



# Safe Places

## *Newsletter*

*March 2014*

“Instructors in our schools should never be bound about by being told that they are to teach only what has been told hitherto. Away with such restrictions. There is a God to give the message His people shall speak.... That which God gives His servants to speak today would not perhaps have been present truth twenty years ago, but it is God’s message for this time.”

—Ellen White *Manuscript 8a 1888*, a talk to ministers delivered on October 21, 1888.

“Ask and it shall be given unto you. Seek and ye shall find. Knock and the door will be opened unto you”  
(Matthew 7:7, 8).

This month we're delighted to have articles by three people with decades of high-quality contributions to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Over his 35-year career, Mitch Tyner was a pastor, religious liberty director, and Legal Counsel to the General Conference. Reinder Bruinsma is a long-time pastor and church administrator. He is about to leave his home in The Netherlands for a quarter of teaching at Loma Linda University. Reinder earned his PhD in church history at the University of London. Gilbert Valentine is chair of the Department of Leadership and Administration at La Sierra University. All three men share a passion for understanding our Adventists roots and developing ways to incorporate that understanding as we address issues we face today.

For the next few months we will be testing a new format for this newsletter. Based on feedback at a recent Safe Places meeting, we're working to make it easier for you to access the articles and/or information that is most interesting or helpful to you. In each section we will have an introductory paragraph and then a link to the rest of the article. You will be able to scan the overall topics in just a page or so. We'll be delighted if you are able to take the time to let us know what you think.

This month we are beginning our series on ways we have addressed "heated" theological topics in the past. Our first article is Gil Valentine's short discussion of our journey toward a Trinitarian view of Jesus.

We had a request to share some of the research and professional thinking about "reparative therapies" and "change ministries." You'll find an overview in our research section as well as a list of 135 references for those of you who would like a more in-depth study of this topic.

We added three new short videos to our resource section. Jonathan Haidt's 20-minute TED talk goes over some of the basic constructs of our notion of morality, taking a look at ways both conservatives and liberals bring valuable perspectives to some of the difficult ethical conversations of our day. We've included a talk by Tony Campolo about working with a gay son. Since Exodus was one of the longest standing support groups for orientation change, we included a film by some of their former leaders.

This month, as many of you already know, there will be a summit on homosexuality, organized by the administration of the General Conference. The organizers chose to present primarily, if not exclusively, one side of this topic that is affecting many individuals, families, and congregations inside our denomination. Many people wrote to the organizing committee requesting that two perspectives of the issue of lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender/intersex Adventists in the church be shared. We've included four of their e-mails.

As always you are welcome to share this newsletter with anyone you think would enjoy and benefit from reading it. If you know of anyone who would like to be added to the mailing list, we can be reached at [SafePlaces@buildingsafepaces.org](mailto:SafePlaces@buildingsafepaces.org). If you have comments, critiques, questions, concerns, or a desire to chat with us, you are most welcome to write. If you would like to be taken off our mailing list, you can reach us at the same address.

We wish you many blessings,

Catherine Taylor and the Safe Places Team:

Ruud Kieboom, Floyd Poenitz, Frieder Schmid, Ingrid Schmid, and Elodie Souil



### **Public Policy Issues Involving Homosexuality: An Adventist Response**

Homosexuality—more particularly, the status of homosexuals and their relationships before the law—has become one of the most confrontational, divisive topics of our time, both politically and theologically. Recently, numerous jurisdictions have moved significantly toward legal equality for homosexuals, including listing sexual orientation as a protected category in local or state human rights statutes and recognizing homosexual marriage or domestic partnership.

How do we, corporately and individually, relate to the religio-political questions involving homosexuality that are currently producing so much heat and so little light? What are the considerations that should be involved in the formation of an Adventist response to such public issues?

*Read more on page 4*

### **Love Lost in Translation: Homosexuality and the Bible. (Book Review)**

K. Renato Lings is a Danish biblical scholar and linguist who has focused much of his academic work on the biblical stories and passages that are often quoted as having a negative bearing on homosexuality. In this new, independently published book he has provided us with a very comprehensive study on this topic. This substantial book can make a significant contribution to the ongoing debate among Christians about the biblical arguments for and against same-sex relationships.

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### **Recent Research**

In 2007, a task force of the American Psychological Association undertook a thorough review of the existing research on the efficacy of reparative therapy. Their report noted that there was very little methodologically sound research on sexual orientation change efforts (SOCEs) and that the “results of scientifically valid research indicate that it is unlikely that individuals will be able to reduce same-sex attractions or increase other-sex sexual attractions through SOCE.” In addition, the task force found that “there are no methodologically sound studies of recent SOCE that would enable the task force to make a definitive statement about whether or not recent SOCE is safe or harmful and for whom.”

*Read more on page 10*

### **Reaction to Cape Town Summit**

The Seventh-day Adventist church is planning a large, international summit on homosexuality this month in Cape Town, South Africa. The organizing committee, including General Conference President Ted Wilson, has planned four days of sessions talking about LGBT people or “alternative sexualities.” While they invited three people who describe themselves as ex-gay, they are not allowing active lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex Adventists to share their own stories.

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### **How Clearer Views of Jesus Developed in the Adventist Church**

Discussions of the doctrine of the Trinity are again rippling the surface of Adventist reflection on the nature of the Godhead. In some quarters the eddies of discussion gurgle quietly. In other places the water is just plain choppy.

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### **Resources**

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## Public Policy Issues Involving Homosexuality: An Adventist Response



*By Mitchell A. Tyner - Maryland, USA*

**H**omosexuality—more particularly, the status of homosexuals and their relationships before the law—has become one of the most confrontational, divisive topics of our time, both politically and theologically. Recently, numerous jurisdictions have moved significantly toward legal equality for homosexuals, including listing sexual orientation as a protected category in local or state human rights statutes and recognizing homosexual marriage or domestic partnership.

How do we, corporately and individually, relate to the religio-political questions involving homosexuality that are currently producing so much heat and so little light? What are the considerations that should be involved in the formation of an Adventist response to such public issues?

Consider four questions: the first two scriptural and timeless, the last two more contemporary. The list is not exhaustive; it should include, but is not limited to, the following.

### 1. Does the proposed position maximize human freedom?

To be faithful to scripture, our positions on public policy issues should work to maximize human freedom to the highest appropriate level. Arguably, the most revealing scripture passage involving freedom is Luke 15, the passage that I call The Story of the Waiting Father.

A young man, raised on an affluent but remote farm, went to his father and said, “Dad, I’m bored. I’m tired of living way out here. I want to experience the world for myself. I want to go to the big city. I want to do my own thing. And Dad, I want you to give me an advance on my inheritance to finance the trip.” Nothing in either Jewish or Roman law gave the father any obligation to grant that request, but he did.

The son left, wealth in hand, headed for the bright lights. As long as the money lasted, so did his social status. But soon he found himself in a descending socio-economic spiral. His money gone, he was forced to earn his livelihood by doing something most hateful to a young Jew: feeding hogs.

He awoke one morning in the pigpen, looked around him and said, “What a miserable state of affairs! What a genuine wreck I have made of my life.” He sat there in the mud and composed the speech he would offer to his father. He would say,

“Father, I have sinned before you and before God. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Just hire me and let me live out in the bunk house with the hired hands.” With that, he started home.

The father had never given up on his son’s return. One day, far off down the road, he sees a pathetic figure limping along. He’s lame, he’s ill-kempt, and he’s dirty. But the father immediately recognizes him as his son. He hurries off the porch, down the path, through the gate, and down the road to meet his son. As they meet, the son begins his prepared speech of contrition:

“Dad, I’ve blown it; I’m not worthy to be called your son...” and he never gets to finish the speech. It’s as though the father said, “Son, I know, I understand. We’ll talk about that another time. For now, all that matters is that you’re home. Come inside; we’ll celebrate your return!” With that, he covered this filthy figure with his best cloak, put a ring on his finger, and led him to the house, where the celebration began.

The older son heard the sound of the celebration and asked one of the hired hands what was happening. He was told, “Your brother’s back and your father’s throwing a party.” But the older brother refused to join the celebration. Eventually

the father came to him and said, “We’re celebrating your brother’s return. Come in and join us!”

The elder brother said, “Look, Dad, I’ve been with you all these years. I have obeyed your every command. I have done everything you have asked but you never threw a party for me. Now this son of yours comes home after wasting your money and his life and you expect me to celebrate? Why should I?”

Notice that the elder brother was factually correct, which merely shows that one may be quite correct but very wrong as to the correct interpretation and application of those facts.

Notice also that the elder brother referred to “your son,” not “my brother.” The father replied, “Your brother was lost, and has been found; he was dead and he is alive to us again. It is proper that we celebrate!”

Who was right in that story, the father or the son? The father, of course. The father represents God, our Father. The son represents us, for each of us has at one time or another wandered away from our spiritual home.

The father allowed his son to leave because, ultimately, he was interested in his relationship

## 2. Does the suggested position maximize equality?

Again, to be faithful to scripture, our positions on public policy issues should work to maximize human equality to the highest appropriate level. Consider the Gospel of Luke, chapter 10. Jesus was confronted with a questioner—a lawyer, a young scholar of religious law who had heard of Jesus and wanted to put Jesus’ teaching on the record. The dialogue went something like this:

*Lawyer:* Rabbi, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

*Jesus:* What do you read in the law?

*Lawyer:* You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.

*Jesus:* You read well. Now go and do that and you will live.

When confronted with an unwanted answer, one may acquire at least a little wiggle room by seeking to further define one or more terms used in the answer. So the lawyer replied, “And just who is my neighbor?”

Knowing that his questioner was not amenable to a straight answer, Jesus chose to answer indirectly, through a story, the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

with his son. He wanted a relationship with his son that was possible only when the son was ready to enter into it voluntarily. The father would not be satisfied with coerced obedience.

