual minority status.

Christian youth who identify as LGBT+ can have even greater challenges. The Pew Research Center report found that almost half (48%) of those who self-identified as LGBT

also considered themselves to be Christian. While many of these individuals have been raised to love God and do so to the best of their ability, they may have heard sermons condemning gay persons as sinners. In their reading of Scripture, they may have read the texts that call homosexuals an abomination. They may have heard church members conflate homosexuality with pedophilia and mental illness. They often have no one to talk to about this and are left to figure it out alone and on their own. In their efforts to *not* be gay they may have prayed that God would make them straight. They may have dated opposite-sex acquaintances and even married heterosexual partners. They may have attended change ministries and gone to counseling to try to alter their orientation. Yet, they almost always find themselves unchanged. Many feel rejected by their community of faith. Some are angry with God for not changing them. Others reject God. Still others find ways to reconcile both their faith and their orientation.

Seventh-day Adventist LGBT+ youth are no exception. If anything, our youth and young adults have even greater difficulty navigating these issues because of the very high behavioral standards of our church. LGBT+ issues have prompted recent discussions in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, including the 2015 Summit on Sexuality held in Cape Town, South Africa.

The idea for our research emerged through multiple conversations with LGBT+ students across several venues: the Teen Homelessness Taskforce at Andrews University, AULL4One (the informal support group for Andrews LGBT+ students), classroom settings, and personal conversations. Although LGBT+ family research has been done using national samples, the researchers were not able to find any studies that were specific to any church denomination. Many well-meaning church members talk *about* LGBT+ individuals, but few actually talk directly *to* LGBT+ individu-

Many young people dread sharing their sexual orientation or gender identity with their families for fear of rejection, discrimination, and bullying.

als to better understand their experiences and perspectives. For all of these reasons, we believed that the time was right to study the experience of Seventh-day Adventist LGBT+ youth related to coming out to their families.

Target Population

The target population for the survey was adults who identified as LGBT+, were between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five years old, and who were raised in the Seventh-day Adventist church. Survey participants did not need to be current members of the Adventist church. We chose this age range to stay broadly within the Millennial Generation and also to create time boundaries for more recent memory of family relationships.

Survey Development

Following a review of the literature, researchers developed an initial list of questions related to family acceptance and rejection, with a primary focus on teenage years. Some of the questions were adapted from a study conducted by Ryan and colleagues at the Family Acceptance Project³, although their study did not specifically target church-affiliated LGBT+ individuals. Other family-acceptance questions were developed based on general themes developed by the researchers. Primary themes included Coming out to Parents; Family Rejection; Parents' Responses/Consequences; and Impact of Religion. These questions were also reviewed and edited for sensitive language, question clarity, and comprehensiveness (face validity) by selected key Seventh-day Adventist LGBT+ individuals and family members, as well as by selected LGBT+ researchers and allies. Researchers have not yet conducted factor analyses on these variables to determine reliability of the questions and factor structure.

In addition, researchers identified possible outcomes that might result from family rejection. Outcome variables were selected from a variety of standardized scales previously demonstrated to have strong reliability and va-

lidity. They included the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale; the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support; the Patient Health Questionnaire Depression Screen; selected substance abuse questions from the national Monitoring the Future survey; high-risk sexual behavior and suicidal thoughts/behaviors questions from the Family Acceptance Project Study; questions about religious background and involvement; and various demographic questions. We also included two qualitative questions asking participants to compare their current lives with their teen years, as well as to describe or clarify responses that were not adequately captured in the survey.

Data Collection

Following Institutional Review Board approval through Andrews University, we used purposive snowball sampling to generate responses within current and former Seventh-day Adventist LGBT+ networks. Anonymous data was collected from July–October, 2016, using SurveyMonkey. A SurveyMonkey link was sent to the following Adventist LGBT+ networks: (1) Intercollegiate Adventist GSA Coalition (IAGC) (iagcadventist.com); (2) SDA Kinship International (sdakinship.org); and, 3) various Adventist LGBT+-friendly support networks. We requested that these groups send out the invitation to complete the survey through various forms of social media (personal blogs, Facebook, email, website announcements, etc.), while at the same time asking those distribution groups and individuals to forward the SurveyMonkey link to other Adventist LGBT+ friends or related networks. Subjects self-screened by reading the email or social media introduction and then proceeding to the link to complete the survey.

While it is impossible to know how many current or former Seventh-day Adventists self-identify as LGBT+, if we were to extrapolate from national statistics (between 3.8% and 4.7% of the U.S. population), it is possible that in the North American Division population of

1.2 million members, approximately 45,000–50,000 members could self-identify as LGBT+.

Sample

A total of 505 individuals began the survey, with 332 individuals completing substantial portions of the survey, and 314 individuals completing the entire survey. Table 1 shows gender at virtually

equal responses for Male (45.8%) and Female (44.1%) respondents, with an additional nine individuals (2.9%) identifying as Transgender, three individuals (1.0%) selecting Intersex, and thirty persons (9.8%) selecting Other, which included self-selected categories of “gender-queer”, “agender”, “gender fluid”, “non-binary”, and several other similar variations. When asked about sexual orientation, over one-third (37.9%) identified as Gay, over one-fourth (28.8%) selected Bisexual, one-fifth (20.3%) selected Lesbian, with the remaining 13.1% selecting Other, which included “Pansexual”, “Queer”, “Asexual”, and several other orientation categories.

Table 1 also shows that almost one-fifth (18.7%) of respondents were college-aged (18–22 years), almost half were early young adult (23–29 years), and one-third (33.8%) were 30–35 years old. While over half (55.7%) the respondents identified their ethnic background as White/Euro-American, the remainder were a diverse mixture of backgrounds, with 12.7% Hispanic/Latino, 9.4% Black/African American, 9.1% Multi-racial, 8.8% Asian or Pacific Island, and 4.2% Other. Almost one-fourth (23.9%) of respondents were not born in the U.S., but almost half of this sub-group (46.2%) had lived in the U.S. for more than ten years.

Table 1

Gender	% (N)	Ethnicity	% (N)
Male (M)	45.8% (142)	Hispanic/Latino	12.6% (40)
Female (F)	44.2% (136)	Black/African American	9.4% (29)
Transgender (F -> M)	2.6% (8)	White/Euro-American	55.7% (172)
Transgender (M -> F)	0.3% (1)	Asian or Pacific Island	9.1% (28)
Intersex	1.0% (3)	Multi-Racial	9.1% (28)
Other	9.7% (30)	Other	4.2% (13)

Age	% (N)	Sexual Orientation	% (N)
18–22 Yrs	18.6% (57)	Gay	38.2% (116)
23–29 Yrs	44.6% (137)	Lesbian	20.4% (63)
30–35 Yrs	33.9% (104)	Bisexual	28.5% (88)
Other	2.9% (10)	Other	12.9% (40)

Findings

Religious Background and Involvement

Virtually all respondents (97.4%) grew up as Seventh-day Adventists. Respondents said that religion was an important feature their homes, with more than three-fourths (76.8%) describing their family as Very Religious or Spiritual and less than one-fourth (22.8%) saying their home was Somewhat Religious or Spiritual. Currently, only 41.6% identify as Seventh-day Adventist, with almost a third (32.8%) claiming no religious affiliation and another fourth (23.4%) selecting Other (including common responses such as Christian, atheist, agnostic, Buddhist, “badventist”, and an eclectic variety of religious denominations). Despite having grown up in strongly religious families, only a third (32.1%) of respondents Agreed or Strongly Agreed that they considered themselves to be *religious*. However, three-fourths (73.4%) Agreed or Strongly Agreed that they considered themselves to be *spiritual*. As evidence for this claim, almost a third (30.8%) said they pray daily, with another one-fourth (23.4%) praying at least weekly. In addition, one-fourth study the Bible or other sacred text (24.0%) or read religious books or journals (23.4%) at least weekly. Finally, almost a third (29.6%) participate in religious services on a weekly basis.

We believed that the time was right to study the experience of Seventh-day Adventist LGBT+ youth related to coming out to their families.

Table 2

Coming out to Parents/Caregivers	Strongly Disagree + Disagree	Not Sure	Strongly Agree + Agree
I felt comfortable coming out to my parents.	85.2%	3.8%	11.0%
I was scared to come out because I knew my family would think I was sinful and/or disgusting.	9.9%	9.6%	80.5%
I knew of my parents' prejudice against LGBT+ persons, so it was hard for me to come out to them.	16.4%	7.7%	75.8%
I knew that I would be rejected if I revealed my sexual orientation and/or gender identity to my family.	26.2%	25.9%	47.9%
I was afraid that my parents would disown me if I came out to them as LGBT+.	31.8%	11.0%	57.2%
My family listened attentively as I shared my sexual orientation and/or gender identity journey with them.	51.2%	7.4%	41.4%
My parents were disappointed when I came out to them.	14.4%	16.1%	69.5%
Immediately or very soon after coming out, my parents communicated that they loved me no matter what.	67.1%	7.0%	25.9%
I was forbidden to tell anyone else of my sexual orientation and/or gender identity.	45.9%	11.4%	42.8%
When I came out to my parents, I was kicked out of my house.	89.0%	2.1%	8.9%

that they felt comfortable coming out to their parents, with four-fifths (80.5%) saying that they were scared to come out because they knew their family would think they were sinful and/or disgusting. Three-fourths (75.8%) knew of their parents' prejudice toward LGBT+ individuals, making it hard to come out to

Independent Variables: Family Acceptance and Rejection

Coming Out to Parents/Caregivers

Respondents were asked how old they were when they first came out as LGBT+ to a parent or caregiver. A third (33.1%) came out during their teen years, with most coming out between ages 16–19 years. The largest group (40.2%) came out between ages 20–29 years, presumably after leaving home, with an additional 6.3% coming out when they were thirty years or older. One-fifth (20.5%) have *never* come out to their parents.

