

THE CONVERSATION ADVENTISTS ARE NOT HAVING

BY MIKE MANEA

A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW
OF ADVENTISM:
WHERE WE ARE,
WHERE WE NEED TO
BE, AND HOW TO
GET THERE.

THE CONVERSATION

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here are many conversations currently taking place among Seventh-day Adventists: conversations about women's ordination, homosexuality, and evolution in our schools, as well as some of the old favorites like the nature of Christ, the nature of sin, standards, music in worship and so on.

But there is one conversation that Adventists are not having: mainly that Adventist theology is becoming less and less credible with every year that passes.

There was a time when Adventists placed a high value on having a rational belief system. We made every effort to offer sensible answers to legitimate questions put forth by critics. We believed that if Christianity was true, it should be supported by the weight of evidence. Today, however, it is becoming harder and harder for a rational person to see the logic of our theological framework.

Consider an intelligent, honest, well-educated person living in the first century A.D. and deciding to take an investigative look at the Jewish religion. It might appear that the claims of the religion are plausible:

01

Israel is God's chosen nation.

02

Because of sin, the Lord has punished them by allowing their enemies to overpower them.

03

The Messiah is coming, and He will set them free.

But then Jerusalem is destroyed and the Jews are scattered everywhere. They are oppressed for century after century with no sign of God's favor or of a coming Messiah. As time passes, the narrative becomes harder and harder to swallow.

Accepting, however, that Jesus Christ is the Jewish Messiah resolves the dilemma: The Jews were in fact the chosen nation; the Messiah did come and set His people free, not from the Romans but from the slavery of sin.

HOWEVER, BY THE MODERN ERA, CHRISTIANITY ITSELF HAD BEGUN TO POSE ITS OWN DILEMMAS:

Jesus had claimed that He would establish His church and nothing would prevail against it. And yet the church bearing His name had kept the world in darkness for over a thousand years and had committed innumerable atrocities.

Moreover, Jesus had promised His disciples that He would go away, prepare a place for them, and return to take them unto Himself. And yet, almost two thousand years later, He still had not returned. Was it sensible to wait for a promise like this for millennia? Would people still wait if ten thousand years or fifty thousand years passed? But if not, what made two thousand years a more credible duration?

In an era of enlightenment and scientific advancement, these were the types of questions thinking people were asking of Christianity. And, for the most part, Christians could offer only cliché answers like "God does everything in His own time" or "To God a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like a day."

Adventists, on the other hand, had real answers. Using a prophetic framework we had inherited from the Reformers and William Miller (himselfaconvertedskeptic) coupled with our own unique understanding of the great controversy and the sanctuary doctrine, we were able to resolve each of these dilemmas intelligently and persuasively.

"I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."

-John 14:2-3, NKJV

ADVENTIST PERSPECTIVE



01



We had a method of prophetic interpretation that appealed to one's intellect, that was not arbitrary in nature and that could be applied consistently across the board.

02

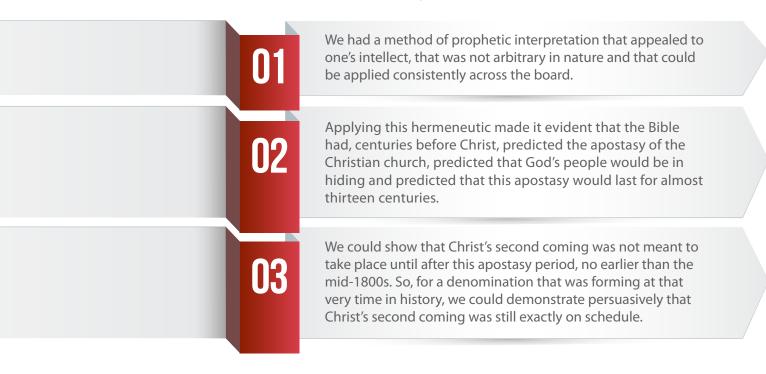


Applying this hermeneutic made it evident that the Bible had, centuries before Christ, predicted the apostasy of the Christian church, predicted that God's people would be in hiding and predicted that this apostasy would last for almost thirteen centuries.

03



We could show that Christ's second coming was not meant to take place until after this apostasy period, no earlier than the mid-1800s. So, for a denomination that was forming at that very time in history, we could demonstrate persuasively that Christ's second coming was still exactly on schedule. For a rational, educated person holding legitimate concerns, our perspective was compelling:



More than this, making use of our sanctuary and great controversy doctrines, we could even explain just why Jesus had waited so long to return. This explanation gave unprecedented force to our preaching regarding the nearness of Christ's second coming. Even though almost two millennia had passed since the ascension, we had very good reason to be confident that now, at last, the end truly was near.

THE PROBLEM OF CHRIST'S DELAY

As with the Jews, the passing of time poses a serious challenge for our prophetic interpretation. The very theological framework that gave power to our preaching in the nineteenth century brings the soundness of our theology into question today.

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Let's think for a minute on what grounds early Adventists were so confident that the return of Christ was just around the corner.

Through the great controversy doctrine we came to understand that God placed a high value on the individual's freedom of will. In fact, free choice was so important to God that He would rather endure Calvary than tamper with or manipulate our choices in any way. At the same time, we knew that God had no intention of allowing sin to rise up a second time after Christ's return. In order to prevent this without compromising free choice, He allowed this earth's sinful history to continue long enough for sin's ugliness to be revealed in its every respect.

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God's sensitive heart has been in constant turmoil since the inception of sin. But He needed to accumulate enough data regarding its character to protect the wellbeing of the universe throughout the endless bounds of eternity. If ever there were risk of another rebellion, there would be some scenario on earth that He could point to as an example of where such rebellion would lead. And there would also be people in heaven who had lived through the experience and could testify of this as well.

So Christians throughout the centuries waited and hoped for the return of the Savior but did not understand that the security of the universe would be placed in jeopardy if God ended world affairs any sooner than the predetermined time (*Rev. 6:9-11*). It is for this reason that the end did not happen during the lifetime of Adam and Eve, as they very likely expected. Neither did it happen throughout the history

of Israel or at Christ's first coming or even a few decades or centuries immediately after.

The apostle Paul was well aware of this and warned the early church:

"Now we beseech you, brethren, touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him; to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is just at hand; let no man beguile you in any wise: for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition" (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3, ASV).