Here is a parable that illustrates an important facet of the great controversy between good and evil, a key historic Adventist teaching. God could have created us in such a manner that we could not have sinned. He didn’t, because He wanted a relationship with us based on our choice to establish it. He refused to coerce us. But doing that cost Him dearly. It cost Him the life of His son at Calvary, paid so that we could relate to Him freely. Every person is free to relate to God freely, according to their conscience, not someone else’s.

What are we to learn from this story? First, that God put a tremendous value on freedom. He could have prevented Calvary, but didn’t, because He would not coerce our obedience. Second, that we have no business, like the older brother, being more judgmental with each other than our Father is with us. Third, we have been given an example that speaks to our own attitudes and actions: If God went to that length to not coerce us, then how dare we, his children, coerce each other?



“A certain man,” said Jesus “went down from Jerusalem to Jericho...” At the end of the tale, dialogue between Jesus and his interrogator resumed.

*Jesus:* Now, which of these three do you think acted as a neighbor to the injured man?

*Lawyer:* Obviously, the one who stopped to help.

*Jesus:* Exactly. Go and do likewise.

Isn't it interesting what Jesus did not say to the lawyer? He did not say to him, "Go and study the scrolls. When you can properly and coherently exegete the prophecies and explain Ezekiel's vision of the wheels within wheels, then come back and we will discuss your future course of action." Jesus spoke nothing of what the questioner should know or believe, only of what he should do. He spoke not of orthodoxy, but of orthopraxy. He simply said, "Go and do likewise."

Four characteristics of the Samaritan's response bear emulation. First, it was a caring response. The Samaritan obviously cared enough about the injured man's predicament to endanger himself in order to help. Second, it was an involved response. Third, it was a committed response. The Samaritan not only bound the wounds of the victim, he volunteered to financially underwrite his care for an indeterminate period. Now that's commitment! Fourth, it was a relevant response. The Samaritan got immediately involved and did what needed to be done at that moment.

Perhaps most importantly for this discussion, all of this was for someone with whom the Samaritan would have been in profound disagreement theologically, politically, and otherwise. There was no pondering of theological convergences, of historicities, of cultural affinities. There was no consideration of public opinion or of the opinion of other Samaritans, no mapping of potential geopolitical consequences. The Samaritan did not see a Jew (or an Edomite or a Roman or Greek or whoever the victim was); he just saw a person in need and recognized that he had the ability to meet the need presented.

How does this story inform our response to such questions as equal rights for homosexuals—or anyone else? It says that our response must be caring, involved, committed, and relevant. It must not be deterred by the approbation of many for the object of our care, or by the potential threat to our own standing. We must be prepared to evenhandedly aid those for whom we can be of service, regardless of their agreement—or lack thereof—

### 3. Is the proposed position informed by our history?

For Seventh-day Adventists to be responsible, our positions on public policy issues should take cognizance of the applicable lessons found in our own history. We have experience with the negative results of efforts by well-meaning people to enact their views and religious convictions into law.

Consider the effects of the national Sunday law drive of the late nineteenth century. The national

with our beliefs and interpretations. How could such considerations ever lead us to deny equal rights to homosexuals or anyone else? In the current context, a consideration of the interrelationship of freedom and equality is necessary, for equality rights not infrequently act as a restraint on freedom. We do not exercise our freedom in a vacuum, but in the context of social relationships. As Paul said, "None of us lives to himself." Paul also observed, "All things are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient." A responsible exercise of our freedom always considers the effect of our actions on the rights and needs of others. Since the late 1990s, there has been, within the church-state community, a running discussion concerning whether or not sincere religious belief should constitute a valid defense to a charge of violating the equality rights of others. What was this discussion really about?

Homosexuality. The question was whether a sincerely held religious belief that one should not employ or rent to homosexuals should be a valid defense to a charge of violating protected rights. Difference of opinion on that question is so deeply held that it has prevented the religious community from achieving broad-based protection for free exercise of religion since that time.

How do we answer that question? Should our religious beliefs allow us to discriminate? When we put the question in the context of race, the answer is clear for most people. Just because a person sincerely believes that he should not hire or rent to a person of color should not relieve him of the duty of non-discrimination. In this instance, the equality rights of one trump the religiously motivated practice of the other.

Few will argue against that position—until they recognize that it cannot be distinguished on any principled basis from the question of equality rights of homosexuals. It simply comes down to the fact that one is generally accepted in our society; the other is not—yet.

bill was stopped, but the effort to enforce Sunday observance was not. Rather, the scene of activity shifted to the states.

During 1895 and 1896, at least seventy-five Seventh-day Adventists were prosecuted in the United States and Canada under state or provincial Sunday laws. Some were fined; a few were acquitted or were lucky enough to have their cases

dismissed. But twenty-eight served jail terms, aggregating 1,144 days. Those prosecuted were targeted not just for their conduct but for the reason behind it: the choice to worship on the seventh-day Sabbath.

The 1890s may have been the high-water mark in the prosecution of Sabbatarians, but the flood did not recede immediately. In 1923, three Seventh-day Adventists were arrested in Massachusetts and fined for painting the interior of a house on Sunday in order to get it ready for occupancy the next day. In 1932, a deputy sheriff of Washington County, Virginia, arrested two Seventh-day Adventists for Sunday work: one, a crippled mother who walked on crutches, for washing clothes on her own premises, and the other, a man who donated and hauled a load of wood to a church to heat it for religious services. As late as 1938 a Massachusetts storekeeper was arrested for selling fresh eggs on Sunday, at a time when it was legal to buy cooked eggs, beer, and liquor and to attend sports events and movies.

Beginning in 1940, a line of Supreme Court cases established that the First Amendment, including the religion clauses, had indeed been made applicable to state and local governments via the

Fourteenth Amendment, thus opening the door to Sunday-law challenges based on those clauses. In 1961 those challenges found their way to the Supreme Court. The questions raised by the R. M. King case in 1891 would finally be answered by the High Court seventy years later. It's just as well that King didn't live to hear the answer: Sunday laws were upheld as no longer religious in nature. That claim would have been impossible to make with a straight face in 1891.

The point? Adventist activism of an earlier day averted two bills in Congress and came very close to producing a fundamental change in the law. Our own history should teach us what we can accomplish in the area of human rights when we put sufficient resources into the effort. Our own history teaches us that when even sincere, well-meaning people seek to use the law to enforce their views of morality on others who do not share those views, bad things happen to good people. That lesson, coupled with an awareness of the potency of our advocacy, rightly motivated and focused, should place us in the front lines of those defending equality rights today.

#### 4. Is the proposed position in the best interest of the church?

Certainly the best interest of the church is a valid consideration. None will wish to jeopardize the church by advocating, in its name, a particular position. Some will argue that the best interest of the church is served by keeping a low profile on social and political issues. They will cite Ellen White's advice that the church in the south should remain segregated, at least for the time, and that we should not publicly oppose Bible reading in the public schools. Those statements must be read and understood in the context of a time in which the church was fragile and vulnerable. Public opinion was such that advocacy on those issues would have cut off almost all avenues of witness. Is that true today? Would advocacy on behalf of equality rights for homosexuals negate the ability of the church to witness to society? On the other hand, will continued silence on the issue negate our ability to communicate with thinking people who espouse a principled view of the matter?

Our society is no longer monolithic on these issues; we do not face a situation analogous to the times in which Ellen White wrote.

More fundamentally, how can it ever be in the church's interest to act other than in accordance with scriptural counsel and instruction? The Bible clearly tells us that God puts a tremendous value on human freedom. Our divinely given example is one who rendered aid where it was needed, not as a "respector of persons." Our own history shows the dangers that follow the legislation and imposition of religious beliefs and religiously based moral convictions on those who do not share them. To act on these principles cannot be other than in the best interest of the church. Indeed, to fail to do so would be an indictment of the church, an irresponsible neglect of the church's best interest.



### Love Lost in Translation: Homosexuality and the Bible.

K. Renato Lings, Trafford Publishing, 2013 (xlvi, 738 pages)

By Reinder Bruinsma, Ph.D.

**K** Renato Lings is a Danish biblical scholar and linguist who has focused much of his academic work on the biblical stories and passages that are often quoted as having a negative bearing on homosexuality. In this new, independently published book he has provided us with a very comprehensive study on this topic. This substantial book can make a significant contribution to the ongoing debate among Christians about the biblical arguments for and against same-sex relationships.

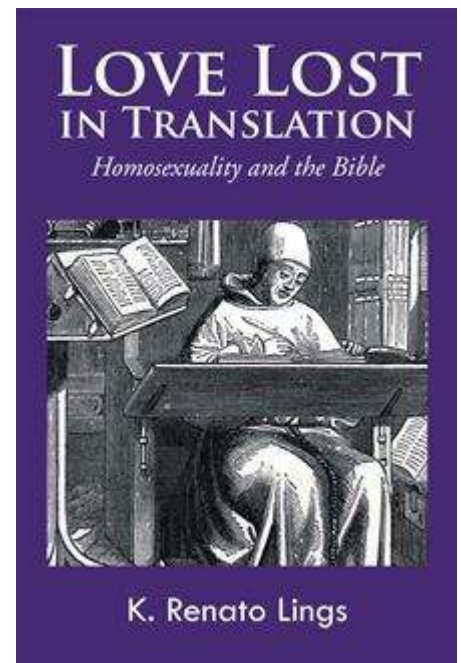
The author deals in meticulous detail with the Old Testament and New Testament passages that are usually cited as the prominent anti-gay texts in the Bible. In this review I will just refer to the most important sections of the book and will add a few critical remarks.