Table 2 shows the results to questions about coming out as LGBT+ to parents or caregivers. Only 11.0% Agreed or Strongly Agreed

them. Further, around half were afraid their parents would disown them (57.2%) or knew they would be rejected (47.9%) if they came out as LGBT+.

When respondents did come out as LGBT+, less than half (41.4%) said their family listened attentively as they shared their sexual orientation and/or gender identity journey with them. Over two-thirds (69.5%) said their parents/caregivers were disappointed and 42.8% said their

Table 3

Family Rejection	Strongly Disagree + Disagree	Not Sure	Strongly Agree + Agree
My parents struggled to accept my sexual orientation and/or gender identity.	8.1%	10.1%	81.9%
One or more of my parents responded as if my sexual orientation and/or gender identity was a poor reflection on them.	21.4%	12.8%	65.8%
I was ridiculed by my family for the way I dressed or fixed my hair to express my sexual orientation and/or gender identity.	47.1%	10.8%	42.1%
My family used demeaning language about my sexual orientation and/or gender identity after I came out to them.	53.8%	8.8%	37.5%
I was called names such as “fag” or “sissy” by my family.	71.9%	7.5%	20.6%
My parents' financial support was dependent on my complying with their wishes about my sexuality and/or gender.	55.4%	15.6%	29.0%
My family blamed me for any anti-LGBT+ mistreatment I received.	55.4%	16.2%	28.4%

Table 4

Parents Responses/Consequences	Strongly Disagree + Disagree	Not Sure	Strongly Agree + Agree
I was not permitted to associate with any LGBT+ friends.	59.1%	13.3%	27.7%
My parents took me to counseling to try to change my sexual orientation and/or gender identity.	69.0%	5.0%	26.0%
My parents took me to counseling to help me understand and accept my sexual orientation and/or gender identity.	85.4%	2.8%	11.8%
My parents searched for organizations that would help them understand, support, and accept my sexual orientation and/or gender identity.	64.4%	18.9%	16.5%
My parents were open to exploring ways of supporting me as an LGBT+ person.	60.8%	11.4%	27.8%
My parents would defend me if anyone else demeaned or attacked my sexual orientation or gender identity.	39.2%	34.1%	26.7%

parents forbade them to tell anyone else about their orientation. Only one-fourth (25.0%) of parents communicated that they “loved me no matter what.” Finally, seventeen people (8.9%) said they were kicked out of their house when they came out to their parents.

Family Rejection

Table 3 shows generally high levels of family rejection. Respondents believed that most of their parents (81.9%) struggled to accept their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, with two-thirds (65.8%) saying that one or both of their parents responded as if their orientation or identity were a poor reflection on them. Rejection was often manifested in humiliating ways within some families, with 42.1% of respondents saying they were ridiculed by their family for the way they dressed or fixed their hair to express their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. In addition, over a third (37.5%) said their family used demeaning language about their orientation or identity, with 20.6% saying their family called them names such as “fag” or “sissy.” Almost a third (29.0%) said their parents’ financial support was dependent on them complying with their parents’ wishes about their sexuality or gender. Finally, almost a third (28.4%) said their family blamed them for any anti-LGBT+ mistreatment they received.

Parent Responses/Consequences

Table 4 describes the kinds of responses or consequences that parents or caregivers gave to their LGBT+ children. About one-fourth (27.7%) of respondents were not permitted to associate with any LGBT+ friends. In addition, one-fourth (26.0%) of parents/caregivers took their LGBT+ child to counseling to try to change their orientation or identity. On the other hand, a minority of parents tried to help their child better understand their orientation and/or identity, with over one-fourth (27.8%) of parents expressing their openness to exploring ways to support their LGBT+ child. Further, 11.8% of parents took their child to counseling to help them understand and accept their identity and/or orientation. Similarly, 16.5% of parents searched for organizations that would help them understand, support and accept their child’s orientation and/or identity. Finally, around one-fourth of respondents felt that their parents would defend them if anyone else demeaned or attacked their orientation or identity.

Impact of Religion

Religion played an extremely important role in how respondents and their families interpreted and responded to issues of orientation and

Ties that Bind ➔ continued on page 60

Subjects
self-screened
by reading
the email or
social media
introduction
and then
proceeding to
the link
to complete
the survey.

From *SGA* to *Outspoken*: Documenting LGBT Adventist Stories | BY JARED WRIGHT

Eight years ago, when Daneen Akers and Stephen Eyer (*right*) started the documentary that became *Seventh-Gay Adventists*, they had a lot of questions. They lived in San Francisco and the State of California had just passed Proposition 8, a ballot measure that made same-sex marriage illegal statewide. The Seventh-day Adventist Church to which they belonged officially held that “Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship.”¹ In addition, the Religious Liberty offices throughout the Pacific Union Conference threw their weight behind Prop 8, arguing that “same sex marriage threatens the survival of religious institutions that refuse to compromise their beliefs.”²

For Daneen and Stephen, opposition to Prop 8 was not simply one of moral conviction, it

felt personal. Attending a small congregation in San Francisco called Second Wind, they got to know many LGBT Adventists who didn't fit in at local churches. “We'd just become aware that the faith community that our family goes back in for many generations included gay and lesbian Adventists,” Daneen said, “and we were exploring what it meant to have both of those identities that could seem to be in conflict.” They had also just welcomed their first child and they wondered whether they could raise their daughter in a denomination that they perceived as taking a hard-edged, discriminatory stance toward gay and lesbian people. Could they remain Adventist themselves? “On a personal level, *Seventh-Gay Adventists* was about finding the contours of our community's religious identity and ours also,” Daneen said.

Seventh-Gay Adventists started as a passion project, a tangible way to turn frustration into action and a way to counter the moral decay narrative

The film received acclaim from Adventist and secular audiences, though not without conflict.



Marcos Apolonio and Óbed Vazquez say a prayer to welcome in the Sabbath in the film, *Seventh-Gay Adventists*.



Yeshara Acosta inspired *Outspoken*, a short documentary film series about LGBT Adventists who are living out their faith in unique and compelling ways.

the church pushed concerning same-sex marriage. It grew into something far bigger—a three-part project on the experiences of LGBT+ Adventists that has spanned almost a decade.

The film itself, a documentary that followed three Adventists in committed, same-sex relationships, turned out to be much gentler than the “issue film” they set out to make. It brought viewers (for the first time, in many viewers’ cases) into the homes and experiences of gay and lesbian Adventists doing fairly mundane things: eating meals, praying together, playing with their children, and sewing patches on Pathfinder uniforms. The film received acclaim from Adventist and secular audiences, though not without conflict. Some Adventist colleges and universities refused to allow Daneen and Stephen to film on campus, and the Adventist Church took an oppositional stance (within the past year, both the North American Division and the General Conference promoted a new documentary film called *Journey Interrupted*, featuring Coming Out Ministries, a group dedicated to helping LGBT+ Adventists overcome the “gay lifestyle” through God’s help³).

After releasing *Seventh-Gay Adventists* on Blu-ray, DVD, and digital download (and after a successful film festival run), Daneen and Stephen began work on a companion project, *Enough Room at the Table*. Their second film featuring LGBT+ Adventists under the Watchfire Films label, *Enough Room* brought together twelve Adventists from around the United States, some LGBT+ and

some straight, who were committed to open, face-to-face dialogue around issues of gender, sexuality, and faith. The participants had not met each other before the weekend retreat shown in the film. Daneen and Stephen created *Enough Room* to model what they called the Sacred Act of Listening and to provide an answer to the question “what next?” Many Adventists who saw *Seventh-Gay Adventists* wanted concrete next steps, and the dialogue sessions (moderated by Union College Associate Professor of English and Communication, Chris Blake) offered a template for conversation. While *Seventh-Gay Adventists* focused on lesbian and gay Adventists, *Enough Room* placed before the camera Adventists from across the LGBT+ spectrum.

The third project in Daneen and Stephen’s LGBT-focused collection of works, *Outspoken*, marks an ideological shift. “We’ve journeyed from thinking that we as allies are doing something helpful to realizing that we are the ones who are deeply blessed by getting to witness and share the stories of our LGBT friends,” Daneen said. It also marks a new phase of life. Since first starting their filmmaking careers, the couple moved from San Francisco to Angwin to Ocean-side, California, and welcomed a second daughter into their family.

Outspoken is a ten-part series of made-for-web documentary shorts, each one featuring an LGBT Adventist, or their parents, who live out their faith in unique and compelling ways.⁴ The impetus for this new project came from Yeshara

Daneen and Stephen created *Enough Room* to model what they called the Sacred Act of Listening and to provide an answer to the question “what next?”

Outspoken is a ten-part series of made-for-web documentary shorts, each one featuring an LGBT Adventist or their parents who live out their faith in unique and compelling ways.

