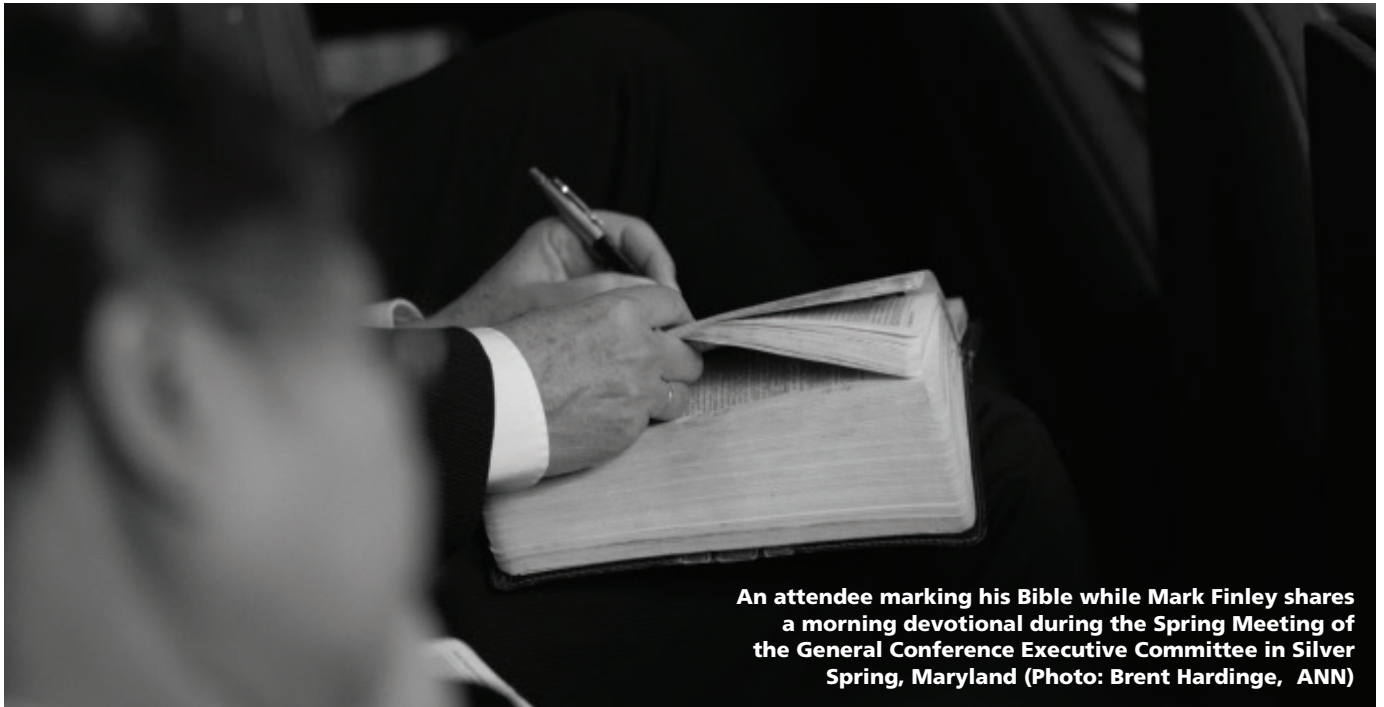


Spring Meeting Postlude | BY BONNIE DWYER



An attendee marking his Bible while Mark Finley shares a morning devotional during the Spring Meeting of the General Conference Executive Committee in Silver Spring, Maryland (Photo: Brent Hardinge, ANN)

IMAGE SOURCE: [HTTPS://WWW.FLICKR.COM/PHOTOS/ADVENTISTNEWSNETWORK/40495300995/IN/ALBUM-72157689764631580/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/adventistnewsnetwork/40495300995/in/album-72157689764631580/)

The General Conference Executive Committee completed its work early and was adjourned at noon on Wednesday, April 11. As the members were making their way to the airport a document that curiously never made it onto the agenda was posted on the Adventist News Network. Under the headline “An Invitation to Uplift Jesus: A Statement from the General Conference Executive Leadership and Division Presidents,” the document resembled in many ways the loyalty-oath portion of the document sent back to committee from Annual Council 2017. This time the request for loyalty was being made to independent organizations, with the One Project being singled out as an example.

We appeal to all organizations and initiatives that are united with us in mission to reaffirm or to respond positively in their official communication channels to the following crucial questions.

Seven questions follow, touching on substitutionary atonement, the role of doctrine, understanding of the heavenly sanctuary, uniqueness of Adventism, literal six-day creation, biblical authority and prophetic interpretation, support for church teaching on marriage and the family and LGBTQ relationships, and church membership in the light on Scripture.

The full document follows below, or read it directly on ANN's website.¹

To honor and exalt Jesus is the foundational commitment of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and undergirds its prophetic message expressed in the 28 Fundamental Beliefs. Salvation by Faith alone leading to a life of discipleship to Jesus is the goal of our mission. As we proclaim the three angels' messages let us make sure that Christ stands at the center of all our activities and initiatives.