#### Content

When dealing with the *story of Noah's nakedness* and the "sin" of Ham, Lings argues that the Hebrews text does not contain any homoerotic elements, but rather emphasizes the sin of disrespect for parents.

The treatment of the *story of Sodom* fills about 200 pages. In a careful analysis of the key words that the narrator of Genesis 19 employs, the author makes a convincing case for his view that what happened in Sodom does not provide ammunition for the debate regarding committed same-sex relationships as we know these today. The central issue of the story has to do with hospitality—an all-important facet of ancient culture. The interest of the men of Sodom in Lot's male visitors resembles what we today would call a gang-rape rather than a committed homosexual relationship. The compromise suggested by Lot to let the Sodomites "take" his two unmarried daughters, is perhaps more problematic; but Lings' conclusion that the frequent occurrence of legal terminology in the story may well suggest that these daughters were "given" as a "pledge" to seal Lot's honorable intentions with his two visitors, appears to be quite convincing.

*Leviticus 18:22*—often seen as one of the most striking condemnations of homosexuality in Scriptures—contains a number of serious linguistic complications and seems, after all, not to be as straightforwardly anti-gay as might appear on the surface. Issues of incest and family and property rights appear to be involved.



Lings argues on linguistic grounds that it is far from certain that *Deuteronomy 23:17, 18* refers to male temple prostitution, as most modern Bible versions assume. The Hebrew terms may refer to "consecrated" temple functionaries in a more general sense.

The *Gibeah scandal* that is found in *Judges 19 and 20* has justifiably been referred to as a "terror text." This horrendous story has often been used to stigmatize homoerotic relationships, but Lings capably shows that many other factors probably play a much more prominent role. The story plays out against the backdrop of the struggle for political supremacy between the camp of Saul and that of David. It contains many parallels with the Sodom story, but neither story informs us in any significant way about the morality of homosexuality as we know it today. Lings maintains that the anti-gay bias that we find in our modern Bible translations is "the product of lengthy theological inertia perpetuated by authoritarian ideologies since the days of the early church, partly based on some letters attributed to Paul" (p. 19).

Lings' linguistic analysis of Paul's statement in *Romans 1:26, 27* sheds an interesting light on this passage that is also often regarded as a prominent anti-gay text, and as a clear statement that specifically also condemns lesbianism. However, originally Paul's reference to "unnatural" (*contra natura*) relationships was not understood as referring to same-sex relationships. This view only emerged



when later theologians interpreted it along those lines. Paul describes some (not readily identifiable) acts that are shameful and dishonorable; his words indicate that these acts were socially unacceptable, without, however, pronouncing a theological verdict and calling them “sin.” The significance of Paul’s use of the *aorist* (the tense that puts the events into a considerable past) in these Bible verses is often not sufficiently recognized. Paul seems to refer to some well-known past scandal with which his readers are assumed to be familiar.

## Approach

The author subjects the various stories and passages to a thorough linguistic analysis. He investigates whether the key terms are also used elsewhere in the original Hebrew and Greek, and if so, in what sense. He also frequently refers to rabbinic comments on Old Testament passages. His overall conclusion is that in most cases these terms do not carry the overtly anti-gay connotation that these texts did, over time, acquire. He points out that the Septuagint and the Vulgate played an important role in introducing an anti-homosexual bias into later translations of these Bible passages. He cites many instances where early church and medieval theologians contributed to this tendency and discovers the same with regard to such early translators as Wycliffe and Tyndale.

An important step in Lings’ argumentation is his demonstration how many of these anti-gay elements that are found in ancient translations and commentaries, have been accepted and often further reinforced by the translators of modern English Bible versions.

Only people with a considerable expertise in Biblical languages can fully evaluate the strength of Lings’ linguistic arguments. I do not consider myself to be sufficiently qualified to do so.

Nonetheless, a few important questions emerge in my mind. Is Lings’ rather negative view of the

## Concerns

Perhaps my main concern is the one-sidedness of Lings’ study. Even though his linguistic analysis is of great value, it, unfortunately, is not solidly embedded in a systematic theological framework. Lings has, I think, convincingly shown that the question of the morality of committed homosexual relationships, as we know these today, is not addressed in the specific Bible passages that are frequently used to condemn such relationships. However, a biblical theology of sexuality must

Lings furthermore argues that the Greek words *malakos* and *arsenokoitai* in *1 Corinthians 6: 19, 20* do not necessarily have to be understood in the anti-gay sense they have often acquired in modern Bible versions. The former word may carry the sense of “weakling” or “softie,” while the latter term could refer to exploitative forms of sex, rather than to male-male sexual relationships in general.

Vulgate and, in particular, of the Septuagint (LXX), fully justified? Jerome, the main translator of the Vulgate, is widely recognized as a prominent scholar with great linguistic skills, and most scholars tend to attach great value to the rendition of the LXX, since the LXX translators had access to more ancient Hebrews texts than the Masoretes.

It would appear that Lings’ selection of the twelve modern English versions that he consistently consults is rather arbitrary. Several important English versions would also be expected in his list, while some of the versions he has included are not all that prominent. His choice to include the *New World Translation*, produced by the community of Jehovah’s Witnesses, seems rather unusual. It would have strengthened Lings’ study if he had provided a clear rationale for his selection and/or would have included a few prominent versions in other languages than English.

Lings points to the considerable anti-gay bias of many of the translators and commentators, who have mediated the Hebrew and Greek texts to us. But, in all fairness, it must also be recognized that Lings himself also writes from a particular perspective, i.e. as a Christian gay-advocate—a fact that inevitably influences his selections and interpretations.

have a much broader basis than a linguistic analysis of these key passages. A theology of sexuality will, however, gratefully use the building blocks that Lings has put at its disposal when it tries to provide us with a systematic Christian approach to the study of gender issues and sexuality. It would have been helpful if the author had given more attention to that aspect, or at least had stressed the need for additional study in this direction.

Yet, my overall reaction to Lings' book must be one of profound admiration for the thorough linguistic research he has undertaken and for the easily accessible way in which he has presented his findings. He has powerfully reminded his readers of the fact that translations are always interpretations, and that in the course of Christian history undoubtedly much anti-gay interpretation has

been injected as the result of a growing aversion against intimate same-sex (and, in particular, male-male) relationships. When people argue that a number of Bible texts "*very clearly*" condemn all homoerotic practices, they may be referred to Lings' book where they can discover that this biblical condemnation is really *not as clear* as they may have hitherto thought.



## Recent Research

In 2007, a task force of the American Psychological Association undertook a thorough review of the existing research on the efficacy of reparative therapy. Their report noted that there was very little methodologically sound research on *sexual orientation change efforts* (SOCEs) and that the “results of scientifically valid research indicate that it is unlikely that individuals will be able to reduce same-sex attractions or increase other-sex sexual attractions through SOCE.” In addition, the task force found that “there are no methodologically sound studies of recent SOCE that would enable the task force to make a definitive statement about whether or not recent SOCE is safe or harmful and for whom.”

Scientifically rigorous older work in this area (e.g., Birk, Huddleston, Miller, & Cohler, 1971; James, 1978; McConaghy, 1969, 1976; McConaghy, Proctor, & Barr, 1972; Tanner, 1974, 1975) found that sexual orientation (i.e., erotic attractions and sexual arousal oriented to one sex or the other, or both) was unlikely to change due to efforts designed for this purpose. Some individuals appeared to learn how to ignore or limit their attractions. However, this was much less likely to be true for people whose sexual attractions were initially limited to people of the same sex.

Although sound data on the safety of SOCE (Sexual Orientation Change Efforts) is extremely limited, some individuals reported being harmed by SOCE. Distress and depression were exacerbated. Belief in the hope of sexual orientation change followed by the failure of the treatment was identified as a significant cause of distress and negative self-image (Beckstead & Morrow, 2004; Shidlo & Schroeder, 2002).

Although there is also insufficient evidence to support the use of psychological interventions to change sexual orientation, some individuals modified their sexual orientation identity (i.e., group membership and affiliation), behavior, and values (Nicolosi, Byrd, & Potts, 2000). They did so in a variety of ways and with varied and unpredictable outcomes, some of which were temporary (Beckstead & Morrow, 2004; Shidlo & Schroeder, 2002). Based on the available data, additional claims about the meaning of those outcomes are scientifically unsupported.

The World Health Organization's ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World\\_Health\\_Organization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Health_Organization)) ICD-10 (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ICD-10>), which is widely used internationally outside of North America (where DSM-IV-TR is used), states that “sexual orientation by itself is not to be regarded as a disorder” ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexual\\_orientation\\_change\\_efforts#cite\\_note-icd-75](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexual_orientation_change_efforts#cite_note-icd-75)). It lists ego-dystonic sexual orientation ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ego-dystonic\\_sexual\\_orientation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ego-dystonic_sexual_orientation)) as a disorder instead, the diagnosis for which is when “the gender identity or sexual preference (heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, or prepubertal) is not in doubt, but the individual wishes it were different because of associated psychological and behavioral disorders, and may seek treatment in order to change it.”



In 2012, the Pan American Health Organization (the North and South American branch of the WHO) ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pan\\_American\\_Health\\_Organization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pan_American_Health_Organization)) did not support “reparative therapies” with non-heterosexual sexual orientations" as they "lack medical justification and represent a serious threat to the health and well-being of affected people", and noted that "there is a professional consensus that homosexuality is a normal and natural variation of human sexuality and cannot be regarded as a pathological condition". The organization further called "on governments, academic institutions, professional associations and the media to expose these practices and to promote respect for diversity." They further noted that adolescents have sometimes been forced to attend these therapies involuntarily, being deprived of their liberty and sometimes kept in isolation for several months, and that these findings were reported by several United Nations ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_Nations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations)) bodies. Additionally, the organization recommended that such malpractices be denounced and subject to sanctions and penalties under national legislation, as they constitute a violation of the ethical principles of health care and violate human rights ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human\\_rights](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights)) that are protected by international and regional agreements.