In the Old Testament book of Daniel we were told that this "falling away" and the reign of the "man of sin" would not begin until several centuries after Christ and would last for over a millennium. Finally, in the eighth chapter of Daniel, it was revealed that the amount of time God had set aside for this data collection process would end with the year



1844. By then, God would be able to accumulate sufficient evidence to safeguard the universe throughout the rest of eternity, and there would no longer be a reason to prolong the great controversy further. The purpose for which Christ's second coming had been delayed for so many centuries would finally be accomplished, and now God could begin the closing work and bring an end to suffering and sin at last.

The very reasoning that resolved the dilemma of Christ's delay and gave unprecedented force to our end-time preaching in the 1800s is what makes our position so difficult to defend today, a century and a half later. Not just this, but with every decade that passes, that difficulty increases. It is one thing to be really late for an appointment. It is a whole other thing to call, provide a good explanation for being late, promise to be there immediately, and then again not show up for several hours more. Because we did have very good reason to expect Christ's return during the lifetime of our pioneers, the passing of several generations since then brings the soundness of our theology into question today.

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WHY WE CAN'T IGNORE THIS DILEMMA

Now some might read this paper and interpret it as an attack on the church. In fact, to some, it will even be a welcomed attack. But to such I would say, don't be so ready to abandon a rational belief system the minute you run into some theoretical difficulties, since there really aren't very many rational alternatives out there. That being said, this is not a question that our denomination can just continue to ignore. Either our theology is wrong, in which case we should fix it or abandon it altogether, or WE are wrong. In other words, there is something we as a denomination have done, or maybe failed to do, that has forced God to delay His coming even beyond the necessary delay that He had scheduled.

At the present time, the Adventist Church and the majority of its members take the position that, while we did expect Jesus to come sooner, God still holds the times and seasons in His own hands and knows exactly when He plans to return. Things are still exactly on schedule, and our job is to continue to hope and to preach of His soon coming. But, to a rational person, this position appears completely absurd.

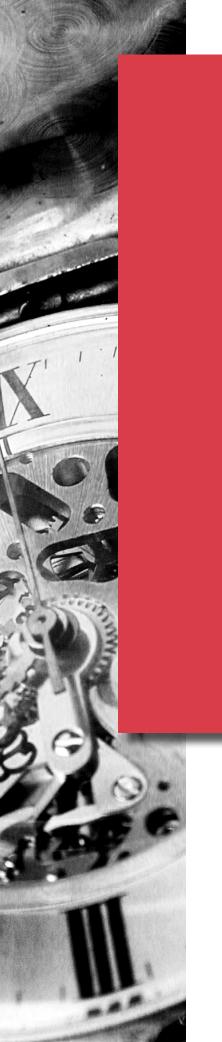
Just consider that God placed certain prophecies in Scripture millennia in advance, leading William Miller and thousands of his followers to expect Christ's return in 1844. And this group was terribly disappointed.

Out of the aftermath of that disappointment God led our pioneers to discover an alternative explanation for those same prophecies, bringing them to the conclusion that the element keeping the great controversy from ending had finally been resolved by 1844. As a result, they also were led to believe that they were living on the very brink of eternity.

Instead, generation after generation has passed since then, as well as world wars and unprecedented atrocities—and all this when God's work had already been completed a century and a half ago? At what point do we acknowledge that the logic of it all just doesn't quite add up?

Sometime during those early years Ellen White even had a vision where she was told that certain people attending a camp meeting would be alive until Jesus came. Because everyone mentioned in that vision has since died, the White Estate published an explanation (1) pointing out that Adventists have always understood the promises of God to be conditional, including the promise of the second coming. The following passage from Ellen White's own writings is quoted:





"It was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be thus delayed. God did not design that His people, Israel, should wander forty years in the wilderness. He promised to lead them directly to the land of Canaan, and establish them there a holy, healthy, people. But those to whom it was first preached, went not in "because of unbelief". Their hearts were filled with murmuring, rebellion, and hatred, and He could not fulfill His covenant with them.

For forty years did unbelief, murmuring, and rebellion shut out ancient Israel from the land of Canaan. The same sins have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan. In neither case were the promises of God at fault. It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord's professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years." (MS 4, 1883, quoted in Evangelism, pp. 695, 696).

To explain why the people Ellen White had talked about did not live to see Jesus come as she had foretold, the White Estate made use of a passage placing on our own church the responsibility for delaying Christ's coming beyond what was originally intended. But this idea of a second, church-caused delay is not a fancy concept we can make use of in our apologetics and then just ignore. It carries with it serious implications that we must confront.

In essence, our denomination is forced to choose today between two very difficult options: either we were wrong about 1844 and surrounding themes, in which case a central pillar of our theological framework crumbles, or we have in some way moved God to delay His coming beyond even what He considered necessary.

If the former, we should probably ask ourselves if we even have a reason to exist as an independent denomination anymore. Without 1844, are we different enough from other churches to justify remaining separate?

If the latter—if this time WE are the ones responsible for the delay—can we really continue on without stopping to figure out what we're doing wrong? Just consider all the atrocities humanity has endured in the past century and a half. If we don't make an effort to figure out our mistakes and correct our course, doesn't that imply that we will make ourselves responsible for many more atrocities? In essence, the question we should be asking ourselves is: Are we doing today anything significantly different than what has been done all this time by previous generations of Adventists? And if not, why would we expect different results?

I would propose that a theology of church-caused delay is the only hope we have left for a rational Adventism (or even a rational Christianity for that matter). Such a concept demands that we drop all the nonsensical conversations and debates that preoccupy our time and figure out how to resolve this issue first.

^{1.} http://www.whiteestate.org/issues/faq-unus.html#unusual-section-d3

ABSTRACT

"We need the Holy Spirit," "We need to repent," "We need to be more loving"; basically things that we all know we need but that never seem to happen, and it's really out of our hands since we can't force other people (or God) to do them if they don't want to.

THEOLOGICAL

There is some point of theology that Adventists need to understand or change: some version of the gospel, some new perspective on righteousness by faith or the character of God or some other topic or doctrine. This could be something minor or a completely new framework like that of the Shepherd's Rod group.

CORPORATE REPENTANCE

The denomination needs to repent for some past corporate sin: 1888, Questions on Doctrine, etc.

ISOLATION

We need to develop character by moving to the country or by starting purer self-supporting ministries where we can associate with Adventists who are serious about holiness.

MISSIONS

There are sections of the world, such as the 10/40 window, that haven't been reached, so we must refocus our evangelistic efforts in those areas.

MEDICAL MISSIONARY WORK

We need to revive the right arm of the gospel.

TECHNOLOGY

Modern advances are the answer: 3ABN, satellite evangelism, buying TV stations, the Internet, etc.

THE YOUTH

We must form an army of youth who will spread the message.