A number of entities both inside and outside the church organization have been founded for the purpose of exalting the name of Jesus. Such an honorable task also brings the challenge of proclaiming a Christ in harmony with His Word. It is our conviction that the Jesus whom Seventh-day Adventists are to follow and emulate is the One revealed in the Bible—the One who presented Himself as the Truth and upheld the authority of the Scriptures. It is of utmost importance that we never forget that Jesus identified Himself with “the way and the truth and the life” (John 14:6). He is actually the Word (John 1:1).

Church leaders are often asked for advice on how to relate with some initiatives and organizations, some of which are well established and widely accepted, such as ASI-recognized entities, which have long cooperated with the church and its leadership. A more recent development is the One Project (now apparently transitioning to become the Global Resource Collective), about which some questions have been raised. Therefore, the General Conference executive leadership with Division presidents has decided to offer some guidance regarding the evaluation of any initiative seeking church endorsement.

We commend those who, prior to joining any initiative or movement, study for themselves to assess whether such movements are in accordance with the revealed will of God (Acts 17:11). As Jesus Himself advised us: “You will know them by their fruits” (Matt 7:16). He also gave the warning, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven” (Matt 7:21).

In harmony with the conviction expressed above that the name of Jesus must be uplifted in ways consistent with His propositional revelation in Scripture, we invite our church leaders and any concerned individuals to assess the biblical foundations of any ministry or evangelistic initiative in the light of Isaiah 8:20: “To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

The Church will be eager to work with all who share its prophetic message expressed in

the 28 Fundamental Beliefs. In light of issues that have been raised regarding some recent initiatives, the following questions although not exhaustive provide some guidance for an assessment of such groups. We appeal to all organizations and initiatives that are united with us in mission to reaffirm or to respond positively in their official communication channels to the following crucial questions:

1. What does it mean to accept Jesus Christ? When we say we accept Christ is this a mystical Christ of experience only, or, does it mean an acceptance of the doctrinal truths He taught, or, both? Does such ministry or initiative uphold the substitutionary atonement of Jesus?

2. How do they understand the role of doctrine in Christian faith? Is there an organic connection between the person of Christ and the teachings or doctrines of Christ? Is there the understanding that knowing Christ necessarily includes knowing and living His teachings and the Biblical truths He taught?

3. What is their understanding and support of the message and mission the Adventist church in the light of its prophetic mission? How do they express their understanding of 1844 and Christ’s ministry in the heavenly sanctuary?

4. Do they have a clear understanding of the uniqueness of the Seventh-day Adventist movement? Are they clear in how Adventist faith differs from other evangelical denominations that exalt Jesus?

5. What is their understanding of creation? Do those involved in new ministries and initiatives believe that God created this world in six literal days and rested on the seventh day in the recent past as understood and voted in our 28 Fundamental Beliefs?

6. What is their understanding of biblical authority and prophetic interpretation? Do they accept the historicist explanation of Bible prophecy and do they share the Adventist understanding of the little horn of Daniel 7, the beast powers of Revelation 13 and the antichrist of Scripture, and that faithfulness to Christ will ultimately climax in a conflict over the law of God with the Sabbath at

the center of that final controversy?

7. Due to current perceptions of gender and sexuality, which contradict the biblical teaching on marriage and the family as accepted by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, these pertinent questions must also be asked: How do they understand gender identity and the question of LGBTQ+ relationships to church membership in the light of Scripture? Do they have a clear, unambiguous and biblical understanding of this subject?

Organizations, groups, or individuals that cannot affirm the 28 Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and provide clear and unambiguous answers to the questions above should not expect endorsement from the organizations of the Church. The General Conference executive leadership with Division presidents invites

every member and entity of the church to uphold the name of Jesus by presenting him to the world and living according to His will. In doing so, Jesus must be proclaimed in connection with the truth as revealed in Scripture and understood by Seventh-day Adventists. Consequently, we reaffirm our utmost commitment, which is to preach “Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Cor 2:2).

—General Conference Executive Leadership and Division Presidents ■

Bonnie Dwyer is editor of *Spectrum* magazine.

Footnotes:

1. <https://news.adventist.org/en/all-news/news/go/2018-04-11/an-invitation-to-uplift-jesus/>.

Responding to the General Conference’s Latest Document

| BY BONNIE DWYER

In “An Invitation to Uplift Jesus: A Statement from the General Conference Executive Leadership and Division Presidents,” (see *above*) the One Project is used as an example of an organization of whom questions should be asked regarding their stand on certain matters of church doctrine.

Asked for their response, two of the former leaders of the One Project replied.

Japhet J. De Oliveira, senior pastor, Boulder SDA Church said,

I do believe that the General Conference Executive Leadership and Division Presidents have been, once again, tragically misinformed. I will press on. I will preach in season and out of season. When it is acceptable and when it is not acceptable. I will always unabashedly lift up the name of Jesus.

“Indeed, I count everything loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my

Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ...” Philippians 3:8.

Paddy McCoy, pastor for young adult ministries, Kettering Seventh-day Adventist Church, said,

For seven years, my life has been changed by a deeper focus on the Jesus of Scripture. During that time, with the support of brothers and sisters and leaders in the Adventist church, I have had the incredible privilege to minister to 2,000 university students a year, teaching them about a walk with Jesus and trying desperately to keep them active members of the Adventist church. We have gone on mission trips, cared for the homeless in our community, sung to the elderly, raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for projects around the world, many with ADRA and Adventist hospitals, we have