Mainstream health organizations also critical of attempts to change sexual orientation include the American Medical Association ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American\\_Medical\\_Association](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Medical_Association)), American Psychiatric Association ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American\\_Psychiatric\\_Association](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Psychiatric_Association)), the American Psychological Association ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American\\_Psychological\\_Association](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Psychological_Association)), the American Counseling Association ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American\\_Counseling\\_Association](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Counseling_Association)), the National Association of Social Workers ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National\\_Association\\_of\\_Social\\_Workers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Association_of_Social_Workers)), the American Academy of Pediatrics ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American\\_Academy\\_of\\_Pediatrics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Academy_of_Pediatrics)), the American Association of School Administrators, the American Federation of Teachers ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American\\_Federation\\_of\\_Teachers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Federation_of_Teachers)), the National Association of School Psychologists ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National\\_Association\\_of\\_School\\_Psychologists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Association_of_School_Psychologists)), the American Academy of Physician Assistants, and the National Education Association ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National\\_Education\\_Association](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Education_Association)).

For a list of 135 references to help you with more in-depth study of this topic...

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## Reaction to Cape Town Summit

By Daneen Akers

The Seventh-day Adventist church is planning a large, international summit on homosexuality this month in Cape Town, South Africa. The organizing committee, including General Conference President Ted Wilson, has planned four days of sessions talking about LGBT people or “alternative sexualities.” While they invited three people who describe themselves as ex-gay, they are not allowing active lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex Adventists to share their own stories. The perspectives of the three invited speakers exacerbate stereotypes that gay people lead broken, addictive, and wildly promiscuous lives (a stereotype that is clearly taken seriously in several African countries and has resulted in the recent draconian legislation enacted in Uganda and Nigeria.).

The list of presenters can be found at <http://ingodsimage.adventist.org>.

The break-out session titles include “Alternative Sexualities: A Disorder or a Choice?” by a church physician. We find it troubling that the options listed in the title would indicate either psychological or spiritual pathology. Another session is on “Conversion/Reparative Therapy” by the editor of *Homosexuality, Marriage, and the Church*. This book promotes “conversion therapy” as a viable option for many LGBT individuals despite research that has indicated how damaging that therapy can be to those who undertake it. Here is the full list of the break-out sessions: <http://ingodsimage.adventist.org/breakout-sessions.html>.

*Letter from Ronoldo Appleton*

Dear Elder Oliver,

I am a 29-year-old gay Seventh-day Adventist. I was born and raised a Seventh-day Adventist in Jamaica, West Indies, during which time I was very active in my church as an Adventurer, Pathfinder, Master Guide, and even deputy director for our Pathfinder Club. I also preached on several occasions on Children’s Days, spoke during Youth Weeks of Prayer, officiated at numerous services and programs, and was very involved in the Adventist Youth program. I enjoyed participating in district Easter weekend camps, conference summer camps, and camporees. I am encultured as a Seventh-day Adventist and I am a follower of Christ. My church views me in a completely different light, however, because of my sexuality.

I am writing to you because of the summit dubbed “‘In God’s Image:’ Scripture, Sexuality, and Society Summit,” which the General Conference has organized to take place in Cape Town later this month. The information to be presented in the summit is very unsettling for several reasons:

- The summit refers to me, and others like me, as “people of alternative sexualities orientation/practices.” This is very dissociating terminology.
- The summit’s “learning objectives” seem to center on how to deal with me and people like me, yet there seems to be very little understanding of who I am; and there has been no demonstrated effort to reach out to me or other LGBTI people to learn from us who we are.
- The summit presents speakers whose experiences represent two unrelated extremes: what the church has accepted as a stereotype of who I am now and what the church proposes as a prototype of who I should become. But there is no attention or voice for the diverse experiences of other LGBTI people who lead normal, happy, godly lives without those extremes. [NOTE: Godly should be capitalized only when referring to God. In this case it is referring to humans.]
- The summit topics show a church that seems to be more concerned with public relations, legal protection, image conformity, and social exclusivity, rather than the love of Christ and love for others that the church taught me should guide us in every circumstance.

The use of the term “alternative sexuality” is belittling and verbally abusive because it offers little respect for who I am and, at the very outset, strips away my authenticity. The term assumes that I have options for my orientation and have chosen to go against the standard, that I am “choosing an alternative.” This is a



terrible conclusion to start with: we've not had an unbiased conversation about me or people like me and all that has molded us. Also, the summit couples "orientation/practices," and so establishes the false idea that who I am as a gay person defines specific things that I might do.

For as long as I can remember, I have never felt any attraction to someone of the opposite sex. I am not camouflaging myself or making a statement of convenience; this is a plain fact. However, as I grew up in Jamaica, there were times when my culture and church pressed me to pretend and to be inauthentic. Culture and religion insisted that I needed to be attracted to women, and that if I felt otherwise, I was going against nature, and that I should hate who I am and must change. I cannot count the number of abusive sermons from the church pulpit I had to listen to that directly insinuated hate, harm, and destruction for anyone who happens to be gay or lesbian, and that claimed these insinuations were rooted in scripture.

These sermons made me hate myself. Several times I contemplated suicide as a means of freeing myself from my orientation. I figured that since all the prayer and supplication did not change who I am, and since I was being taught by the church that I am unloved and unacceptable to God, I was doomed to eternal damnation, there was nothing more I could do, and there was no redemption for me. These teachings were what spiritually drove me from the church and from God: it had absolutely nothing to do with sex, drugs, alcohol, or any desire for "worldly pleasure," as some speakers so often claim. It was not because I am gay that I ran from God, but because the church taught me that if I was gay, I had no chance to be one with God.

I am older and wiser now. I know that God loves me unconditionally, and that there is no power on earth that can separate me from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. It is this truth that pulled me back to God and guides me each day. *I am a gay child of God*, and that is neither a disorder nor a choice, as one of the session titles suggests; and God has a plan for my life that does not seem to involve "striking me straight" or having me live as a broken heterosexual.

The summit that is planned profiles three self-proclaimed "ex-gay" individuals: Wayne Blakely, Ron Woolsey, and Virna Santos. Mr. Blakely and Mr. Woolsey, as well as a third *Coming Out Ministries* partner, Michael Carducci, often speak of their dark past of sexual promiscuity, drugs, alcohol, and a lifestyle of addictions. They tell how abuse, environment, and circumstance channeled them toward a destructive lifestyle, and how that was followed by "redemption from homosexuality." I know they will tell you and other church delegates these stories.

I do respect their views, and I salute them for overcoming a destructive lifestyle and for having the courage to share their story. At the same time, their experiences do not resemble anything that I, or a vast number of LGBTI people, have ever experienced. The Church has to disassociate lifestyle choices such as drugs, alcohol, and promiscuity from homosexuality. Treating all LGBTI people as having made those lifestyle choices is like saying that because I am black, I must sing rap music and wear cow chains around my neck! To stereotype like this does a disservice to who I am, and it is a false portrayal. Relying on the *Coming Out Ministries'* stories alone will either give or reinforce to the church delegates in Cape Town a very skewed image of who we are. Please imagine a gay person being told by a pastor who was informed by this summit that he should "come out" of a lifestyle of prostitution and drugs or alcohol, but who has never even experienced any of those things. I know so many LGBTI people who have been treated like this—all because church workers weren't properly informed or have stereotyped LGBTI people.

The summit in Cape Town needs to present some of these other stories too if the church genuinely desires to minister to its LGBTI members; there are many people who would be willing to share their narratives with you at the summit. I hope you've already had a chance to see the film, *Seventh-Gay Adventists*. It gives an unadulterated sneak peek into the experiences of some of the LGBTI Seventh-day Adventists that I know. By offering delegates a viewing of this film you would help them to achieve a more accurate view of us. Of course, nothing will trump having actual people with you to participate in the discussion. It's important to talk *with* us rather than just *about* us or *at* us.

I imagine church leaders will be attending the summit from all over the world. Because the church has been silent on the subject of sexuality and gender identity for so many years, I imagine a number of attendees might be discussing the subject openly for the first time in their lives. Many might have never knowingly met a gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or intersex person before, and they'll carry with them attitudes and customs from their cultures and communities.

I cannot help but call your attention to the inhumane anti-LGBTI laws that have passed in Nigeria, Uganda, India, and Russia, and that were even considered here in the United States this year. People have already been detained, imprisoned, and even killed since the Nigerian, Russian, and Ugandan laws were

implemented. And people don't even need to be LGBTI themselves to be accused of breaking the law; in Nigeria, you could be imprisoned for not reporting an LGBTI family member or church member.

But it is no secret how the laws came about in these three countries. United States evangelicals Scott Lively and Lou Engle traveled to these countries, rousing the people by spreading propaganda about LGBTI people at evangelistic rallies and instilling fear in their audiences. Lively openly claimed responsibility for the "success" when the laws were passed. I was horrified at this because I am a Christian and because of my own experience in Jamaica.

I have lived in a country where LGBTI people are violently attacked on a regular basis and our church is silent about it. Jamaica has seen many gross beatings, burnings, mob attacks, and murders of people who were even as much as perceived to be LGBTI. For that reason, to protect myself I sought asylum in the United States. Many people in Jamaica hold very strong anti-LGBTI views, and they are always held in the name of religion: the culture of homophobia in Jamaica is nurtured by religious people, and the same is true for many other nations where Adventism is well represented, like Uganda and Nigeria.