Acosta, the young woman who is the subject of the first short film. “The first time we met her, we were struck with her incredibly vibrant presence, her huge heart for God and people, and her beautiful voice and songwriting talent,” Daneen said. She and Stephen felt that if their two girls grew up to have Yeshara’s vibrancy and heart, they would have succeeded as parents. However, not all Adventist parents feel that way. “We’ve been around this conversation and community at the intersection of faith, gender, and sexuality long enough to realize that a lot of Adventist parents can’t see their queer children with those eyes of love and gratitude because of what their theological views have taught them about being LGBT,” Daneen said.

Rejection, both by family members and faith community, has very serious consequences. “Almost every person who came by our first story booth, when we embarked on a three-month, 10,000-mile listening campaign, had a story of near suicide or very strong suicide ideation,” Daneen said. “These were not abstract questions.” Continuing to “show up” and to build relationships has been a key motivation for Daneen and Stephen throughout their years documenting LGBT Adventists’ stories, as has been the desire to give hope and a future.

Yeshara’s story provides an example of hope’s transformative power. “My journey of acceptance started with the *Seventh-Gay Adventists* film,” she said. “So being part of a project with the very people who made such a personal impact on my life just felt right.”

Yeshara also said “yes” to the *Outspoken* project to provide hope for “all the kids like me who at 18 are dying to hear some words of encouragement, love and spiritual support.” She said she needed someone to tell her “God could still use gay me, not just straight me.” That sentiment lies at the heart of the *Outspoken* series. God can use people of all genders and orientations and sexual preferences, not just straight people. The lens focuses closely on people showing up in interesting and compelling ways in their faith walk. For some people like Yeshara, that means active par-

ticipation in the life and ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In the case of some others featured in *Outspoken*, it means life outside of Adventism—a community that, despite strides made toward love and inclusion, can still feel adversarial to LGBT people.

“We know what it is like to be ignored or fiercely opposed,” Yeshara said. “The Adventist Church has made ‘suggestions’ to its congregations and pastors on how to treat LGBT people—denying them positions of ministry, interaction with children, or marriage,” things she called “basic human activity and joys.” For Yeshara, those limitations placed on LGBT Adventists reflect traditional fears rather than Spirit-led conversation. “The Adventist Church has recently begun acknowledging our existence,” she said. “That’s already huge in itself, but how they acknowledge us still scares me. It is so misinformed.” She would like church leaders to sit down with their LGBT members and talk with them. “Let God show you how he is using them to his glory,” she said. The *Outspoken* series is a demonstration of how God is doing precisely that. ■

Jared Wright reports from Southern California for the *Spectrum* web team. He holds a Master of Divinity degree from La Sierra University.



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3. For more, see Alita Byrd’s interview with *Journey Interrupted* producers Brian and Anne Savinsky, “The Message Behind the New Film from Coming Out Ministries” on page 42 of this issue.
4. Installments in the *Outspoken* series are posted on the first Friday evening of each month, starting in February 2017, and can be viewed at www.watchfirefilms.com/outspoken.

The Message Behind the New Film from Coming Out Ministries

BY ALITA BYRD

Brian and Anne Savinsky (*right*) talk about the new film they have produced about same-sex attraction within Christianity and the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which shares the perspective of Coming Out Ministries.



What made you want to make the film *Journey Interrupted*, featuring the four members of Coming Out Ministries talking about their journey through issues of sexual identity?

As we got to know the team members and heard the stories of their journeys, we were compelled to make a way for these to be shared with everyone. Though we are a straight couple and don't have any history of same-sex attraction ourselves, we related to their journeys as fellow Christians and were greatly inspired by them. We also saw the need for their stories to be told in a culture that grapples with the issues of homosexuality and gender.

What is the main message that Ron Woolsey, Wayne Blakely, Danielle Harrison, and Michael Carducci share in the film?

The main message of the film is that, regardless of who you are and what your struggles are, you are loved by God; you matter to Him, and He has the solution to whatever issues you are struggling with. God respects each of us and gives us the freedom to choose His way or our own.

Is there a new message in the film that Coming Out Ministries has not articulated before?

While the testimonies of the four team members have been shared by Coming Out Ministries in the past, there is a new element in this film that has not been heard before: that is the journey of Anna, a friend of Coming Out Ministries. Anna currently lives in the gay culture and shares her past and present struggles with God within that context. And while the message of *Journey Interrupted* is consistent with that which Coming Out Ministries has always given, the documentary provides a wider platform for more people to encounter via the medium of film.

Can you tell us a little more about the narrative structure of the film? I watched the trailer but haven't had the opportunity to watch the whole thing. Does the story move between the speakers? Is it all documentary-style with talking heads? Who made the film?

The documentary features the stories of five individuals who have struggled with same-sex attraction. The film blends their journeys in chronological order, taking each of the stories from early childhood through present day.

The film was made by Woods Media Productions, a non-Adventist production company located in Ohio. It has been intentionally produced as non-denominational to appeal to the Christian community at large.

Journey Interrupted was filmed on location in several parts of the world including Germany, Italy, Czechia, and Brazil, besides the U.S.

The main message of the film is that, regardless of who you are and what your struggles are, you are loved by God.

Each of the cast members has had their “journeys” interrupted by God, and the film documents how the Lord has intentionally sought them and their responses to Him.

Why the title *Journey Interrupted*?

Each of the cast members has had their “journeys” interrupted by God, and the film documents how the Lord has intentionally sought them and their responses to Him.

Would you say this film is an answer to Daneen Akers’ and Stephen Eyer’s films *Seventh-Gay Adventists* and *Enough Room at the Table*?

This is not the intention of *Journey Interrupted*. The film does, however, address many of the same issues that *Seventh-Gay Adventists* and *Enough Room at the Table* deal with. Coming Out Ministries had made prior unsuccessful attempts at putting a film together, before *Seventh Gay-Adventists* was released.

I believe the film premiered in Berrien Springs in September. Where has it been shown so far? How has the film been received?

Yes, *Journey Interrupted* was premiered in Berrien Springs in September 2016. Since then, it has been shown in numerous churches in North America, at the General Conference Annual Council, at GYC Houston as well as GYC Costa Rica, and at the recent Adventist Ministries Convention.

The film has been received extremely well, and we have been given much positive feed-

back! It was globally broadcast on 3ABN and Dare to Dream, with a Q&A following, on February 16, 2017.

Has there been an official response from the Adventist Church to the film?

No, not an “official” response. However, it has been well received by denominational leadership at many levels.

How is the film being distributed? How was it funded?

Journey Interrupted has been funded by the producers of the film. We saw the need for a film that conveys the basic message of Coming Out Ministries—that of God’s love, compassion, and tenderness as Jesus holds out redemption for all who will seek Him.

Coming Out Ministries has been widely criticized for espousing conversion to a straight sexual identity for gay people, or at least leaving same-sex attraction behind. Is that correct? How do you respond to this?

Thanks for asking this important question. Coming Out Ministries has been falsely accused of promoting “conversion” and “reparative” therapy. Coming Out Ministries has never promoted



Journey Interrupted features team members of Coming Out Ministries: Ron Woolsey, Danielle Harrison, Michael Carducci, and Wayne Blakely.

HTTP://WWW.FULCRUM7.COM/BLOG/2016/02/22/RM017KQK3T652AQF282X8FHWX0

these therapies and has been very open about sharing how dangerous some of these therapies can be. We all suffer from various temptations, but there is a difference between “attractions” and “behavior.”

Coming Out Ministries focuses on how God invites us to live for Him, not for the desires of self which are in contrast with His plans for us. For example, there is a line from the film which states, “I didn't go under the water ‘gay’ and come up ‘straight.’... That disappointed a lot of people.” Coming Out Ministries educates congregations and audiences wherever they go, that same-sex attractions may last until Jesus comes. They advocate for God's family to walk with each other on this journey, lifting each other up, and asking God to put His desires in our hearts. His desires never disagree with His Word. Only in experiencing His love are we inclined to give our desires over to Him.

What do you say to parents whose children have identified as gay?

We can share with you what we have heard the team members of Coming Out Ministries tell parents. Listen, love, and embrace your child. Encourage them never to give up on Jesus because Jesus will never give up on them. Don't blame yourself for your son or daughter's declaration of being gay. Pray diligently, claiming God's promises and ask God to interrupt your child's plans and reveal Himself to them. Don't give up on them or ostracize them. Prayer was the most powerful influence in each of the lives represented in *Journey Interrupted*.

Isn't not accepting LGBT individuals for who they are very damaging to them?

It would be wrong for any Christian not to accept anyone. This question leads us to a deeper conversation. God doesn't approve of behavior that He has outlined in His Word as sinful. He tells us in His Word what constitutes sin so that we can draw the boundary lines for us to be safe. Choosing an identity based on what our temptations are, and saying that is just who you are, begins the downward spiral.

We might not always be in control of the temptations we encounter, but we don't have to be identified by them. By identifying with our temptations, we become enslaved to our feelings rather than who Jesus says we can be in Him. The damage is in choosing an identity that distances us from God's plan for our lives. You can certainly be a guy or gal who has same-sex attractions

and temptations and be a child of God who is a believer. Our identity is in Jesus, not in the attractions we experience. We have a part in the decision process.