WORKING TOWARD A SOLUTION

In the previous chapter we concluded that a theology of church-caused delay is indispensable to a rational Adventism. We also established that, given such a delay, we cannot continue on doing "more of the same" and expecting different results. As a denomination, we need to stop, figure out where we've gone wrong and fix it.

First, I want to briefly outline a few of the perspectives church members have expressed regarding what it will take to fix Adventism:



PERFECTION

A large enough group of people must attain to moral perfection.

PERSECUTION

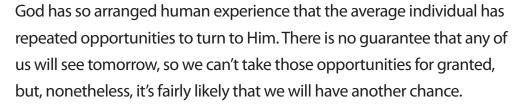
The church has gone too far for us to be able to fix it. At some point God will get tired of waiting and will send down disasters and persecution, which will cause the unfaithful to leave the church and drive those who remain to seek the latter rain with all their hearts.

There actually is a hidden benefit to the long delay we've experienced: We've had plenty of time to test out ideas and determine what doesn't work. But now let's try to figure out what will.

WHY A CLOSING WORK?

There is a question that was left unanswered in Chapter 1 that needs to be addressed:

If God has already accumulated sufficient evidence to end the great controversy, why is there still a need for a closing work?



I remember as a child sitting in Sabbath school and sensing the Holy Spirit tugging at my heart, urging me to give my life to Jesus. But I told God that I wasn't ready just yet. Years later, at sixteen, I again remember God wrestling with me to make a decision for Christ. Again my answer was, "Maybe later." But, at nineteen, the invitation came again, and that time I accepted.

Throughout history, however, there have been several instances when probation closed on entire groups of people: the Flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, the Jewish nation, etc. People with whom the Holy Spirit would normally have had many more years to work were suddenly deprived of that privilege. So instead God provided these people with a special dispensation of grace, a catalyst intended to ripen the harvest quickly to make up for the loss of time.

Take the Jewish nation, for example. They had been God's chosen nation for more than a millennium, but "the kingdom of God [would] be taken from [them], and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt. 21:43, KJV). Before probation closed on them as a nation, however, God sent His Son to live among them for more



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than 30 years. He ministered and extended the gospel invitation to them for three and a half years, and He trained disciples who would continue to reach out to them for several years more. When the opportunities to make a decision are cut short, God sends people additional light and privileges to make up for the loss.

Even so now, Jesus is to return and to bring human history to a close. When He does, whatever decisions people have made up to that point can no longer be changed. Human probation is going to close once and for all, not just on a group or nation but on everyone. So, before it does, the gospel invitation must be extended in a special way. What Jesus did for the Jewish nation must be done for the planet as a whole.

For the sake of the stability of the universe God allowed the great controversy to continue for several millennia. But now that this is no longer needed, God wants to give humanity a persuasive last opportunity to turn to Him prior to the close of probation.

This opportunity must be more than just a transfer of information, more than just a series of propositions that humanity either accepts or rejects. Just as the character and life of Jesus and the apostles gave power to their message as they mingled with the people they were trying to reach, the last-day message must also be lived as it is preached (Rev. 14:4, 5). It is for this reason that this final invitation cannot be fully extended in writing or over the radio, television or the Internet. The human element is an essential component. People need more than just to hear what God wants them to do. They need to see living examples of other people who are already doing it; they need to be mentored into a life of obedience to God.

BUT HOW WILL THIS BE ACCOMPLISHED?

How does God intend to get this last-day message of mercy out to the entire planet? After all, there are many options at His disposal: He could send out His angels to evangelize in our stead; He could speak to people through dreams; or He could rain down the Holy Spirit on a handful of faithful people and use them to reach everyone else. But a

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key question we should be asking right now is this: Considering that God was ready to do this in the late 1800s, and considering that, at that time, our church had a prophet through whom He could guide us, how *did* God go about trying to accomplish this? What lessons can we learn from early Adventist history that will help us better understand what process God intends to use to reach the globe?

A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY

In the aftermath of the disappointment of 1844, several groups emerged: Some concluded that William Miller had been altogether wrong and went back to their regular lives. Others decided that there was a mistake with the calculations and continued to set new dates for Christ's coming. Still others succumbed to discouragement and depression and even lost their faith.

A small group, however, unable to deny the providences of God in the Millerite movement or its Scriptural foundation, went back to the Bible to look for answers. In the process, they came to understand the sanctuary doctrine, and a new perspective emerged regarding what had happened and what God wanted them to do.

At first, this was only a handful of people scattered over several states. The most immediate need was communication, so James and Ellen White began to print a small paper that they mailed out to the other sympathetic Adventists. As various aspects of the Disappointment were dwelt upon, people wrote back with questions, which were published and addressed in the next issue.

As the confusion regarding 1844 began to dissipate, other doctrinal differences came into focus. Unlike other denominations, Adventists were a very theologically diverse group formed of people from many different denominations who had been brought together by the news of Christ's soon return. Through several intense Bible study conferences, even these differences were resolved.

"Our church began to be known and respected by the public; our influence extended to the nation's leading men, and people of renown visited our sanitariums."

Up to this point this small company of Adventists had been growing steadily albeit slowly. When all these differences were worked out, however, the group began to grow exponentially. Soon the need for organization became evident, and the conference system was formed. Organization made it possible to expand the work even further by allowing for uniformity of doctrine, by allowing for the insightful delegation of responsibilities, and by providing for the training and sustenance of ministers.

Through organized cooperation they were able to expand the work to new states and even overseas. They were able to develop systems "...as we ask ourselves today what God needs us to do to prevent further delay, we need to take a look at how God initially planned to finish the work."

that leveraged people's energies and abilities beyond their immediate reach: systems such as the publishing work, the health work and the educational work. Our church began to be known and respected by the public; our influence extended to the nation's leading men, and people of renown visited our sanitariums. And all this under the guidance of the prophet.

So, given that after a long delay God was finally ready to return, how is it that He chose to go about finalizing His work on earth? God used our pioneers to build up a movement. His strategy was to bring together a large group of people from all walks of life and with varied talents who through cooperation and united action would prepare humanity for the close of probation.

Recognizing this fact is important because, as we ask ourselves today what God needs us to do to prevent further delay, we need to take a look at how God initially planned to finish the work. God began this closing work with a movement, a movement that was successful for a while but at some point began to stagnate and decay. Yes, the denomination continued to grow, but the movement itself stalled; the increase in numbers did not translate into a more efficient global outreach program.

If we want to finish the work today, what we need to do is to revive this movement.

WHAT EXACTLY IS A MOVEMENT?