**Some summit attendees will be very impressionable. They will most certainly take the summit's message and tone back to their homes. By mischaracterizing who we are to them, you could help set the stage for more Ugandan/Nigerian/Russian-style laws elsewhere, with religious people's consent. Our church should not be linked to tolerating the repression and bloodshed of LGBTI people anywhere. You have the opportunity to impact the entire world with God's grace. Please, I ask you and all the leaders planning the summit, to let your attendees see more sides of us and have an unbiased conversation; we are God's children, too.**

Christ's unconditional love reaches all. While He lived on earth, He set the example of calling all people, Jews and Gentiles, Roman and Greek, to His side. When He broke bread and fish it was for all, and when He ministered, He ministered to everyone who would hear Him. This summit could be your chance to make the Adventist church a house of prayer for *all* people.

I pray that the love of Christ will shine on the summit and the Holy Spirit will pour out wisdom on you.

Yours in Christ,  
Ronoldo Appleton  
Seventh-day Adventist – Baptized 1994

### *Letter from Carrol Grady*

Dear Elder Mwansa,

You probably don't know who am, but you might remember meeting my husband, Bob Grady, in the airport in Dakar when his SAGE team was on its way to build a church and hold evangelistic meetings in Zambia. Both Bob and I were at the General Conference some 25 years ago.

I understand that you are the chairman of the General Conference Committee that has been studying homosexuality. As the mother of a gay son and the surrogate mother to hundreds more Adventist gay and lesbian people, I am writing to express my concerns about the upcoming summit in Cape Town.

My biggest concern is that no one is speaking for the vast majority of Adventist lesbian and gay people at this summit. Once again, we are talking *about* people but not *to* them, in a real conversation, where we attempt to understand each other.

I realize that you will have three members of *Coming Out Ministries* who will tell their stories; but they are in no way typical of the thousands of faithful Adventist gay and lesbian members of the church who have not spent their lives as prostitutes or in a promiscuous, drug-filled lifestyle.

It seems to me that, unless there is a willingness to listen to *all* the voices in the church, this is just a very, very expensive exercise in rubber-stamping. I hope this is not how our tithe money is being spent.

Elder Mwansa, I am a loyal and faithful fourth-generation Adventist. From that perspective I say this with the utmost love and respect: I very much fear that our church is going in the wrong direction.

It has been 23 years since we learned that our son is gay. I have been studying this issue ever since. In these last decades I have seen much new information and better understanding of the biological aspects of

homosexuality and other sexualities and gender identities. I am not sure that all of our top church leaders have kept up with this knowledge.

I have read many books on both what church leaders have considered traditional theological understanding, and the more recent theology expressed in our church as well as in others, in the light of increased understanding about homosexuality.

I have watched other denominations and other world religions who have struggled with this issue. I am convinced that this is a *present truth* that the Holy Spirit is bringing to the world. Are we going to ignore it because it is new to us and uncomfortable? Or can we hold this issue in a holy tension between people of different understandings, as we have done about the nature of Christ or the role of women?

Over the past nearly quarter century, I have heard stories that would make the hardest heart weep, of how people of *alternative sexualities* have been treated in our church. I will be praying that the Cape Town Summit will be an occasion for the Holy Spirit to truly open people's hearts to see the mistakes made in the past and to change course.

In Christian love,  
Carrol Grady

*Request from Yolanda Elliott*

“If, as you say, you wish to gain a greater understanding of our sexualities and gender identities, families, employment concerns, pastoral needs, and spiritual lives, please allow us to participate in this conference. What we have to say is important, and no one knows our stories better than we do.”

—Yolanda Elliott, President, SDA Kinship International



## Resources

### Feature Film



*Free copies for Seventh-day Adventist pastors and teachers*

Our hope and prayer making *Seventh-Gay Adventists: A Film About Faith on the Margins* has always been to spark authentic dialogue with (and not just “at” or “about”) LGBTI members of the Adventist church (and beyond). The listening spaces that have opened up at screenings and home viewings have been profound. People have realized that it's not about a theological debate; it's about listening, really listening, to the stories and perspectives of those most marginalized and least allowed to share their experiences in our pulpits and publications. Because of the importance of these conversations, we are offering the film for free to any Adventist pastor or teacher who requests a copy. The digital copy is entirely free, and the DVD version will only cost the shipping fees while supplies last. If you'd like to watch this film for yourself or share it with a

Sabbath school class, home discussion group or class, please contact Daneen Akers at [daneen@daneenakers.com](mailto:daneen@daneenakers.com).

Here are a few of the endorsements the film has garnered:

“The movie, which simply tells stories rather than taking an advocacy stance, is powerful. It can, I believe, do much to make Adventists more compassionate.”

—Dr. William Johnsson, retired editor, *The Adventist Review*

“Whatever one’s position regarding homosexuals and the church may be, this film is worth seeing because it candidly probes issues with real human faces and stories.”

—Dr. Roy Gane, author and Andrews seminary professor

“No matter one’s views going into the film, one comes out better understanding the human responsibility, let alone the church’s responsibility, in dealing with its LGBT children and members. I defy anyone to see this film dry-eyed. It will change you. You’ll leave with Christ’s words ringing in your ears, ‘I tell you the truth, whatsoever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it for me.’”

—Dr. Lawrence T. Geraty, president emeritus, La Sierra University

“This film is—hands down—the best bridge-building film in this genre that I’ve seen.”

—Andrew Marin, author of *Love Is an Orientation*

“A must-see documentary film about the crossroads between faith and sexual identity. Thank you for being gracious and generous and for putting a spotlight on grace.”

—Pastor Ray Dabrowski, communication director for the General Conference  
from 1994 to 2010

“The film is superb, a poignant and profound experience beyond any I’ve seen on the subject.”

—Chris Blake, author and professor of English at Union College

“If you are processing how a ‘follower of Jesus’ should respond to someone whom society has labelled as LGBT, you owe it to yourself to add this documentary to the list of resources you are considering. I was unexpectedly blown away.... I cannot recommend this film highly enough.”

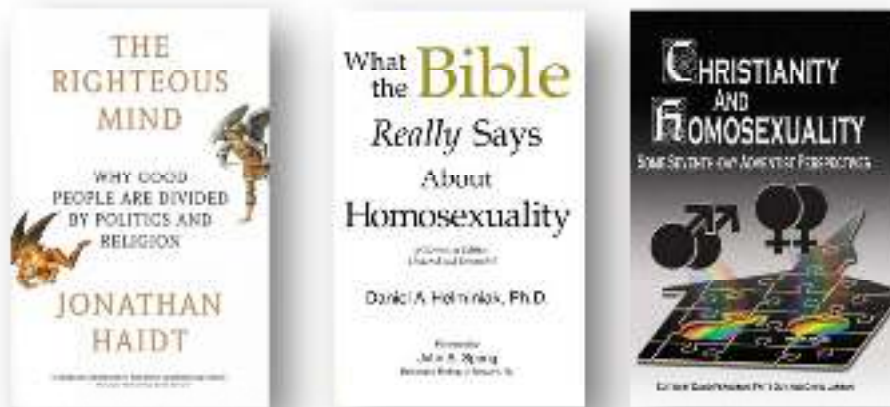
—Herb Montgomery, author of *Finding the Father* and director of Renewed Heart Ministries

The digital and DVD versions include English closed captioning and subtitles in English, French, and Portuguese, as well as a great deal of special features (such as an intro and Q&A and over 30 minutes of additional footage).

To learn more about the film, please visit <http://www.sgamovie.com>.

Thanks for being part of this conversation,  
Stephen Eyer & Daneen Akers,  
Co-producers/directors

Books



*The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion*  
by Jonathan Haidt

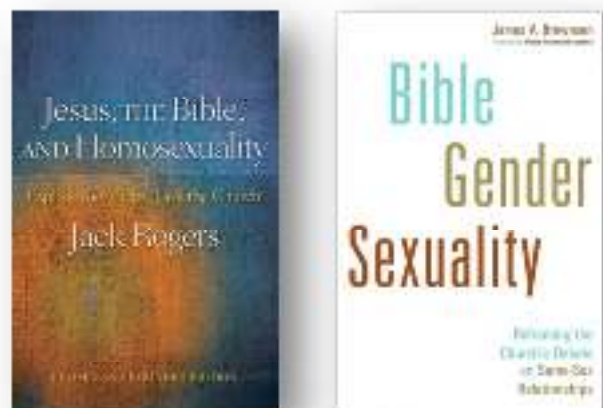
*What the Bible Really Says about Homosexuality*  
by Daniel A. Helminiak

*Christianity and Homosexuality: Some Seventh-day Adventist Perspectives,*  
edited by Fritz Guy, David Larsen, and David Ferguson

More information at <http://buildingsafeplaces.org/index.php/resources/christianity-and-homosexuality-some-seventh-day-adventist-perspectives.html>.  
Sdagayperspectives.com

*Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality*  
by Jack Rogers

*Bible, Gender, Sexuality*  
by James Brownson



### Pamphlets



#### *Living Eden's Gifts*

A Bible study that addresses Old and New Testament texts often used to condemn same-sex relationships. You can order a copy or copies of this study in pamphlet form by writing to [info@BuildingSafePlaces.org](mailto:info@BuildingSafePlaces.org). You can find it online at <http://buildingsafeplaces.org/index.php/resources/living-eden-s-gifts.html>

#### *Homosexuality: Can We Talk About It?*

<http://buildingsafeplaces.org/index.php/resources/homosexuality-can-we-talk-about-it/homosexuality-can-we-talk-about-it-english.html>

### Short Videos

*Teaching Empathy* – <http://www.wimp.com/homeroomteacher/>

This video shows unique ways a Japanese teacher works with his students to help them understand others.