What is your ultimate goal for the film? Where would you like to see it go?

Ultimately, our aim for this film is to go worldwide both inside and outside the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It offers a universal, non-denominational message of hope and redemption for all, and we are thrilled to be able share it with the general public very soon! We plan for it to be available on DVD, for download, and on social media soon.

What is your connection to Coming Out Ministries?

We first got to know the team over four years ago. Immediately, it became clear to us that this was a ministry that was both unique and greatly needed. We saw the message of Coming Out Ministries as the embodiment of “present truth” and most certainly the third angel's message of righteousness by faith. We were so moved by their stories and inspired by their work that we began to support them both structurally and financially, and eventually, we became members of the Board. About a year into our friendship with the team, we had the idea of the film and began to work on that. We travel with the team at times to conferences and speaking engagements.

Can you tell us a little bit more about yourselves and your background? Have you produced a film before? Have you always been Adventists?

Neither of us have ever been involved in the film industry before. It's been a marvelous adventure to be part of something that has the potential to reach so many hearts for the Lord!

Brian's background is control systems engineering, and Anne is a registered nurse.

While Anne is third-generation Adventist, Brian was raised in the Catholic church before becoming an Adventist. Both of us pray that this film will continue to be used by God to spread His message of love and redemption to the entire world.

For more information about the film and to view the trailer, see www.journeyinterrupted.com ■

Alita Byrd is a member of the *Spectrum* web team, and is a freelance writer from Dublin, Ireland..

Love, Sex, Orientation, and Companionship: A Review of *Journey Interrupted* | BY TODD LEONARD

Tell them
that when you
look into
their eyes, you
see Jesus.

Coming Out Ministries (COM) is an organization that is devoted to helping people find “redemption, victory, healing, and freedom from homosexuality.” COM board members, Brian and Anne Savinsky, (see *Spectrum’s* interview with them on page 45 of this issue) produced a documentary film that primarily features the stories of four individuals who make up the Coming Out Ministries team: Ron Woolsey, Wayne Blakely, Michael Carducci, and Danielle Harrison. I attended a screening of *Journey Interrupted*, along with a follow-up Q&A session with Blakely and Carducci on December 10, at the Pasadena, California, Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The stories of each person in the film begin tragically and end triumphantly. Dysfunctional and abusive homes and friendships marred the early years of each person’s life and failed to provide a stable environment where healthy sexuality was modeled and discussed. Each person was exposed at an early age to harmful sexual experiences through other people in their lives and through access to pornography. Depression and mental illness during their teenage and adult years was

common. Some became addicted to alcohol and drugs. During periods of their adult lives, each engaged in compulsive sexual behaviors—prostitution, anonymous sexual encounters, excessive self-gratification, and more. But each story concluded with the testimony of breaking free from dysfunctional sexual experiences, most by practicing celibacy. Ron Woolsey found a loving relationship with a wife, raised children with her, and continues to minister as an Adventist pastor. Each subject in the film testified that it was the power of Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit that gave them freedom from “the gay lifestyle,” where they can now describe themselves as God’s sons or daughter, rather than as a gay man, lesbian, or bisexual. The film is well done and would be an inspiration for anyone who hopes to break free from dysfunctional sexual behavior.

As a pastor who has had the privilege of serving and becoming friends with many individuals who identify somewhere in the LGBTQ spectrum, I greatly appreciate that this film and the Coming Out Ministries team are getting Adventists to talk about the reality of same-sex attraction in a way that encourages faith communities to show grace, love, and support to LGBTQ people in their midst.



Wayne Blakely, one of the subjects of the new film *Journey Interrupted*, said he believes the new film “speaks to God’s remnant people, wherever they might be found.”

This is desperately needed and long overdue.

But, while I believe that each person with COM has the best of motives for how to counsel people to respond to their same-sex desires, they are, unintentionally, causing harm to the very people to whom they are trying to minister. Perpetuated in the film, and the follow-up comments from Blakely and Carducci, were a number of myths about human sexuality, false stereotypes about gay and lesbian experiences, and a lack of differentiation between the realms of sexual attraction and gender identity. Despite the best of intentions, this film has the potential to further isolate LGBTQ youth and young adults and keep church members from knowing how to best serve those with same-sex attractions.

Here are five of the myths I heard explicitly or implicitly communicated by the film's presenters, followed by my attempt to provide corrective data.

Myth 1: All gays and lesbians are obsessed with sex.

Listening to the stories in the film, this is a natural conclusion to draw if you do not know any LGBTQ individuals yourself, or only get your information on same-sex orientation from people and ministries that are opposed to same-sex relationships.

Reality 1: The majority of gays and lesbians yearn for companionship.¹

Most people with same-gender attractions want the type of relationships that people with opposite-gender attractions want. Yes, that includes sexual intimacy. But as much or more than that, they want emotional support, spiritual support, and all the other benefits that a soulmate brings into one's life.

Myth 2: There is one gay lifestyle. This lifestyle is the experience of every person attracted to someone of the same gender and is marked by many of the following:

1. Drug and pornography addiction;
2. Active sexual experimentation;
3. Excessive self-gratification;
4. Promiscuous and, sometimes anonymous,

sexual encounters; and/or

5. A lack of desire for and an inability to maintain monogamous, same-sex relationships.

Reality 2: There are as many same-sex lifestyles as there are heterosexual lifestyles.²

This means that people with same-sex attractions can have from 1–100 sexual partners in their lives, just like people with opposite-sex attractions. Gay and lesbian people can have strong or weak sex drives. Some will experiment more than others. Sexual behavior preferences, appropriate or inappropriate, vary widely, and are different from orientation.

Myth 3: If families can protect children from harmful early-childhood experiences, their children are certain to grow up with typical heterosexual attractions and desires.

These are the harmful experiences that they believe can lead to same-sex attraction include:

1. A sexually-dysfunctional or physically/sexually-abusive home;
2. Sexual molestation by a stranger, friend, family member, or authority figure;
3. An absent or an "effeminate"/"emasculated" father; or
4. An overbearing (read "masculine") mother.

Reality 3: People with same-sex attractions come from all types of upbringings, including from what COM presenters would affirm as ideal Adventist homes.

I have friends who grew up in multi-sibling homes, where their brothers and sisters grew up with a heterosexual orientation, while they had a same-sex orientation. I have other gay and lesbian friends who grew up in severely dysfunctional homes where their siblings were heterosexual. How can siblings grow up in the same home environment and have different orientations? The only explanation is that a dysfunctional home life cannot be understood to be a predictor for developing a same-sex orientation³ any more than a stable and sexually-healthy home life can be a predictor for developing an opposite-sex orientation.

**The majority
of gays
and lesbians
yearn for
companionship.**

Myth 4: A person's gender identity or expression of gender must fit early twentieth-century Western norms of what is considered masculine and feminine.

Neither the film, nor the presenters, recognize that gender identity is a separate human characteristic from sexual attraction. From their perspective, anyone operating outside of a western binary gender expression and opposite-sex attraction are dysfunctional. If a biological male has a strong expression of a "feminine side"; a biological female carries herself too much "like a man"; or either gender's internal psychological identification differs from their biological presentation; these people, are in, or dangerously close to, "the gay lifestyle."

Reality 4: Gender identity and sexual attraction are two different aspects of a person's makeup.

Further, gender identity and sexual attraction are not binaries. Both aspects of a person's being can be presented along different continuums of self-expression.⁴

Myth 5: Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, can remove your desire for same-sex intimacy. If you pray and claim the promises found in the Bible and the writings of Ellen White, God will give you the self-control necessary to gain victory over same-sex attraction.

Each person in the film states that he/she has been set free from homosexuality, and that God brought deliverance through being immersed in prayer and the reading of inspired writings.

Reality 5: With rare exceptions that are statistically irrelevant to the same-sex-oriented population as a whole, gay and lesbian individuals never lose their innate desire for companionship and intimacy with someone of the same sex.⁵

In one breath, Blakely and Carducci stated that Jesus set them free from homosexuality. In the next, they stated that they are still attracted to men. Their orientation has not changed. What has changed for them is that they have, through the Holy Spirit's work, severely curbed, or stopped completely, engaging in sexual promiscuity or excessive self-gratification facilitated by gay pornography. Their stories of breaking free from sexual addiction are wonderful. But they need to properly identify what they left behind—their behavioral addictions, rather than their same-sex orientation.

I have listened to dozens of stories from gay and lesbian friends who share their stories of trying to find victory over their same-sex attraction for years, even decades. They cried out to God in prayer every day, claimed scripture promises,

met with pastors and counselors, and, in some cases, tried what we now recognize as the barbaric and increasingly-illegal practices of conversion or reparative therapy.⁶ These friends tried just as hard as those in the film and did not find freedom from their orientation.

To their credit, neither COM nor the film offers or encourages people to try conversion therapy. But the implication of their message is that if you have not broken free from "the gay lifestyle," you have not fully surrendered to the work of the Holy Spirit. This subtle message is the most dangerous one in the film. It has the potential to severely demoralize someone who believes that God requires a person to break free from same-sex attraction and has been pleading, to no avail, for God to remove this desire.

While I do know LGBTQ individuals who are engaged in some of the same dysfunctional behaviors as the COM presenters, I know many more who are living a life that, if they were heterosexual, people with COM would affirm their behaviors as healthy and normative. A couple of these friends have chosen celibacy; others are looking for a life partner (some more patiently than others); and some have pledged fidelity to a same-sex soulmate and are experiencing the full range of joys and challenges that come with marriage.