A movement is simply a group of people rallying together around a common cause. Each individual has unique skills, talents and abilities that they can contribute to the group, and tasks can be delegated among members to achieve maximum output. People movements have the capacity to achieve nearly impossible feats, good or bad. The civil rights movement has taken this nation from slavery and segregated water fountains to a black president. Hitler was able to convert war-torn Germany into a formidable war machine in a few

years. The communist movement started with an idea in someone's mind but ended up enveloping nearly half the globe. The Protestant movement took down the most formidable monopoly the world had ever known: the medieval church.

In the Bible as well God used people movements to accomplish what was previously believed impossible. In the Exodus God organized a movement to take His people out of Egypt and into the promised land. After the destruction of Jerusalem God used Nehemiah to organize a movement and rebuild the city. To take the news of His death and resurrection to the world, Jesus trained disciples whom He later used to start a movement that engulfed the planet.

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So it is no surprise that to finish His work on earth God would organize yet another movement. The individual's skills, when leveraged through united action, can accomplish tasks that are insurmountable by any other means.

All these examples more than prove that restarting a movement in Adventism is definitely within our grasp. What isn't possible is to restart a movement without hard work and sacrifice.

I have talked to many Adventists who just couldn't wrap their minds around the idea that our church could again be transformed into the impressive movement that it once was. But it would be if we cared as much about our church and about ending the age-long cosmic conflict as people cared about civil rights a few decades back. Yes, our church today is divided into a thousand fragments with many problems and no real leadership, but our circumstances are no more dire than what other movements have had to face.

REVIVING THE MOVEMENT

Up to this point we have established two very important concepts that, if understood and accepted, would significantly reduce the confusion our people are in:

01

We are responsible for having delayed Christ's coming.

02

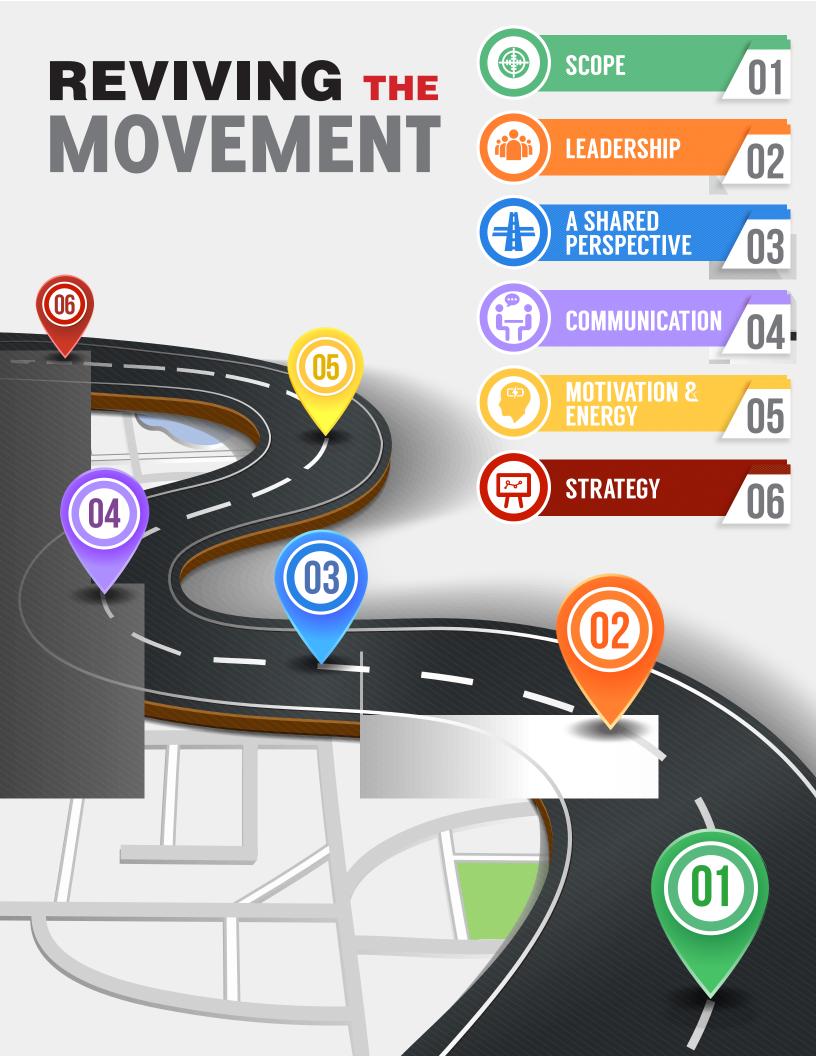
To prevent further delay, we must revive the Adventist movement.

Without accepting the delay (I challenge anyone to present a rational version of Adventism that doesn't), we will never understand the seriousness of the situation enough to take action.

If we don't realize that God started this work with a people movement and intends to finish it through a movement, we will continue to spin our wheels doing things that will not ultimately finish the work.

But reviving a dormant movement is extremely difficult, so how should we go about doing this in our church?

For the rest of this article I will be painting a bird's-eye view of what it would take to revive a movement in Adventism. For each of the following sections hundreds more pages could be written with additional details, but for now we are just looking at the big picture. We will need to address the following six points:



SCOPE

Movements are formed when large groups of people come together around a common cause. Their shared perspective allows them to cooperate in accomplishing their goal. Through proper organization the skills and talents of many people are leveraged to accomplish things that would be impossible by any other means.

Today's Adventist Church, however, no longer has a shared perspective. For all practical purposes, our church is a collection of many denominations with widely divergent views that have all come together under one umbrella and that insist on holding on to the Adventist name. We can't move forward in united action because we can't agree what platform exactly we should be uniting on.

But this variance among us has some unique characteristics that are important to understand. Our church isn't simply a large collection of small groups with differing opinions. Rather, there is one large group of members who agree with the church's official beliefs (the 28 fundamentals), and there are hundreds of smaller groups who disagree with one or more of these beliefs in some significant way. For the duration of this paper, let's call the larger group "Creedal Adventists," and all the smaller groups let's class together as "Variant Adventists."

"Today's Adventist Church, however, no longer has a shared perspective."

The lack of unity among us therefore is of two types: there is lack of unity between Creedal and Variant Adventists, but there is also a lack of unity among the Creedal Adventists themselves. It is important to understand this distinction, because unity among Creedal Adventists

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is still within our grasp. We agree on issues that are fundamental and disagree on things that aren't.