*It Gets Better* – <http://www.itgetsbetterforadventists.org/>

The *It Gets Better Project* is an internet-based project founded in the United States. Its goal is to prevent suicide among LGBTIQ youth by having gay adults convey the message through social media videos that these teens' lives will improve. The project has grown rapidly: over 200 videos were uploaded in the first week, and the project's YouTube channel reached the 650-video limit in the next week. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suicide\\_among\\_LGBT\\_youth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suicide_among_LGBT_youth) - cite\_note-Savage\_sfgate\_1010-29 The project is now organized on its own website, the *It Gets Better Project* (<http://www.itgetsbetter.org/>) and includes more than 30,000 entries, with more than 40 million views, from people of all sexual orientations, including many celebrities. A book of essays from the project, *It Gets Better: Coming Out, Overcoming Bullying, and Creating a Life Worth Living*, was released in March 2011. The link above is the one made by and for Seventh-day Adventists.

*A Gay Son* by Tony Campolo – [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWYtkn\\_8D-g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWYtkn_8D-g)

*Exodus* (former ex-gay support group leaders speak out) – [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDiYeJ\\_bsQo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDiYeJ_bsQo)

*The Righteous Mind: Moral Roots of Conservatives and Liberals* by Johnathan Haidt – [http://www.ted.com/talks/jonathan\\_haidt\\_on\\_the\\_moral\\_mind](http://www.ted.com/talks/jonathan_haidt_on_the_moral_mind)

*We are Seventh-day Adventists: Every Story Matters* – a new stories site (coming soon!)

### Websites

***Someone to Talk To*** - <http://www.someone-to-talk-to.net>

This ministry is for friends and families of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex Seventh-day Adventists. Its goal is to:

- provide a listening ear for parents who desperately need a “safe” person with whom to talk;
- help parents work through their initial emotions of shock, anger, shame, grief, and pain;
- enable parents to get past focusing on their own suffering so they can begin to understand their children’s situations and the confusion and rejection they have experienced much of their lives;
- encourage parents to demonstrate God’s unconditional love to their children; and
- provide information and resources in the hope that they will help our church to move beyond ignorance and prejudice and to reach out with true compassion and understanding to those who so often have not been treated the way Jesus modeled.

**The Trevor Project**- <http://www.thetrevorproject.org/>

*The Trevor Project* is an American non-profit organization that offers an around-the-clock crisis and suicide prevention helpline for LGBTQ youth. The project “is determined to end suicide among LGBTQ youth by providing life-saving and life-affirming resources including our nationwide, 24/7 crisis intervention lifeline, digital community, and advocacy/educational programs that create a safe, supportive, and positive environment for everyone.” Though the crisis line is not available outside the United States, the digital community and information about the advocacy/educational programs is.



**American Association of Suicidology Warning Signs of Suicide**

<http://www.suicidology.org/web/guest/stats-and-tools/warning-signs>.

**The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

A free, 24-hour hotline available in the United States to anyone in suicidal crisis or distress. Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Learn more at <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>.

**American Association of Suicidology Risk Factors for Suicide and Fact Sheets**

<http://www.suicidology.org/web/guest/stats-and-tools/fact-sheets>.



## How Clearer Views of Jesus Developed in the Adventist Church



By Gilbert M Valentine, published in *Ministry*, May 2005, 14-19.

**D**iscussions on the doctrine of the Trinity are again rippling the surface of Adventist reflection on the nature of the Godhead. In some quarters the eddies of discussion gurgle quietly. In other places the water is just plain choppy.

Adventists as a whole have not always been Trinitarian in belief as a number of recent authors such as Gerald Wheeler, George Knight, Woodrow Whidden, Jerry Moon and Merlin Burt<sup>i</sup> have pointed out. Some Adventists still think that we should not be trinitarian.

Many early Adventist pioneers such as James White, Joseph Bates, J. H Waggoner and R. F. Cottrell were, in fact, strongly anti-trinitarian. They came from a Christian Connexion (Disciples of Christ) or similar church background and brought their strong anti-creedal, anti-trinitarian theology with them. This was how it came to be that semi-Arian concepts of Christology were fairly deeply imbedded in early Adventist beliefs and literature.

When did the change to Trinitarianism occur?

As Jerry Moon points out in his recent jointly published volume on *The Trinity*, “an irreversible paradigm shift” occurred in the church in the 1890s, spurred along by the publishing of Ellen White’s publishing of *Desire of Ages* in 1898. This influential book on the life of Christ reflected Mrs White’s own developing understanding and called attention “to scriptures whose significance had been overlooked.” Its publication contributed to a “complete reversal” of Adventist thinking on the Trinity and it became a kind of “continental divide.”<sup>ii</sup>

Because theological concepts are inter-connected and inter-related, the paradigm shift inevitably had a deep and far reaching impact on the church’s understanding of other parts of its theology as I

show in my biographical study of leading church theologian, W.W. Prescott. The development enabled the church to give its distinctive message in a new gospel context.<sup>iii</sup>

The change did not happen quickly of course. It took many years. But how did the change happen? What lay behind it? What motivated it?

Did Ellen White simply initiate the changes in the late 1890s through some special burst of revelation or insight? Or did the development occur as the result of some sort of focused bible study on the topic occurring in the church? Was there some sort of “agitation and discussion” happening somewhere in the background?

Noted Bible teacher and evangelist, Elder Milan Andreason and others advocated the first explanation. Andreason clearly gave this impression in his repeated recalling of his own and the churches astonishment at reading in *Desire of Ages* the “revolutionary” statement on the self-existent deity of Christ, “in Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived.”<sup>iv</sup> In Andreason’s mind this was clearly an unexpected burst of new light with no prior background discussion “of any sort.”<sup>v</sup> This view was apparently widely held in the denomination.

Ministry editor Leroy Froom on the other hand suspected there was more to it than that? As he understood things, “the Spirit of prophecy was never the instrument to initiate doctrine, or other truths among us.” Rather, new perspectives and understandings “have come from study,” he suggested. Froom’s inquisitiveness in the mid 1940s



led to his seeking out witnesses of what had been happening during the period when the changes

occurred.<sup>vi</sup>

## How And Why Does Doctrinal Development Occur?

Cambridge University scholar, Maurice Wiles in his classic study of doctrinal development in the earlier patristic period of the Christian church observes that there were three underlying motivations at work. First and foremost, apologetics played an important part. This involved the need for believers to express truth in a form that met the questions of the surrounding world, *defensively*, on the one hand, to explain what really was meant by a doctrinal statement and to correct misunderstanding and challenges, and *offensively*, on the other hand to recommend the faith evangelistically, persuading and convincing unbelievers. A second motivation was to protect against heresy within the church. Development driven by this motivation was concerned to protect against some unbalanced, overemphasis on one part of a doctrinal statement at the expense of another important aspect of the whole. Protecting against heresy involved clarification of terminology or rejection of the use of inappropriate language to express the faith. This tended to result in an ever-increasing precision of doctrinal statement. A third motivation arose from the natural desire of Christian believers to think out the implications and meaning of the full spectrum of biblical teaching. It involved the community in an ongoing study of scripture and a seeking for effective language to adequately express the understanding of truth. This was often related to some personal or community spiritual crisis. And often it involved the role of a “genius”.<sup>vii</sup>

The story of doctrinal development in the Adventist church that this article relates will show that the same motivations and factors identified by Wiles in early church developments have been at work in the denomination. Often inter-twined and functioning beneath the surface of things, they have nevertheless, quietly driven the doctrinal

## The Preacher

Professor Prescott's theological emphasis had changed radically in the years since 1888. Events following Minneapolis had led him into a new religious experience that centered on "personal relationship with Christ." As a result, he came to see the whole range of church doctrines from a quite different perspective. As he explained to delegates at the 1919 Bible Conference years later,

developments in Adventism of the 1890s in the area of Christology and the Trinity.

The changes in Adventism may be seen first of all as arising from efforts within the community to correct a pronounced “heretical” drift toward legalism at both the practical and doctrinal level.<sup>viii</sup> The clearer understandings of the Gospel of Justification by faith that developed around 1888 underscored this effort and led to further clarifications in doctrinal expression. Second, development occurred in response to apologetic concerns about the effectiveness of mission and the clarity of Adventism’s evangelistic witness. Underscoring these concerns was the third factor, the desire to understand correctly the full teaching of scripture with regard to these issues. And the process related to a community in crisis (the church faced the possibility of schism following 1888) and it involved “gifted” Adventist minds.

The details of the unfolding drama behind the profound changes form a fascinating window on history through which we can see how theological development has occurred and will probably continue to occur in the church.

The immediate context for the developments in Adventism involved a well-known preacher, an evangelistic campaign, the writing of a Sabbath School lesson quarterly series, a Bible Conference and a landmark publication venture by Ellen White. The events revolved around a visit to Australia in 1895-6 by one of the Church’s leading thinkers. Professor Prescott at the time was Education Secretary for the Church and he was on his first visit overseas. While, in Melbourne he engaged in a very effective new style evangelistic outreach series. At the same time he was involved in researching and writing a year-long Sabbath School lesson study series on the Gospel of John.

the change had come to him "almost like a personal revelation, like a person speaking to me." When he first "started out" in the work back in the early 1880s, he had thought that "the thing to do was to prove the doctrines. . . . As I had observed and heard," he explained. (He had not had the benefit of any special homiletics training in a Bible Institute or Seminary.) The preacher's task



was "simply to demonstrate the truthfulness" of church teachings through the careful argumentative use of proof texts. Following his "new vision," however, he had "cast the whole thing aside and started in the simplest way presenting Christ."<sup>ix</sup> Church doctrines, he now believed, should be presented as "simply the gospel of Christ rightly understood." They should "grow out of a belief in Jesus Christ as a living personal Saviour."<sup>x</sup>

### The Evangelistic Series – “Apologetics”

The story of the evangelistic campmeeting in the Melbourne suburb of Armadale, in late 1895 illustrates the “apologetic” motivations behind doctrinal development and highlights clearly the kind of impact produced by the new thrust in Prescott's preaching. Pitched in the center of a prominent middle-class suburb, not far from the city center, in full view of a major city railway line, the sixty-five-tent encampment presented a striking novelty for the community. As the meetings progressed, the regular congregation of two hundred camping church members was augmented during evenings and weekends by an inquisitive public. Evangelist John Corliss and Ellen White shared in the preaching, but it was Prescott who dominated, not only the schedule of meetings but also with his charisma. Undoubtedly, the professor's legendary, richly resonant voice attracted the ears of the Aussie “colonials”, but the real attraction that drew in the crowds in ever increasing numbers, according to respected observers, was the Christ-centered content of his sermons.