Even more than getting accurate information on sexuality in the hands of upcoming generations of Adventists, my experience on December 10 reminded me of how desperately our teens and young adults need Adventist churches and schools that will create safe and loving environments to support them as they determine how they will healthfully live out their lives within the framework of their orientation. To tell a person with a same-sex orientation to pray and read the Bible by themselves, and let them work it out on their own, only guarantees them more loneliness and depression, and greatly increases the risk of them engaging in harmful behaviors, including suicide.⁷ Those wrestling with identity, attraction, and addiction need us to come alongside them and stick with them no matter what they are going through and what mistakes they make along the way. We should not interrupt their growth by exasperating their fragile teen years with unrealistic expectations borne out of spiritual and cultural myths.

If you are considering showing this film to a group, allow me to make three recommendations:

1. *Do not show this film to teens or market it to young adults.* Because of the extensive misuse of terminology; the lack of differentiation between addiction, attraction, and identity; and the suggestion that the addictions suffered by the sub-



Ron, Danielle, Michael, and Wayne

jects in the film are normative for all LGBTQ people; confusion and further discouragement for these age groups will likely result. The stories in *Journey Interrupted* are important stories to hear. But whoever hosts this event must clarify that the film shows people with same-sex attractions breaking free from their sexual addictions, rather than their orientations. Providing a primer on the conventional usage of terms would be helpful as well.⁸

2. If you show this film, or invite COM's presenters to come, *consider showing* two other films made by Adventist filmmakers that introduce viewers to a broader array of LGBTQ stories: *Seventh-Gay Adventists* and *Enough Room at the Table*. Adding these two films will give a more robust view of Adventist theological perspectives and showcase the diversity of struggles and triumphs of our LGBTQ brothers and sisters within the Adventist denomination.

3. Before, during, and after the presentations, make sure that your faith community communicates *unconditional love and support for LGBTQ people*, along with anyone, gay or straight, who suffers with sexual addictions. Tell them that when you look into their eyes, you see Jesus. And do everything you can to create safe spaces for them and their families. I can think of no better way to minister the love of God. ■

Todd Leonard is senior pastor at Glendale City Seventh-day Adventist Church and president of Glendale Communitas Initiative, a local non-profit organization devoted to families working their way out of poverty. He shares life with his wife,



Robin, and three daughters, Halle, Abigail, and Emma.

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**Rejection,
both by
family members
and faith
community, has
very serious
consequences.**

Untold Stories in ADVENTIST History



Protest and Progress: *Untold Stories in Adventist History* | BY CALVIN B. ROCK

The 2017 Percy and John Christian Civil Rights Center Lecture

Word has gotten around that I have now at the press a manuscript titled *Protest and Progress: The Four Major Freedom Endeavors of Black Seventh-day Adventist Leaders in the Twentieth Century*. I have been asked to pursue this subject with you, with particular emphasis on what one leader identified as “untold stories” of that journey.

The journey of Black American Seventh-day Adventists from their scattered, statistically inferior numbers and organizational involvement in pioneer Adventism to their present state is itself a story largely untold that the book, when published, will explore in some detail. It is a journey which, it should be noted, closely parallels that of Black Americans in this nation in general, filled with examples of inestimable pain and bravery, suffering and sacrifice, by Whites and Blacks alike.

The struggle of this people in the church, like that in the nation, has been the effort to throw off the shackles of injustice: to achieve equal opportunity, equal access, equal pay, and yes, even in our Remnant Church milieu, equal reward for service.

The journey has been made arduous by a number of factors. Two that are primary are first, until recently, the fear that the presence and participation of Coloreds, Negroes, African Americans, or Blacks, as defined over the decades, would stunt White Adventism’s witness; a fear had then, and that even now, has some validity, but which, on the other hand, has produced formidable image negativ-

ity for Black Adventism.

The second, as indicated, has been the felt need of White Adventism, over the decades, to faithfully obey the laws of the land—in particular the dehumanizing regulations of “Separate but Equal,” a law that gripped this country from 1896–1954. Separate but Equal fed the worst of the human tendencies and legally established a biased socio-political personality for our country, as well as our then compromising church. The latter fact is evidenced by our being the sixty-first of established US denominations to speak out against the evils of segregation.

Undergirding and informing these positions has been the overwhelming degree of Scriptural interpretation by scholars of the advantaged class, whose sociological grid allows them without shame to maximize the pietistic or vertical aspects of God’s righteousness, while stripping it of the vigorous horizontal or social justice concerns portrayed by the Old Testament prophets and modeled by Christ, Himself.

It was not always that way. The earliest of Adventist church pioneers were vigorous in their denunciations of social injustice. Most Adventists are familiar with the little book, *The Southern Work*, which catalogues Ellen White’s, at times plaintive, and at others scathing, rebukes against the treatment of the Colored race, not only during Slavery, but after: without, as well as within, Adventist society.

John Byington, elected in 1865 as the first General Conference president, was known as

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The Civil Rights Center at PUC



Dr. Rock meets with Shirley Christian and Jennifer Christian Newton, following his lecture at PUC.

The Percy and John Christian Civil Rights Conference Center was founded in 2016 to honor two influential Adventist educators, who were fiercely committed to the goal of racial equality. As trained historians, Percy and John devoted their lives to strengthening Adventist education.

During his esteemed career, Percy served as president of Pacific Union College (1945–1950), Emmanuel Missionary College (now Andrews University), and Walla Walla College (now Walla Walla University). While president of WWC, Percy initiated the acceptance of black students. He also hired Dr. Donald Blake, the first black professor to teach at an Adventist institution outside of Oakwood University in Alabama. He is credited with integrating Adventist higher education.

John, Percy's son, was academic dean and professor of history at PUC (1972–1977, 1994–2000). Like his father, he was also deeply committed to racial equality. He also served as an influential professor at Walla Walla University, Atlantic Union College, Andrews University, and Columbia Union College.

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an active abolitionist; Uriah Smith, first General Conference Secretary, James White, first editor of the Review and Herald, and Joseph Bates (who, on p. 170 of vol. 10 of the SDA Commentary, is listed along with James and Ellen White as one of the triumvirate that founded the Seventh-day Adventist Church), were all outspoken social liberals.

Unfortunately, the socially liberal attitudes of the Adventist pioneers had, by the turn of the century, given way to prevailing attitudes of White Protestant Christianity, not the least determinative of which was belief in the Protestant ethic that held that prosperity was a sign of God's favor and poverty His curse. It was a formula the freed but impoverished victims of slavery and their children found impossible to advantage or overcome.

But it was that very hopelessness and their longing for a better day that, in large part, attracted them to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They delighted in the Seventh day of rest and were thrilled by the promise of the coming kingdom of glory, only to discover upon joining the church that the people of the promise, anxious not to offend their White audiences, or to break the nation's socially restric-

tive laws, offered them what can only be described as overtly repressive, second class status.

The arrangements included: assignment of White leadership to administer Black church growth and stabilization well into the middle Forties; the refusal of Negro students at most of our colleges, and acceptance by quota of those that did, with mandates to room with Blacks only, avoid interracial dating, and cafeteria seating at tables for Black students only, well into the Fifties, the refusal of jobs as well as services at Adventist installations (hospitals and publishing houses, etc.) well into the Seventies; and refusal of membership in White churches in many sectors of the country (often demonstrated by the encouragement to a Black who happened to show up on Sabbath that they would be more comfortable at the Colored church across town), into the Eighties.

A glaring example of such indignities was not allowing F. L. Peterson, first Black to graduate from Pacific Union College (1916), and first Black to be elected as a General Conference Vice President (1962), at the beginning of his tenure there, to eat in the G.C. cafeteria.

Another example of the institutionalized bias that pervaded into the latter quarter of the

twentieth century, in some sectors, was on prominent display in the *Atlanta Constitution*, April 3, 1948. The newspaper's byline read: "Adventist Upholds Racial Segregation," and continued, "Doctrines of the universal Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man have no place in the Christian church and are altogether untrue, Carlyle B. Haynes, of Washington, D.C. told a congregation here Friday at the Beverly Road Seventh-day Adventist church. Haynes upheld racial segregation, maintaining that it was 'originated 'by God and set forth in the Bible as the divine way for races to get along together.'"

Pastor Haynes, author of forty-five books, and arguably the most prolific Adventist writer of his time, did not regard himself as a mean man. In fact, he regularly expressed to Black audiences his appreciation for their musical ability and anticipation of one day going over to the "Colored side of heaven" to hear them sing.

What is *not* surprising is that such restrictive attitudes and repressive practices produced a number of vigorous protests by Black church leaders and laity. What *is* surprising is that there were not more. That Black Adventists, given the severe racial difficulties they encountered for so many decades, never, as is the case with the Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal, and a number of other church groups, severed organizational relationship completely, is truly remarkable. Their not having done so is a testimony to the loyalty of a long list of Black leaders who, while challenging structural injustice, continued to treasure Seventh-day Adventist doctrine and mission.