Unity with Variant Adventists, however, is far more difficult, as the differences are much greater. Neither will we see Variant Adventists unite amongst themselves, since the only thing they really have in common with each other is their disagreement with mainstream Adventism. If all Creedal Adventists suddenly disappeared, there would be nothing left holding the others together. Even if they did manage to unite on something, it would have to be something so vague that it would not translate into any kind of positive action and definitely would not warrant maintaining this group as a separate denomination.

Therefore, when we consider developing a common platform that our movement can unite upon, we need to restrict the scope, at least for the time being, to Creedal Adventists. Trying to unite with Variant Adventists is very difficult and will keep us spinning our wheels with little or no progress. On the other hand, some people feel that the 28 fundamentals are not restrictive enough and that additional tests of fellowship are needed before someone is safe to work with. However, the 28 fundamental beliefs are what the world church, via the General Conference in session, has deemed essential Adventism, making this the ideal starting point.

Those of us who are in accord with the denomination's fundamental beliefs have more in common with each other than most other people groups on earth. If we focus on what unites us, there is hope that we will be able to resolve any remaining differences enough to work together.

LEADERSHIP

It is fairly easy to see that unity is an essential component of an effective movement. What isn't always as obvious is that in order to have a united movement, what is needed first and foremost is a united leadership. Disunity among the leaders breeds disunity among members. Neither can a movement advance in any particular direction without a united leadership to point the way.

As of now, however, among those Adventist leaders who do agree with the church's fundamental beliefs and who still accept the prophetic ministry of Ellen White, there is considerable variance of opinion in regards to all facets of the work. Rather than find ways to resolve those differences, today's leaders prefer to gather followers after themselves and to press forward in the direction of their choosing. And this regardless of whether in doing so they are interfering with the work of another or whether things can be done much more efficiently some other way. All in all, today's church is similar to a football team trying to win a game with every player executing his own private strategy.

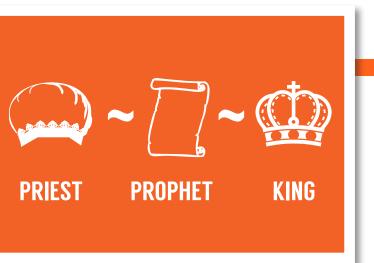
"Disunity among the leaders breeds disunity among members."

To better understand the leadership dynamic in our church today, we need to understand some of the developments that have brought us to our current predicament.

THREE TYPES OF LEADERS

Let's start by looking back at the leadership structure of Old Testament Israel. We find that the nation had three types of leaders: kings, priests and prophets. The kings handled secular matters and were selected to their office through a carnal process, i.e., father to son. The priests handled spiritual matters but were also selected through genealogy. Prophets, on the other hand, were spiritual

guides like the priests, but instead of being born into their office, they were called directly by God.



All three types of leaders were God-ordained; the selection process itself was God-ordained; and we see in the story of Nehemiah how well things ran when all three entities worked together. But there were also instances of conflict: for example, when the civil and religious leaders in the New Testament opposed the preaching of the gospel

by the disciples at Pentecost.

There is somewhat of a counterpart to this in our church as well. We have church administrators who handle the business operations of the church and have considerable influence over the direction that our church takes. We also have ministers who are spiritual leaders and who influence the denomination as a whole through their influence at the local church level. But to some degree, like the kings and priests of old, both these groups can attain to their position of influence through worldly processes. In other words, a person does not necessarily have to be spiritual or theologically sound to become a minister or an administrator in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They just need to obtain a college degree and work their way up the corporate ladder.

Besides these we have another set of leaders in the church today who have risen to positions of influence by having developed spiritual authority. In other words, regardless of whether they hold official positions within the denominational structure, the membership perceives them, because of their track record in ministry, as spiritual guides. These might be missionaries, evangelists, ministry leaders, media personalities, authors or itinerant preachers.

Now under normal circumstances there would be nothing wrong with this state of things. It is beneficial to an organization to have different types of leaders, just as it was beneficial in Nehemiah's time for the different entities to work together. However, in our church today, this particular dynamic has created an imbalance.

As our denomination began to grow, and as more people with divergent views took on positions of influence, some of the "faithful" leaders felt uncomfortable with the direction the denomination was taking and left denominational employment. They assumed they could help God's cause more if they started parachurch ministries where they could be free to work for God according to their conscience. However, when they left, other people had to be found to take their place—people who might not have been as dedicated or theologically sound. This impacted the trajectory of the denomination even more, which in turn caused others to want to leave, creating a vicious cycle. More

"...young people with leadership potential who might otherwise have sought denominational employment chose to follow other routes."

than this, seeing the example of their predecessors, young people with leadership potential who might otherwise have sought denominational employment chose to follow other routes as well.

Now under a different type of church government, this might not have caused significant problems. But with a democratic-style government, the system cannot work if faithful people are not there to work the system. As mentioned earlier, Variant Adventists represent only a minority of our global membership. However, because they hold positions of influence, they have significant impact on the church at large. Today there is enough diversity of perspective within our denominational leadership that many things are done that are not conducive to the accomplishment of our God-given mission. Or, at other times, very little of significance is done at all since the leaders cannot get past their ideological stalemate. This is not a result of some notorious plot to take over the church but is simply an outcome of faithful Adventists either leaving denominational employment or not entering at all.

On the other hand, those who chose the parachurch ministry model instead of denominational leadership are not much better off. While they might apparently have greater influence on a small segment of the church population, they have little to no influence on the global membership as a whole. Denominational leaders, however, by controlling our seminaries and educational facilities, have significant sway worldwide. Even people who are brought in by parachurch ministries eventually join a local church and come under their influence.

Moreover, the official leadership structure has elements in place that provide a certain degree of oversight. Ministers, for example, do have significant influence. But they are also accountable to their congregations and local conferences. Today, however, we have a large number of leaders who are accountable to no one. They go from church to church preaching, selling materials and lobbying for donor support but have no congregation that can attest to their calling, nor are they in any one location long enough for people to see the fruits of their ministry. Their education and Biblical understanding is often

"...with a democratic-style government, the system cannot work if faithful people are not there to work the system."

lacking, but they don't answer to any conference that can evaluate their preparation and effectiveness.

Finally, when our church was first organized, we introduced "systematic benevolence" (tithes and offerings) as a way to sustain ministers and denominational staff. Because funds were collected into a central pool and distributed equally, the ministers, administrators and other workers were not in competition with each other and thus could work together towards a common goal.

But parachurch ministries are not supported by the conference and therefore must find other ways to support themselves, which generally means reliance on donations. Donors and funds, however, are limited, and the more such ministries spring up, the more competition there is for these funds. Therefore, in order to stay afloat, such ministries often have to develop what in business we would call Unique Value Propositions. In essence, they must find ways to distinguish themselves by offering something that appears to donors as superior to what their brethren are offering. This might mean more reliance on the sensational in their preaching, more emphasis of some unique perspective on the gospel, prophecy, current events, etc.—whatever it takes to distinguish themselves from other ministries.