Church workers were astonished at the interest, particularly in the light of the widespread prejudice against Adventists that had developed in the community. Uriah Smith's *Thoughts on Daniel and Revelation* had been widely distributed by colporteurs and its semi-Arian teaching on the pre-existence of Christ had caused many to view Adventists as a heretical, sub-Christian sect that

This was not some artificial additive or some sugar coating that Prescott thought was necessary to give Adventist teaching a superficial gospel flavor. Rather, it was a genuine, total reorientation of his belief structure. For him, this gospel-centredness was a personal spiritual and theological paradigm shift and it set the pattern for the rest of his ministry. To lead other Adventist preachers to the same conviction and perspective became his life-long burden. "That ye might know Him, whom to know is life eternal," (ARV) became his hallmark text of Scripture, remembered long afterwards by generations of his students.<sup>xi</sup> According to noted radio speaker, H. M. S. Richards, who attended some of the professor's later ministerial institutes, Prescott's "legacy to Adventist preachers" was that "Christ must be the center of every sermon."<sup>xii</sup>

But Australian Adventism in the 1890s was still untouched by the Gospel message of 1888. Prescott's new message stirred

denied the divinity of Christ.<sup>xiii</sup> These apologetic concerns led Prescott to respond to the criticism by preaching sound Christian doctrine. "His theme from first to last and always is Christ," reported an enthusiastic William C. White.<sup>xiv</sup>

Prescott even managed to turn the traditional Adventist Saturday-Sunday polemic into a remarkable gospel presentation. Several weeks after the presentation on the Sabbath doctrine the seasoned but awed W. C. White was still marvelling. Prescott had preached "with a clearness and power that exceeds anything I have ever heard in my life," he reported. The truth had been presented "with a freshness and a brightness" never seen in it before. He recalled that he had not even once heard Prescott preach "what we are accustomed to call a doctrinal sermon" on "the old lines." "The old lines of work" of getting up an "interest" by "presenting the prophecies" must "be abandoned," he asserted. "The whole thing" must receive "a new setting." He longed to see "every one" of the ministers emulate Prescott in "preaching Christ and him crucified."<sup>xv</sup>

Ellen White, too, was ecstatic over Prescott's sermons and the quality of the people who were drawn by his "exaltation of Jesus." They were "the very best class" of society. "Unbelievers turn pale and say, that man is inspired," she reported to her son Edson.<sup>xvi</sup> She saw in this Christ-centered

evangelism a pattern for the whole church. Testimonies went out encouraging others to follow the professor's example. Clearly Ellen White applauded Prescott's re-focusing of the denomination on Jesus in this fresh new way.

"Preaching Jesus as Professor Prescott has done," added local conference president, Arthur G. Daniells, "seems to have completely disarmed the people of prejudice." He felt that the public image of Adventists had been "completely revolutionized" by the professor.<sup>xvii</sup> This was very effective "apologetics".

But it was more than just the public image of Adventism that had been changed. Adventism itself was changing.

The Armadale meetings with their demands for clearer public witness to educated, informed people helped lead to profound shifts in Adventist thinking and understanding on Christology. Daniells whose own spiritual experience had fallen into the doldrums was a convert to the new perspective. It was as if someone had switched the lights on for him. Under Prescott's mentorship he became a new man. His evangelistic preaching took on new power as he used the same paradigm for teaching the doctrines in his next series of meetings conducted after Prescott left.<sup>xviii</sup> A quiet revolution was underway. It took a long time, however, before many others caught the same vision. Prescott in this as in some other things was ahead of his time.

### A Bible Institute and a Sabbath School Lesson Series – "Bible Study"



W.W. Prescott

Some time after the Melbourne meetings, Prescott spent three months at Cooranbong, north of Sydney, working with Mrs White and the founders of the soon to be established Avondale College. When the start of school was unavoidably delayed by legal problems it was decided to have school for the waiting teachers instead. Ministers were invited as well. Thus in April, 1896 Prescott conducted a Bible Institute attended by about 40 ministers and teachers. The Cooranbong Bible Institute is noteworthy not just for the charter it produced for the educational development of Avondale. It is significant also because, in a sense, it provided the crucible in which were crystalised the profound new developments emerging in Adventist theology.

Prior to his journey to Australia, the professor had been commissioned to write a four-quarter Sabbath-school-lesson series for 1896-97 on the Gospel of John. He considered this to be "no small task". Thus, while riding the swells across the

Pacific enroute to Sydney he took time for an intensive study of the Gospel. After his arrival at Cooranbong, the early morning kookaburras stirred him to further study and work on his manuscript. W. C. White, with whom Prescott shared the developing manuscript, was impressed. The lessons were "more appropriate" than former ones, he thought, and he urged the Battle Creek Sabbath School Association to accept them. As might be expected, the fourth Gospel provided the content for much of Prescott's preaching during this time.

One of the questions that grew out of Prescott's study of John was the pre-existence and eternal deity of Christ and the implications of this for the church's generally accepted teaching on the Godhead. Many Adventists at the time associated the doctrine of the Trinity with creedalism and with Apostate Catholicism. But was that necessarily a valid linkage? Prescott visited a second-hand bookstore shortly after first landing in Sydney in August and bought himself a copy of Augustus Neander's classic, *Lectures on the History of Christian Dogmas*. The book, now in the Andrews University Library, is extensively under-lined by Prescott's editorial blue pencil. The chapters that he has marked are those that deal with the Christological controversies of the early Christian centuries. Prescott had been rigorously trained in the classical languages of Greek and Latin at an ivy league college in the US (Dartmouth) and he now became interested at least to see how, in the development of the historic church statements about Christ, the church had grappled with problems of appropriate language in the expression of complex ideas. In spite of the strong anti-creedal stance of

many in the church, he was at least prepared to consider what the creeds had to say. The professor studied intently the specific issues of Arianism, the deity of Christ and the Trinity.

As noted above, widespread prejudice against Adventists in the community that had been reported in Melbourne and which arose from the circulation of Uriah Smith's *Thoughts on Daniel and Revelation* bothered the professor and the Ministers who studied with the new converts in their homes. They needed help. Adventism was not a sub-Christian sect. And that they should be perceived thus was unfortunate. The Arian slant on the pre-existence of Christ was not a "test" teaching of Adventism and it no longer seemed adequate. In the light of his study of the fourth gospel with its strong emphasis on the divinity of Christ things began to look clearer.

Prescott's three months at Cooranbong was, in effect a research and study leave. For the previous six months he had been constantly involved in intense evangelistic work and constant counseling regarding the perplexities of church administration. He was exhausted. With General Conference consent and local church leadership support, his return to Cooranbong was planned as a retreat. His purpose: to write out the materials he had

### The Publication Project

Both doctrinal themes were highly lauded by Mrs. White who attended the institute meetings along with Marian Davis and her other literary helpers. W. C. White commented shortly afterwards that while the institute "was a big interruption" of Mrs White's editorial work on the *Life of Christ*, nevertheless it was a "grand success" and "it has been a blessing to all her household and especially her literary helpers." Mrs White was thankful at this time for "the best set of workers she has ever had."<sup>xxi</sup> As already noted, at the time Mrs White and her team were focused on work on the manuscript that eventually became the *Desire of Ages*. She solicited Prescott's help in critically reading her manuscript from a literary and a biblical and theological perspective. Why? Help was needed in organizing the material. And, it seems clear, it was important that the new emphasis Prescott was giving was properly presented.<sup>xxii</sup>

According to H. Camden Lacey, W. C. White's brother-in-law and one of the young Avondale teachers at the time, Mrs. White's leading book editor, Marion Davis, was having a hard time with the arrangement of material for the first few chap-

been using in preaching, complete his SS lesson series on John, spend time with Mrs White and, at her specific request, assist in the editorial work on her voluminous *Life of Christ* publication project. As a result of his continued studies in the Gospel of John, Prescott's preaching at the Cooranbong institute specifically emphasized the implications of "I Am" claims of Jesus, the full eternal son-ship of Christ and the need for Adventist teaching to have a clear Christological focus. Daniells who spoke at the evening meetings chose to speak on the theme of the Holy Spirit.<sup>xix</sup> Following the Armadale campmeeting and prior to the Cooranbong Institute, the ministers in Melbourne, under Daniells leadership, had followed up the interest stimulated by Prescott and had been studying the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in their daily worker's meeting. Daniells had found in a second-hand bookstore a book entitled *The Spirit of Christ*, by the famous Anglican preacher, Andrew Murray. Daniells had found the book helpful in nurturing his own personal devotional life and used it as a guide for the workers study of scripture on the topic. The work and the person of the Holy Spirit was thus also being actively discussed among the ministers during this period.<sup>xx</sup>

ters of *Desire of Ages*. She found the professor's help invaluable. Prescott's assistance and emphasis brought about a clearer and more decided presentation of Christ's deity in the book, reported Lacey. "Professor Prescott's interest in the 'Eternity of the Son' and the great 'I Am's' coupled with the constant help he gave Sr. Davis in her preparation of the 'Desire of Ages' may serve to explain the inclusions of the above-named teachings in that wonderful book."<sup>xxiii</sup>