The very first or earliest of protests was conducted by Charles Kinney, the first Black student of Healdsburg college (forerunner of PUC), 1883–1885. Kinney, also the first Black to be ordained to Adventist ministry, accompanied his written protest of segregated seating at Kentucky camp meeting in 1898 (the year of his ordination), with the prescient suggestion that if such arrangements continued, Blacks would do well to establish their own conference structures.

Other significant protests of this early era were those led by: Lewis C. Sheafe, chiropractor and attorney who joined the church in 1896, became a prominent pastor and advocate but, by 1917, had become so discouraged by the church's racial practices that he left, taking with him most of the Los Angeles, Berean congregation; John and Charles Mann in Georgia in the twenties; and the celebrated defection of J.K. Humphery in New York City, in 1929.

All of these, as most Black leaders and members of this era, "wanted in." They prayed and hoped (contrary to the laws of the land and the ways of the church) for equal access and opportunity. Instead, they were denied meaningful participation and left an unorganized appendage of the church's structure.

The church did attempt to recognize their "appendage status" in 1908, when they were assigned the first of a series of White officials to oversee their labors. The arrangement lasted ten years, until 1918, when, seeing that White oversight of Black church growth was not a long-term solution, church leadership appointed a Black, Pastor W. H. Green, as coordinator.

Black Adventists throughout the country, including the Pacific Coast (where there was very little work at that time), regarded this as a step in the right direction, but it too was inadequate. Green served more as an advisor than an administrator and, given the entire country as his parish, literally worked himself to death; he died on the job at age fifty-seven. The 1930 *Review and Herald* (Vol. 107, p. 24) report of his death read in part: "He always labored unsparingly, and came home at the close of an itinerary very tired and worn. Without warning, he passed away."

The more revealing description of events, written by his wife, a few weeks later, gives the following graphic details:

After attending the Fall council in Springfield, Mass., Elder Green returned to his home in Detroit. He administered the ordinances of the Lord's house there Oct. 6th and remained until the 12th of the month, attend-

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During a February visit to Pacific Union College, Calvin Rock addressed students, faculty, and staff for Black History Colloquy, visited classes, and presented the 2017 lecture of the Percy and John Christian Civil Rights Conference Center.

ing to official affairs and making a visit to Holly, Mich. to see his daughters, who are students in the Adelpbian Academy at that place.

He left home the night of the 12th to serve the churches in Omaha, Neb., Oklahoma City, Okla., Fort Worth, San Antonio and Houston, Texas, from which place he journeyed to the Florida Camp meeting stopping for a few hours in New Orleans, La., The night of the 27th of Oct., he started from Orlando, Fla., for his home in Detroit for the purpose of . . . making the home comfortable for the Winter, intending to leave early enough to meet his appointment in Milwaukee, Wis., Nov. 3rd. His intention was to return again on the 5th to cast his vote Tuesday.

On his way to Detroit he traveled in a round-about way, using his railroad pass to save the amount of fares to the Cause he loved so much. Having missed his train in Atlanta, Ga., he was forced to spend most of the day in that city, arriving in Detroit about 10:00 P.M. Tuesday.

He was suffering with a severe cold in his head, he said, and wished to take a hot bath for treatment. He retired shortly after the bath. Expressing in weary tones the desire to rest and sleep until morning, because he had not been to bed for four nights, he soon seemed to be sleeping quite naturally, while I remained awake for a while, but finally dropped off to sleep. I was awakened about two o'clock A.M. by the peculiar noise he was making, and thinking that he was troubled with dreams, I tried to arouse him, but soon realized that he

was beyond human help. No word was spoken by him, neither did he show any signs of consciousness. He passed quietly into eternity with his work on earth done. . . Please accept this reply to all and pray for his sorrowing wife and children."

(Jessie Green letter, Oakwood University Archives)

A few weeks later, the General Conference voted to lessen some of the strain on his successors by moving the office of secretary of the Negro Department to Washington D.C., rather than leaving it at the home of the appointee—in Green's case, 526 miles away.

It was shortly after Green's death that Black pastors, convinced that change of residence would never satisfy the crying needs of indigenous leadership, engaged the second major protest—the formal push for Colored Conferences. This was done by petitioning church leadership in the years 1929–30. They were not only refused, they were sternly admonished "never to mention it again!"

However, thirteen years later, the unexpected happened. G. E. Peters, Green's successor, emboldened by a series of socially disturbing "trigger events," in the church and society in general, and knowing that then president, J. L. McElhany, was privately of the opinion that Colored conferences would in-

deed, be helpful, craftily facilitated conversations between McElhany and Black leadership in which the subject was reengaged.

During two eventful meetings held in April, 1944, McElhany, and other world church officers, encouraged Black leadership for the gospel sake, to establish Colored Conferences. Black leadership was not in unanimous agreement. Some thought that White leadership was simply trying to “get rid of them” and voted for the “status quo.” Others regarded the move as an unfortunate abandonment of their long-standing push for full integration. However, Pastor McElhany’s proposal, the strong desire of most Colored leaders, was adopted.

The results speak volumes regarding the wisdom of that decision. Black membership that was 9 percent of NAD’s total then, is 26 percent now, and its tithe, which was \$511,000, is now \$200 million, or 18 percent of the division total, and exceeds all but three of the world church’s thirteen divisions: Inter-America, South America and North America.

The *third* major protest engaged by Black leadership was the push for Black Unions, 1969–1981. It was in summary, *comprehensive, defining, divisive* and, while not eventuating in their stated objective, *very effective; comprehensive* because it riveted the attention of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, as had no prior debate of social concern; *defining* because it drove Black leaders, for and against, to a depth of thought and research that they had never before engaged in; *divisive* because their expressions, written and oral, produced opposite camps of heated opinion which, in unguarded moments, referred to each other on the one hand as angry militants and, on the other, as “Uncle Toms,” with the negative consequences for relationships that this produced healing very slowly, if, for some, at all; and the protest was *effective* because, while the appeal was denied, it stimulated significant change in church racial practice, the most visible of which has been the election of Blacks to the presidency of six of NAD’s ten unions.

We will never know whether or not black unions would have brought about comparable benefits. What is believed by many observant participants is that, had not chairman President N. C. Wilson abandoned all sense of neutrality and advised the delegates against voting in favor of the motion to approve, Black Unions would likely have passed. That is a conclusion that president Wilson, himself, privately shared with me on more than one occasion over the years.

The *fourth* major protest was the contesting of the nine Black conferences of the General Conference retirement system. Black leaders had long since realized that because of lesser Black longevity, and the exponentially higher number of Whites in the retirement system, their contributions to the retirement plan (the same as that of other conferences) were disproportionately funding White retirees. The fact was that black membership, whose pay at the American standard was 59 percent of White America, was providing long term, uneven support for their White colleagues. This, plus the recognition of lesser Black intergenerational wealth on which to depend when retired, led them in the late 1990s to protest and request a change.

Church authorities refused and, in a move that few thought could possibly succeed, and that others regarded as disloyal if not outright rebellious, leaders of these units broke away from the longstanding GC retirement arrangement (regarded by many as sacred), and established their own. The plan, now housing 600 employees, presents retirement privilege after thirty years, rather than the forty years necessary on the G.C. plan; provides approximately \$1,000 more per month to individual retirees; and has commensurate health benefits and an investment portfolio of over \$200 million dollars.

But Black Adventist protest has not been the province of clergy alone. Black laity has, on a number of occasions, effectively expressed itself in this regard. Some individually, but most often in organized approach; among the former, none more authoritatively than Dr. James Howard, Black physician, uncle and mentor of

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Adventist scholar, Eva B. Dykes, first Black female in the nation to receive confirmation for a PhD (Radcliffe University, 1921).

Howard, a leading layman in the Washington, D.C. area in the early twentieth century, staunchly believed that the Adventist church could and should show the world that integrated church fellowship was not only possible but required by gospel mandate. Furthermore, he spared no pains in expressing himself to the highest of church authorities (Ellen White and A. G. Daniels, the GC president), in polite but fervent protest against the decisions of church leaders (for the gospel's sake) to encourage separation of White and Black worshipers in the D.C. area.

His letter to A.G. Daniels, December 3, 1903, is typical. He wrote in part:

I tell you plainly, Brother Daniels, with all respect, that you and your committee are grievously wrong in your cause and policy on the race question... you are wrong at a time when the world is growing worse in this respect and so much needs your wise and corrective influence... the compromising plea of expediency, policy, the demands of the world and doing the thing that good may cause, is too weak and unworthy of our cause... it is difficult to see why it is necessary to make a race line in the Adventist denomination in the face of the fact that the truth involves a positive protest against any such thing in the church... I plead not for any fanatical affiliation of the races. That is not desired by either parties. But in the name of heaven, the message and righteousness I plead for a pure and correct standard and practice in this denomination, of the church which professes to be the last.

Without doubt, the most celebrated lay-group protest was that led by F. W. Hale, Jr., president of Oakwood College, 1966–1972 (and later provost at Ohio State University), who, in 1961, organized The Laymen's Leadership Conference for vigorous address of what he called the "uncompromisingly institutionalized racism" of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

What distinguished the LLC's protest from all others was their willingness to take their complaints public or outside of church circles. Both Black clergy and laity had, until then, almost unilaterally protested within. Hale, however, ably assisted by Adventist journalist Mylas Martin, against the pleading of older, seasoned Black leadership, enlisted the media as allies in the cause. And they were successful.