This differentiation ends up erecting imaginary barriers between ministry leaders who, for all practical purposes, are really on the same side of the issue. This in the very midst of an intense battle against an opposition that is daily getting stronger! In fact, things have gotten so bad that ministry leaders today can publicly humiliate each other and get a boost in donations as a result.

In summary, in order to effectively revive the Adventist movement we need solid leadership. Instead, the church's official leadership structure is in deadlock because Creedal Adventists are underrepresented while parachurch leaders are too busy competing with each other to actually lead the movement.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

As lay members we must make it absolutely clear to our leaders that they need to work out their differences and develop a united leading body that is capable of reviving and directing this movement. If they are unable or unwilling to do this, they should step aside and let others lead the way. We must stop supporting those who continue to compete with each other or who put up roadblocks to unity. This might mean interrupting financial support and no longer purchasing their materials, attending their seminars and conferences or inviting them to speak to our churches.

In a papacy, monarchy or dictatorship, change can only happen from the top down. If change is needed, the people have little recourse but to stage a revolt or leave. In a democratic setting, change can happen at every level. It can be brought about by leaders and lay people alike:

We can
encourage church
leaders to work
towards reform.

We can show support for those leaders who are doing this.

We can encourage lay leaders to band together to bring about change.

We can encourage and train promising young people to enter the next generation of church leadership.

We can encourage those with training and experience who have left denominational leadership to return.

Those entering church leadership and even existing leaders can be encouraged to take on more strategic or influential positions even if this will prove inconvenient or difficult.

Lay people can themselves band together and press for change, in submission and with humility, but nonetheless persistently.

In a democratic setting we don't need to leave the church, complain or feel helpless, or try to force or manipulate the system. All the elements needed to bring about change are already in place waiting to be used for the betterment of the church.

A SHARED PERSPECTIVE

I covered the previous section first because many people think theology is the only thing that divides our leaders (Creedal Adventists) when in fact there are other, more subtle dynamics as well. But theology is also a problem, so we are going to discuss this next.

In principle, there are several steps needed to reach theological unity:

We must come to the conclusion that a united leadership is indispensable to progress. Any person with a firm grasp of reality should have no problem reaching that conclusion.



"...the fact that
so many of us
have come to agree
on such a unique
perspective as our 28
fundamental beliefs is quite
an accomplishment."

We must have a solid starting platform where we have significant common ground that we can build upon. As Adventists, we already do have quite a bit in common. If we think about all the beliefs held by people worldwide, the fact that so many of us have come to agree on such a unique perspective as our 28 fundamental beliefs is quite an accomplishment. As we start our work towards unity, we need to see this as a task that is already 90% completed rather than something that has to be built from scratch.





Once we do turn our focus towards the issues that divide us, we need to place all these issues on a list, define them, and then determine how many of them really are essential. There are things we disagree on where we can just "agree to disagree" and still work together. Such issues can then be scratched from our list.



If any issue is removed from the list, however, we must all commit not to make that issue prominent again in our preaching, teaching or writing, and we must keep one another accountable to this.



Any issue that is considered essential and cannot be removed from the list must be taken and studied out. Those involved must agree that unity is important enough to them that they will not part until, through prayer and Bible study, they can come to some resolution. While this sounds extremely difficult, we must see it as an absolute necessity and press forward, remembering that our church exists as a denomination today because our pioneers chose to do this very thing.





Finally, we must recognize that there will always be people who will refuse to come to an agreement no matter what.

This should not be allowed to keep the rest of us from developing a united platform.



It is beyond the scope of this article to thoroughly cover every issue or point of theology that currently divides Creedal Adventists. But I will briefly mention some of the more major ones as examples of how to possibly arrive at a resolution:



NATURE OF CHRIST

The nature of Christ debate was introduced in Adventism by evangelicals more than half a century ago and has caused division among us ever since. It is not the kind of topic that the average member thinks about, but even within the recent past, ministries have broken up over this issue.

"...even theological issues that have kept the different factions at odds for decades can be resolved if we care about unity enough."

I believe there is a way to think about this issue that both "pre-fall" and "post-fall" groups can unite on. In order not to distract from the general direction of this article, I have written about this topic in a separate article that the reader can find in Appendix A when ready. The most important thing to realize is that even theological issues that have kept the different factions at odds for decades can be resolved if we care about unity enough.



THE GOSPEL

Another major topic of debate among us has been the gospel itself. Different groups have argued about whether more emphasis should be placed on justification or sanctification, on assurance or victory, on what Christ did for us versus what He can do in us.

I believe that the key to resolving this issue is found in our sanctuary doctrine. In my opinion, one of the primary reasons that the sanctuary doctrine was given to us was so that Adventists would not repeat the endless conflicts that have gone on between Calvinists and Arminians for centuries. In Appendix B you will find an article where I discuss this in more detail.

The thing we have to remember when it comes to theology is that God does have a solution to our theological conflicts. If we haven't found it yet, it is either because the topic does not matter to God and He wants us to move past it or because we have not cared enough about unity to search for a solution until we have found it.



WOMEN'S ORDINATION

The question of the ordination of women starts with theology but ends up impacting the church in a very practical sense. It is yet another question that has caused division in the church for decades, and frankly, the fact that we have allowed it to divide us so sharply demonstrates that we just aren't a very reasonable group of people. When we consider the big picture, where we are in history, what our mission is and how far we are from accomplishing it, we just can't afford to spend this much time going back and forth on this topic. Many people are worried that God will be displeased with our church if women's ordination is finally voted in. But He can't possibly be more displeased with that than He is with us having allowed this topic to eclipse far more important matters for so long.

We live in a society where higher education is readily available to females as well as males, where birth control has made it possible for women to have more charge over their lives, where there is an infrastructure in place that can support mothers with finances and child-rearing. As a result, we see women rising to the highest ranks of society; they run billion-dollar corporations and lead entire nations. Because of this, we just can't expect that opposition to our current policy will die any time soon. We are faced here with a conflict that just won't go away and will continue to preoccupy our time for decades unless we grow up and look for ways to move past it.

More than this, it is a conflict that only embarrasses our church. No matter how justified we might think we are in our positions, to the outside world our constant bickering about this makes us appear to be a really backward group of people.