Lacey had been at the Armadale meetings and in the later Melbourne meetings with Daniells. His particular responsibility had been the nurture of the new believers at Armadale.<sup>xxiv</sup> He reports that his own interest at the time had been in emphasizing "the personality of the Holy Spirit" and that this new emphasis had also been an important part of the doctrinal and theological agitations at the time.<sup>xxv</sup> Lacey, connected to Mrs White's extended family circle through marriage was in a sense, part of the "inner circle" as it were, and is an important witness. The two families were closely connected. Lacey's aged parents had moved to Cooranbong from Tasmania to be with

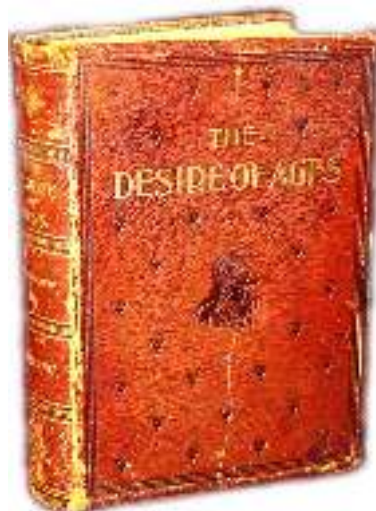
their children and grandchildren and they bonded with Mrs White and her family. Lacey's reports, although written out in the 1940s, are consistent with the primary source documentation available

## Conclusion

The impact of the new emphasis in *Desire of Ages* lingered long in M. L. Andreason's mind. "I remembered how astonished we were," he wrote, "for it contained things that we considered unbelievable: among others the doctrine of the Trinity."<sup>xxvii</sup> Andreason was not apparently aware of the extensive background to the doctrinal developments that *Desire of Ages* reflected. Those developments did not occur in a vacuum but were motivated by a desire to better understand the teachings of scripture, more adequately confess them and more effectively communicate them to unbelievers. As Andreason remarked, the development in doctrinal understanding were quite revolutionary. As Prescott left Australia in 1897 he probably did not realize how long a shadow his study and preaching would cast. The events of 1896 set a solid foundation for further development. But many decades were to pass before the church developed a common mind or anything that approached a unanimity of conviction on the eternal deity of Christ and its implications for the doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>xxviii</sup> Even as late as the 1940s Prescott was still being viciously attacked for his Trinitarian views.<sup>xxix</sup>

If the promise Jesus gave about the work of the Holy Spirit is true, then, as the Spirit of Truth does his work, he will continue to guide the church into deeper and broader understandings of truth. (John 15:12) There will, of a certainty then, continue to be doctrinal developments. There will continue to be new understandings unfolding on

from the period. He does not seem to have overstated his case, nor did he see Prescott's help as undercutting Mrs. White's claim to inspiration.<sup>xxvi</sup>



the mind of the church. Apologetics will continue to be a powerful motivation. The church will need to continue to make sure it is using the best language and the best thought forms to express and confess the full orb of the truth about Jesus as creator and

saviour. It will continue to seek language and appropriate thought forms so as to protect against misunderstanding and mis-stating the meaning of scripture. Adventists as a community must continue to study the word in its fullness, seeking to correctly understand, discarding inappropriate understandings and searching for appropriate and meaningful language to effectively confess to an unbelieving world the beauty of the truth "as it is in Jesus." As Bernhard Lohse has observed, "A faith which no longer knows how to confess, and which can no longer express this confession doctrinally will lose its vigour and become weak. For every epoch must answer anew the question which the Lord of the Church and of the world puts to it: 'Who do you say that I am?'"<sup>xxx</sup>

Adventism has successfully weathered earlier periods of development. Under the Spirit's leading it will surely continue successfully in this pilgrim journey to the kingdom.

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i Woodrow Whidden, Jerry Moon and John W Reeve, *The Trinity* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 2002). Gerald Wheeler, *James White, Innovator and* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 2004); George Knight, *Joseph Bates: The Real Founder of Seventh-day Adventism* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 2004); Merlin Burt "Demise of Semi-Arianism and Anti-Trinitarianism in Adventist Theology, 1888-1957." Unpublished Research Paper, 1996 AUHR. See also Russell Holt, "The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination: Its Rejection and Acceptance," (unpublished paper, Andrews University, 1969).

ii Whidden, Moon and Reeve, p. 189. Moon shows clearly how Ellen Whites' understanding in this particular area of doctrine developed. Her statements over the years evidence a clear progression "from the simple to the complex." Later statements became "increasingly precise and explicit." pp. 196, 206, 208

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- iii See W. W. Prescott: *Adventism's Forgotten Giant and Shaper of the Second Generation* (Washington D C., Review and Herald, forthcoming). Or G. M. Valentine, *The Shaping of Adventism*, (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1992).
- iv M. L. "Unpublished Chapel Talk," at LLU, November. 30, 1948: "Testimony of M. L. Andreason," October, 1953, p. ; The frequently quoted statement from *Desire of Ages* is a loose paraphrase of a sentence from a book on the Gospel of John by John Coming entitled, *Sabbath Evening Readings on the New Testament: St John* (London: Arthur Hall, Virtue & Company, 1857) p. 6.
- v Leroy Froom (LEF) to H. Camden Lacey (HCL), August 8, 1945.
- vi LEF to HCL, September 26, 1945. Froom's enquiries to Lacey were to ask for his recollections of what had occurred in Cooranbong.
- vii Maurice F. Wiles, *The Making of Christian Doctrine*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1967).
- viii George Knight shows how this strand in Adventism was laid down by Joseph Bates in *Joseph Bates: The Real Founder of Seventh-day Adventism*, (Washington DC; Review and Herald, 2004) pp 83 – 88.
- ix "1919 Bible Conference Transcript," Jul. 13, 1919.
- x *GC Bulletin*, Feb. 23, 1893, p. 350.
- xi Authors interview with former Union College student George S Hutches, Feb. 11, 1981.
- xii H. M. S. Richards to G. M. Valentine, May 21, 1981. In Richard's view, Prescott "knew how to use the English language, not pedantically, but in its glorious strength and beauty."
- xiii W. C. White to O. A. Olsen, October 24, 1895.
- xiv W. C. White to Brethren, November 21, 1895.
- xv W. C. White to S. McCulloch, November. 5, 1895; W. C. White to A. J. Breed, November 22, 1895.
- xvi E. G. White to S. N. Haskell, November. 6, 1895.
- xvii A. G. Daniells to O. A. Olsen, November. 22, 1895. Daniells acknowledged that his own spiritual experience had in fact been turned around under the impact of Prescott's preaching and spiritual mentoring. They became life-long friends.
- xviii Daniells relates in detail to Prescott how he found the new Christological understanding to be helpful and effective in his evangelistic preaching of the Sabbath. His letter clearly indicates that he looked to Prescott as his mentor. A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott, March. 3, 1896.
- xix "The Cooranbong Institute," *RH*, June 16, 1896, p. 378.
- xx A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott, March 3, 1896; H. Camden Lacey to A.W. Spalding, June 2, 1947.
- xxi W. C. White to O. A. Olsen, May 1, 1896.
- xxii This was Ellen White pattern. She had earlier asked A. T. Jones to read manuscript for her from a biblical and theological perspective to help ensure that the expression of ideas was correct. W. C. White to C. H. Jones, May 18, 1887.

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xxiii

H. Camden Lacey to L. E. Froom, August 30, 1947. See also W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, February 10, 1896; E. G. White "Diary" February 1896 and April 1896. The *Life of Christ* manuscript was actually re-worked and not published for another two years.

xxiv

A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott, March 3, 1896; H. Camden Lacey to A. W. Spaulding, June 2, 1945.

xxv

Interestingly, when Daniells reports to Prescott about the helpfulness of Andrew Murray's book in his Armadale workers meetings, he still refers to the Holy Spirit by the impersonal pronoun. ". . . we studied about the Holy Spirit and prayed for *its* indwelling presence, we felt assured that *it* came to us and truly blessed us . . ." A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott, March 3, 1896. The usage may simply indicate that Daniells was unconsciously locked into his usual language or that the issue of the personality of the Spirit came up in the later meetings at Cooranbong rather than in Melbourne. This latter suggestion is implied in Lacey's correspondence with Froom. L. E. Froom to H. Camden Lacey, August 8, 1945.

xxvi

Lacey's report to Froom was called out by a request from Froom specifically enquiring if there was any background of "agitation or discussion" of any sort that was occurring in Australia at the time the much clearer statements on the eternal deity of Christ appeared in *Desire of Ages*. L. E. Froom to H. Camden Lacey, August 8, 1947. In Lacey's response to an earlier enquiry from Arthur Spaulding on the same issue, Lacey cited some of the changes Adventists had adopted in the lyrics of some of the "outstanding hymns of the Christian Church" to avoid overt references to the Trinity and the personality of the Holy Spirit (as well as some references to Righteousness by faith). He was glad that the 1941 Hymnal had reverted to the original wordings. The changes to the wording had bothered his Anglican church musician mother when she first became an Adventist.

xxvii

Unpublished Chapel Talk, November. 30, 1948; E. G. White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 530.

xxviii

Although Review editor F. M. Wilcox was able to say in a doctrinal summary in the Review in 1913 that Adventists believed "in the divine Trinity," his language sidestepped the issue of the eternal self-existent deity of Christ and was still sufficiently vague as to be able to include both the traditional semi-Arians and the Trinitarians. Jesus was simply "the son of the Eternal Father." But the Holy Spirit was the third "person" of the Godhead. "The Message for Today" *RH* October 9, 1913, p. 21.

xxix

See Judson Washburn "The Trinity" 1939.

xxx

Bernhard Lohse, *A Short History of Christian Doctrine*, (Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1985). p 22.