The threat of exposing the church's racial sins to the public moved the needle of racial progress. It is, with evidence, believed that the threat expressed to G.C. president R. R. Figuhr and other leaders at the 1962 San Francisco General Conference, was responsible for the election of F. L. Peterson to the Church's vice presidency. What is viewed as credible evidence is that, having made it known a few days earlier that Peterson was too old to be considered for the job, the brethren, when threatened with media exposure by Hale's group, abruptly changed their minds.

Dr. Hale, whose degree in speech was always evident in his address, launched his June 22, 1961, challenge of the church's racial policies and practices with the following declaration:

For decades we have ADJUSTED! We have adjusted to segregated churches. We have adjusted to quota systems in our schools our colleges, our professional schools. We have adjusted to the philosophy of "White teachers only" in most of our institutions of higher learning. We have adjusted to the philosophy and practices of "Menial Tasks only" for what few Negroes have served in certain of our publishing houses, sanitariums, and other centers. We have adjusted and adjusted. Now is the time to readjust. Communication is a two-way street. Too long has the information been funneling down; now is the time for reaction and information (of those who have been affected by racism) to start bubbling up. This organization (LLC) is dedicated to the abolition of racial segregation and discrimination within the organizational pattern and framework of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination.

(Hale's Angels Watching Over Me, 176)

It is paradoxical that Peterson, one of those who had pleaded with Hale not to go public, benefited so handsomely from his efforts. It is likewise noteworthy that younger clergy, witnessing his elevation to Oakwood's presidency in spite of his militancy, a few years later gained inspiration for their launching the memorable Black union debate which Hale, labeling it as capitulation to racism, stanchly opposed.

As noted, protest represented so far has been mainly conducted in the Eastern, Southern, and Midwestern areas of the nation; there was not comparable expression West of the Rockies—with one exception—the push for a Black Conference in the Pacific Union.

This movement had tenuous origins in the mid-Fifties, surfaced again unsuccessfully in the Seventies, later in the Eighties, and, perhaps finally most forcefully, in the Nineties, conducted by a group led by the late Dr. Gaines Partridge, with the acronym WURC—"Westerners United for A Regional Conference." The efforts of this organization peaked on March 2, 1994, when a large group of protestors, comprised primarily from Southeastern and Southern California conferences, arrived at the Thousand Oaks, California, union conference headquarters with placards and bullhorns, shouting their demands.

The event was noted by several area newspapers, as well as the *Los Angeles Times*. The March 3, 1994 report of the *Ventura News* blared the headline: "Blacks Protest Adventist Operations" and continued, "about 250 African Americans church members who want to govern their own affairs protested White control by the Seventh-day Adventist church outside the church's headquarters Wednesday. Waving banners that read, 'Let My People Go!'"

Again, while there have, through the decades, been numerous individual protests of mistreatment at various churches and schools etc., there has not been the level of united address to racial inequities seen in the rest of the country. One reason is that the greater mixture of cultures on the West Coast has muted the

intensity, and therefore likely the volatility, of strictly one-on-one cultural interaction between Whites and Blacks.

Another is the percentage of Black Adventists that has migrated to the West, relieved to escape the racial tensions they left behind, with a willingness for patience with such discrimination as they have encountered.

Another is that Adventism in the West, while not without its racial challenges, has, on balance, been more racially accommodating than most parts of the nation.

And I am happy to say that with leaders of the past such as Percy and John Christian; instructors of the past such as the inimitable Charles E. Weniger; the election of a Black female, Heather Knight, as president; and now the creation of a Civil Rights Center, PUC is to be stoutly commended. God bless you, center directors, college leadership, students, and constituency for your vision and energies toward the understanding, establishing, and perpetuation of justice.

May your fervor never wain, your faith never fail, your example be system-wide contagious and the God of justice and mercy prosper you abundantly! ■

Calvin B. Rock, who retired as a vice president of the Gen-



eral Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in 2002, is a native of New York City. He is a graduate of Oakwood College. At the University of Detroit, he earned an MA in sociology and at Vanderbilt University he received Doctor of Ministry and Doctor of Philosophy degrees, both in religious ethics. In 1971, he became the eighth president of Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama, where he served for 14 years. He loves to write and is the author of eight books and editor of another. A third-generation Adventist, his maternal grandmother was in the original class at Oakwood in 1896, and later served as chamber nurse for Ellen G. White. He and his wife Clara, now in their 65th year of marriage, have three daughters, five grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

**The very
first or earliest
of protests
was conducted
by Charles
Kinney...the
first Black
to be ordained
to Adventist
ministry.**

Table 5

Impact of Religion	Strongly Disagree + Disagree	Not Sure	Strongly Agree + Agree
When I came out, my religious beliefs triggered feelings of guilt and shame.	21.4%	3.4%	75.2%
Given my parents' religious beliefs, they had difficulty accepting my sexual orientation and/or gender identity.	10.2%	7.5%	82.4%
My parents prayed that God would change my sexual orientation and/or gender identity.	12.5%	27.1%	60.4%
My parents used Scripture to try to talk me out of my sexual orientation and/or gender identity.	36.7%	6.4%	57.0%
My parents drew upon their religious beliefs to help them understand and support my sexual and/or gender journey.	44.5%	18.5%	37.0%
My parents took me to a pastor for prayer and counseling to change my sexual orientation and/or gender identity.	70.2%	4.8%	25.0%

(37.0%) of parents drew upon their religious beliefs to help them understand and support their child's sexual and/or gender journey. Because only one-third of respondents came out to their parents while they were in their teen years, it is likely that

Ties that Bind → continued from page 41

identity. Table 5 shows that religious beliefs triggered feelings of guilt and shame in three-fourths (75.2%) of respondents. Most parents were heavily influenced by their religious beliefs, with 82.4% of respondents saying that religious beliefs led to difficulty in parents accepting their orientation and/or identity. Almost two-thirds (60.4%) of parents prayed that God would change their child's orientation and/or identity, and well over half (57.0%) of parents used Scripture to try to talk their child out of their orientation and/or identity. One-fourth of parents (25.0%) took their child to a pastor for prayer and counseling to change their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. In contrast, about a third

these percentages underestimate the behaviors of parents trying to change their children's beliefs.

Dependent Variables

Social Support

Respondents were asked questions about current levels of social support using the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (PSSS). Tables 6–8 show selected social support questions, organized by the categories of Friends, Family, and Caregiver/Clergy/Church. Researchers combined Very Strongly Agree and Strongly Agree responses into the same category in order to better highlight similar results. Findings show strong differences between the three categories. Social

Table 6

Social Support: Friends	Very Strongly Disagree + Strongly Disagree	Mildly Disagree	Neutral	Mildly Agree	Strongly Agree + Very Strongly Agree
There is a special person with whom I can share my joys and sorrows.	4.2%	4.8%	6.4%	14.7%	70.0%
There is a special person in my life who cares about my feelings.	3.2%	5.4%	6.7%	15.4%	69.2%
There is a special person who is around when I am in need.	5.8%	6.1%	4.8%	15.3%	68.1%
My friends really try to help me.	1.6%	1.6%	5.4%	23.6%	66.7%
I have a special person who is a real source of comfort to me.	5.4%	5.4%	7.0%	16.3%	65.8%
I can talk about my problems to my friends.	2.9%	3.2%	5.1%	24.3%	64.9%
I can count on my friends when things go wrong.	2.2%	1.9%	9.3%	24.9%	61.7%

Table 7

Social Support: Family	Very Strongly Disagree + Strongly Disagree	Mildly Disagree	Neutral	Mildly Agree	Strongly Agree + Very Strongly Agree
My family really tries to help me.	10.6%	8.3%	18.5%	27.5%	34.2%
My family is willing to help me make decisions.	10.9%	8.9%	18.5%	27.5%	34.2%
I get the emotional help and support I need from my family.	25.0%	14.4%	8.3%	27.6%	24.7%
I can talk about my problems with my family.	27.6%	12.5%	11.5%	27.5%	20.5%

Table 8

Social Support: Professional Caregiver, Clergy Person, and/or Religious Congregation	Very Strongly Disagree + Strongly Disagree	Mildly Disagree	Neutral	Mildly Agree	Strongly Agree + Very Strongly Agree
I have a professional caregiver (therapist, healthcare provider, etc.) who is an important source of support to me.	36.2%	9.9%	19.9%	13.1%	20.8%
I have a clergy person who is an important source of support to me.	58.0%	8.0%	11.5%	10.6%	11.9%
My religious congregation is an important source of support to me.	56.7%	9.0%	14.7%	10.3%	9.3%

support from friends (Table 6) was generally strong, with respondents saying they have a special person or friend who: (a) *cares about my feelings* (69%); (b) *is around when I am in need* (68%); (c) *I can talk about my problems* (65%); and (d) *I can count on when things go wrong* (62%).

In contrast, family members were considered to be much less available and helpful. Table 7 shows that social support from family was moderate to low, with between 42% and 21% believing their family was available for support. Respondents Very Strongly Agreed or Strongly Agreed that: (a) *my family really tries to help me* (42%); (b) *my family is willing to help me make decisions* (34%); (c) *I get the emotional help and support I need from family* (24%); and (d) *I can talk about my problems with my family* (21%).