But our church does have a process for dealing with questions like this: the General Conference in session. And, whether we like it or not, the question will be decided through this process. So instead of the endless debates, let's just make sure that the process is working optimally and then move on to other things. We can take advantage of the available technology to create a website where the various positions can be clearly and thoroughly articulated. Each side should have sufficient opportunity to make their case through text, graphics, audio or video, but there should also be limits in place so that no one side will be tempted to overwhelm with information. The site should be translated into as many languages as needed, and every delegate should be encouraged to examine the arguments for themselves.

"All of this can be done very effectively by a handful of people, with the rest of us redirecting our attention to actually finishing the work."

And, having done this, let's trust the process that God has instituted and let it run its course. If it turns out that the ordination of women is voted in, that gives us five years of actual data that can be gathered and added to the website before the next General Conference session, where the vote can be reevaluated if needed. All of this can be done very effectively by a handful of people, with the rest of us redirecting our attention to actually finishing the work.

Some people have argued that in accepting women's ordination we would, as a denomination, essentially adopt a brand-new hermeneutic (method of biblical interpretation) altogether. But a denomination's stance on hermeneutics is critical and not something that can be changed without addressing the issue directly. We should not allow the enemies of the church to deceive people by using our own words against us: "They said that if women's ordination passes, it will change our hermeneutic. Well, it did pass, so the hermeneutic must have changed as well."

All in all, the issue of the ordination of women and which position individuals support should not be allowed to get in the way of Creedal Adventists working side by side.



MUSIC

Many people consider music and worship styles one of the biggest obstacles preventing Creedal Adventists from joining forces and working together. In reality, the solution is simple:

Imagine a spectrum of music styles going from the mildest to the most rhythmic labeled 1 to 100. And let's say that people who have conservative music tastes can worship comfortably with music ranging anywhere from 1 to 50 on this spectrum, while those with more liberal tastes prefer worship music that ranges from 25 to 75.

In that case, there should be some range on this spectrum that everyone is comfortable with—say 25-50. So let's try to keep most of our worship music within that range. Let's agree to stay away from music that is far in extreme of that medium range, and let's also agree to put up with minor deviations from that range for the sake of our brethren. The conservative can wait prayerfully for that troublesome song to finish instead of storming out, while the liberal might just put up with that really boring song for a few seconds longer.

Surely there is some happy medium where most of us would be comfortable worshiping corporately. But if not, we could always just scrap music from our worship services altogether. I doubt anyone would want, on that Day, to explain to Jesus that the reason we prolonged this planet's misery for decades was because we could not stand each other's music. (There are some people who argue that the worship music debate is not about personal preference but about being sensitive to the unchurched. Appendix C has a brief article on this.)

COMMUNICATION

For this section let's assume that Adventist leaders have managed to work out their differences and are ready to guide our movement forward. Currently, as a denomination, we don't have very good channels of communication between leaders and members. With few exceptions, most members are completely out of touch with what the leaders are doing. While this might not be too great a problem for just keeping the denomination afloat, it will not work if our intention is to run a movement.

In the time of our pioneers James White addressed this problem using the printed page. Articles were published in our periodicals describing different issues, and people responded to these articles by writing letters back to the editor. These in turn were printed and addressed in later publications. In this way, members were kept up to date with concerns that the leaders were facing and with decisions that were being made. With the technology we have at our disposal today, we should have no problem developing a communication system that is easily accessible to anyone who has an interest in the church.

We need, however, to learn to be more transparent in our leadership style and to allow for outside participation in the decision process. When members understand at least in part the challenges leaders are facing and have a sense that their input is taken into account, they are far more likely to buy into the decisions and to contribute when it is time to take action. The key to a successful movement is keeping all participants engaged. Everyone should understand what the goals are, what the overarching strategy is for reaching those goals, how that strategy is being specifically applied, and what part they can play in the overall process.

"With few exceptions, most members are completely out of touch with what the leaders are doing."

Moreover, we should make every effort to incorporate a data-driven decision-making process. We should be willing to test out ideas, obtain accurate data and keep or discard those ideas based on results as opposed to personal preference. If leaders can learn to be pragmatic in their approach, it will be much easier to develop consensus when it comes to important decisions.

Another important part of an effective communication strategy is how we present ourselves to those outside the church. I have written a brief article on this but placed it in Appendix D in order not to deviate too far from the scope of this paper.

MOTIVATION & ENERGY

For this section we're going to assume that Adventist leaders have worked out their differences and that they have developed an effective system for communication with the members. The next major problem we run into now is that, in general, members are very slow to take action. In any given situation, a handful of people end up doing all the work while the rest just sit idly by. Apathy among the membership can hinder a movement just as much as lack of leadership. I believe, however, that within the recent past God has given us the key to resolving this dilemma as well.

Around the year 2000 several evangelists decided to turn their attention to the youth, and a number of evangelism training schools were founded, including Amazing Facts Center Of Evangelism (AFCOE) and Mission College of Evangelism. These schools began accepting small groups of students and training them to be evangelists, missionaries and Bible workers in as little as three or four months.

Right around this time a young man named David Asscherick was converted and attended one of these colleges. Upon graduation, he put together a small team of workers and began conducting evangelistic campaigns, baptizing as many as 100 people per campaign. The success of these efforts raised awareness for the Bible schools, and many other young people attended the colleges and went on to do Bible work or conduct their own evangelistic meetings.

About this time an organization called ASI (Adventist-laymen's Services and Industries) was developing a program called ASI Youth for Jesus. The intention here was to give high-school-age teens the opportunity to participate in a full-scale evangelistic effort. They were to work side

by side with the evangelists and Bible workers and to conduct Bible studies or even preach themselves. Since by this time the Bible schools had produced a number of young evangelists and Bible workers, bringing the two ministries together was the perfect fit. The ASI youth would be mentored by other young people who were only a few years older than themselves.

"Apathy among the membership can hinder a movement just as much as lack of leadership."

Shortly after this another group of young people began organizing a yearly youth conference called GYC. Although the church occasionally put on various events for the youth, the distinctive premise here was that young people could be attracted to attend such events purely on the merits of the Adventist message as opposed to various forms of entertainment.

Now this idea had been tried before with limited success, but this time the speakers for the morning and evening services as well as those teaching the seminars were themselves young people who had been out in the trenches and had real, fresh experiences to share. Some of them had only recently been converted, had attended a brief training program, and were now doing evangelism and bringing others into the church. The fresh testimonies, the miracle stories, the fact that many of these new converts had in a short time acquired a deeper understanding of Scripture than most lifelong Adventists, all left a profound impression on the attendees. In addition, many of the ASI youth were present to attest to these stories as they had witnessed them firsthand.