Finally, caregivers, clergy, and religious congregations (Table 8) were generally not considered to be good sources of social support for respondents. Respondents Very Strongly Agreed or Strongly Agreed that: (a) *I have a professional caregiver who is an important support* (21%);

(b) *I have a clergy person who is an important source of support* (12%); and (c) *my religious congregation is an important source of support* (9%).

High-Risk Behaviors

While Seventh-day Adventists have a strong tradition of abstinence from using alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, we asked questions about drug and alcohol use to better understand possible risk behaviors (no table provided). Almost one-fourth (22.3%) said they used alcohol weekly, with another 17.7% saying they used alcohol between three or more times per week. In addition, 10.0% of respondents used tobacco three or more times per week. Almost 10% of respondents used marijuana weekly or more often. Finally, 14% of respondents said they had passed out or lost consciousness as a result of using drugs or alcohol within the past five years.

We asked two questions relating to risky sexual behaviors (no table provided). Almost one-fourth (22%) had had unprotected anal or

They often have no one to talk to about this and are left to figure it out alone and on their own.

**It is possible
that in the
North American
Division
population of
1.2 million
members,
approximately
45,000–50,000
members could
self-identify
as LGBT+.**

vaginal sex with a casual partner or a steady partner who was non-monogamous within the past six months. Of that group, 4% (12 respondents) had had sex with someone who was HIV positive. We did not ask the HIV status of the respondent.

Depression and Suicidality

We asked a series of questions relating to nine standard clinical criteria for depression that occurred over half or more of the days in the two weeks prior to the survey (no table provided). Thirty percent of respondents reported low energy and 29% said they had sleep difficulties. In addition, respondents reported appetite problems (21%), feeling bad or like a failure (19%), and trouble concentrating (19%). Sixteen percent reported anhedonia, 14% said they felt down or hopeless, 10% reported moving or speaking slowly, and 5% said they had suicidal thoughts.

We also asked three questions relating to suicidality. Almost one-third (31.7%) of respondents said they had thoughts of suicide or thoughts of ending their life during the past six months. Almost one-third (29.0%) had made a suicide attempt at some point in their life. Of this group, almost a third (29.5%) said that their suicidal thoughts or attempt(s) were related to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Discussion

There are several limitations that merit a brief mention. The first limitation is that many of the family acceptance variables are measures of the *perceptions* of the participants in this study. While perceptions are important and often shape a person's reality, it may also be true that parents may not have intended, or even perceived that they had rejected or stigmatized their child. Well-meaning parents, attempting to love their child, may have shared with them their understanding of God's word and the child may have perceived parental rejection as a result. The difficulties of researching perceptions and their impact on reality can be very challenging. Despite one's best ef-

forts, love can be perceived as rejection. Second, the findings of this study are limited by the memories of the respondents. Memories can be unreliable, but accurate or not, can shape perception and subsequent behavior. Finally, we did not ask questions about the extent of family trauma, including sexual abuse, violence, substance abuse, or neglect. Family dysfunction can emerge in all family types, not just those with LGBT+ children, leading to mental health challenges and at-risk behaviors on the part of children in response to those traumas.

With those limitations in mind, this preliminary analysis of the data indicates that many LGBT+ individuals have experienced a great deal of suffering and rejection from family members and churches as a result of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Although we continue to analyze the comments made by 277 of the respondents in this survey, we have selected a few key quotes to represent some of these challenges. One respondent stated, "After I came out, I was much happier in general but far more isolated from my church community support network. This was particularly devastating as the SDA church was an integral part of all primary and secondary school systems in the area." A common response from many is represented in what one respondent stated when she said: "[Coming out] has definitely changed the family dynamics [which has since] disappeared and there is no longer trust and/or 'real' love in the house. Everything is now dependent on me being, in their words, 'normal.'" Another shared, "[After coming out], my grandmother sent me a letter full of Bible verses. My grandmother does not speak to me now. I am dead to her."

When LGBT+ youth come out to their parents, the conversations that need to occur between them are often difficult, filled with varying feelings of shock, fear, grief, and confusion. Too many of our LGBT+ youth experience rejection rather than support on the very difficult journey that they are on. "My dad lost it," one participant stated. "He said horrible things to me, like he would have preferred I was a drug addict. He said

he would pay for me to go to any doctor to cure me. He said I had ruined his life and he would never be able to show up in church again.” In the midst of the rejection it is also possible to see that hurting and confused family members don’t know where to turn for help as they try to sort out how best to help their LGBT+ child.

We recognize the courage and strength it takes for a Seventh-day Adventist LGBT+ individual to come out to family and friends and we particularly wish to thank those who took the time and emotional energy to participate in our research. As can be seen from this study, such actions often result in confusion, emotional pain, and isolation on the part of LGBT+ individuals. Many will also wrestle with their own, their family’s, and their church’s understanding of scripture surrounding LGBT+ issues. At such times it is important to remember that God still loves and supports them, even as parents and church members wrestle with the meaning of texts about homosexuality. Such confusion can sometimes make it difficult to understand and come to terms with their orientation or identity. That said, it is also important to remember that there are a small but substantial group of families who *have* provided support and love to their LGBT+ children, thereby making the difficult journey of coming out less painful and challenging than it might have otherwise been.

In response to our findings, we believe it is important for parents with LGBT+ children to understand: (1) that they are not alone; (2) that it takes great strength and courage for an LGBT+ child to come out; (3) that parental reaction to their child’s coming out has a direct impact on their wellbeing; (4) that the importance of their support, even if they are confused or uncomfortable with their child’s orientation or identity, is key for their child’s welfare; (5) that significant others (parents, families, friends, church, youth pastors) need to seek understanding and knowledge of LGBT+ issues; (6) that affirming their love for their struggling young person is their first business, not trying to change their child’s sexual orientation or gender identity; and, (7) that it is

important for parents to communicate to their LGBT+ children that both they and God love them unconditionally as they work to come to terms with their child’s orientation or identity in the context of their religious beliefs.

It is our hope that this research will contribute to the growing awareness of Seventh-day Adventist church members, and the larger community, of the challenges faced by Adventist LGBT+ youth as they first come to terms with their same-sex attraction and identity. Understanding how LGBT+ children perceive the responses of parents, friends and church members can help all these groups to develop more caring and helpful responses to the LGBT+ persons they know. In addition, information from this study could aid General Conference, North American Division, and Union and Conference leaders in family ministry positions as they begin to develop resources for LGBT+ persons, their families, and the congregations in which they worship. Such resources would help family members, friends, church members, and pastors to be more supportive as we walk this journey with our LGBT+ youth and fellow churchgoers.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church would do well to proactively address the needs of its LGBT+ members and their families. Many of our churches are not prepared to welcome with graciousness either one of their own, or a member of the community, who is same-sex attracted or transgender. Leaving families and young people to figure out and deal with this major life event alone without the faith community’s support and love is counterproductive for all. Beginning steps might include learning to listen without judgment, addressing our own fears about sexuality, exploring resources that can help LGBT+ persons and their families, providing the same generous, unconditional welcome that Jesus did with the outcasts of his day, and providing spaces for honest, humble conversations about this difficult issue.

If we wish to keep Seventh-day Adventist LGBT+ youth and adults in our congregations, we must create safe, loving spaces for LGBT+ in-

**Two-thirds
(65.8%) [said]
that one or
both of their
parents
responded as
if their
orientation or
identity
were a poor
reflection
on them.**

Caregivers,
clergy, and
religious
congregations
were generally
not considered
to be good
sources of
social support
for respondents.

dividuals to attend and flourish. Rather than hearing condemnation, they should be welcomed and included as equals before God and other church members. While everyone in the church may not agree on the interpretation of Biblical texts, all can agree that the greatest commandment is to love. While there may be much discussion about how that love is demonstrated, it must start with conversations that make room for greater levels of understanding and compassion. It is only in these sometimes difficult spaces of conversation that long-term change in the church will happen. And, as we are trying to manifest this love in meaningful ways, we must remind ourselves that we are all beneficiaries of God's continuing grace. This grace can allow us to offer tangible love and support to LGBT+ children and their families, thereby creating safe spaces where all can be embraced as God's beloved children. ■

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Modern Faithful Adventist

BY RAY MCALLISTER

Adventist:

I am the very model of a modern, faithful Adventist.
All 28 beliefs with 20 prooftexts I will gladly list.
I know the GC presidents and quote their works historical
From Byington to Wilson, all in order categorical.
I'm very well acquainted, too, with matters theological
I understand all arguments both founded and illogical.
I can discuss Christ's nature and the pre and post-lapsarian
Post-lapsarian?
Ah, yes.
And I can shoot down heresies both docetist and Arian.

All:

And he can shoot down heresies both docetist and Arian.
And he can shoot down heresies both docetist and Arian.
And he can shoot down heresies both docetist and Ari-arian.

Adventist:

I know the books by Ellen White and their abbrevia-tions
And quote them very effortlessly in all situa-tions.
In short the 28 beliefs and prooftexts I will gladly list.
I am the very model of a modern, faithful Adventist.

All:

In short the 28 beliefs and prooftexts he will gladly list.
He is the very model of a modern, faithful Adventist.

When Ray McAllister received his PhD in Hebrew scriptures from Andrews University, he was the first blind person to accomplish that feat. On page 7 of this issue there is an interview with Ray about his other "firsts" as well as the rest of this poem, based on the "Modern Major-General's Song" by Gilbert and Sullivan.