For many, attending GYC proved to be a life-changing experience. What might have been a simple gathering of youth became instead something of a phenomenon. Sinners were converted, decisions were made to serve in ministry locally and overseas, attendance grew with each year and some even began to replicate the GYC experience in other locations in North America and globally. Basically, what started as several distinct small ministries with limited reach merged into a sizable youth movement, a ready army of willing soldiers.

Now I am aware that some even among Creedal Adventists don't have a favorable opinion of GYC or the surrounding youth movement. But the key here is to recognize that, in order revive a movement in Adventism, we need a sizable team of laypeople who are willing to take action alongside the leaders. After decades of inactivity such people will not be easy to find. The GYC movement, however, demonstrated that young people, if approached correctly, are not only willing to do the work themselves but can even inspire the older generation to action as well.



WHAT CAN WE LEARN?

I would propose that the GYC movement would never have occurred had it not been for several distinct variables (the Bible schools, ASI Youth for Jesus, GYC) lining up just right. This very likely indicates that God orchestrated events in order to bring certain things to our attention:



01

That the way to infuse energy, drive and motivation into a movement that has been stagnant for generations is to start with the young. If young people can be inspired, if they become convinced that God is doing something and needs them to play a part, they will readily go anywhere and do anything asked of them.



02

That when attempting to reach the young and to get them involved, the age group that we should target is young adults (20-30 years old) as this age group gives the greatest return on investment. The tendency is usually to try to reach out to teenagers. But teenagers are a difficult age group to reach since they are at an age when they are still finding themselves and are emotionally and financially dependent on their parents. Young adults, on the other hand, are generally not yet tied down by career, family or mortgage payments like older generations but are nonetheless mature enough to bear significant responsibilities.



03

That it is possible to organize something that a good majority of Creedal Adventists can feel comfortable with. Many things Adventists do appeal only to a particular faction within Adventism. But by focusing on those things that unite us rather than on our differences, by focusing outward (on evangelism) rather than inward, we can actually get along and work together. **Ö**→Ö

04

And lastly, the most important lesson to learn from GYC is that simply getting together for a conference once or several times a year does not a movement make. This brings us to the final section of this article, the strategy section.

STRATEGY

So far we have covered all the elements needed to start a movement, including leadership, communication and energy. The question we are going to address next is how we can utilize these elements to bring widespread change within a global denomination.

Consider that the GYC youth movement had a decent group of young people, had yearly conferences, had Bible schools, had regional events, had various Bible workers and evangelists—and yet the energy eventually ran out without having had a major impact on the denomination.

"What will it take to reawaken a movement within a sizable denomination that has been in a state of dormancy for decades?"

To some degree, a youth movement is like the kindling used when starting a fire. It quickly catches the spark and begins to burn, but unless the young flame can be used to ignite something more lasting, it burns out just as quickly. Sometime during the mid-2000s the GYC movement had built up enough momentum to potentially impact the church. But, for lack of mature leadership to guide it, the opportunity was lost.

So what could have been done differently? What will it take to reawaken a movement within a sizable denomination that has been in a state of dormancy for decades?

GO WHERE THE PEOPLE ARE

The answer is actually quite simple: For a movement to take root within the denomination, it has to be taken to where the members are; it has to be taken to the local church. If the movement revolves around conferences and events that people need to find out about, take off work and travel to, if it is something where they only spend a few hours and then return to their regular lives, not much will change.

"If the revival happens only at special events and meetings without reaching the local church, it will not translate into a movement... To reach local congregations, we must target them directly."

To say it differently, the way to know that a transformation is really taking place within North American Adventism, for example, is if a significant portion of local congregations have experienced that change. If the revival happens only at special events and meetings without reaching the local church, it will not translate into a movement.

It is a mistake to think that if we bring people to an event and get them excited about the work, they will then take that excitement back to their home churches and these will be revived as well. To reach local congregations, we must target them directly.

IMPORTANCE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

Somehow, with the passage of time, we have lost sight of the importance of the local church. When we think of revival, we think of conferences and camp meetings. When we think of evangelism, we think of thirty-day campaigns that move from city to city leaving a handful of baptisms behind. Or, even worse, we think of large-scale satellite events where technology takes the place of individual

"Discipleship takes time; it takes consistency; it takes actually being present... because the local congregation provides the context where discipleship is meant to happen, it is the critical component that any revival must reach."

interaction. The local church doesn't usually figure into the equation. It is just somewhere we go for an hour a week, pretty much because we have to.

This is in large part because we have come to think of the work of the gospel as either a transfer of information or as an emotional high—both things that can be achieved in a few days or even hours. But while both emotion and information play an important role, there is yet another critical component to the work of the gospel that must not be overlooked: discipleship. Discipleship cannot be done via satellite or Internet. It cannot be done in the thirty days most traveling evangelists/revivalists spend in one location, or during a weekend conference. Discipleship takes time; it takes consistency; it takes actually being present. And, because the local congregation provides the context where discipleship is meant to happen, it is the critical component that any revival must reach.

THE LOCAL CHURCH AND EVANGELISM

Many people think that the reason the gospel spread everywhere in the first century A.D. is because evangelists like Paul and Peter went from place to place preaching. What they forget is that in most cases, all these missionaries had time to do is to plant a small congregation and then run off to another city to avoid persecution. The bulk of the evangelistic work was done by the churches they left behind. By the time Paul wrote an epistle or visited the region again, the handful of people he left behind had grown into a thriving church community.

Today, most of our churches are dysfunctional. If we do evangelism and baptize a few people, in most cases they are gone a few months later because the church environment they are placed in is not conducive to spiritual growth. Keep in mind that no matter how we conduct our evangelism, those who get baptized end up joining a congregation and are affected by the condition this congregation is

in. Even our own children who grow up in these churches leave about 50% of the time.

Thus, both in order to revive our own people and in order to take the gospel to the world, reawakening a movement within Adventism consists in large part of finding ways to revitalize the local church.

REACHING THE LOCAL CHURCH

Considering that there are several thousand Adventist churches in the North American Division, how do we go about reaching so many congregations?

I believe the most efficient way to do this is by following three steps:



CREATE MODEL CHURCHES

We've been accustomed to doing church a certain way for so long that it is hard even to imagine what a revived church would look like. So instead of expecting our members to change their congregations into something they don't quite understand, they should be able to first see an example of such a church in action.



PLANT INSTEAD OF FIX

It is much easier to plant a church than to transform an existing one. When people have been accustomed to doing things a certain way for many years, it takes a lot of effort to get them to change. If the Model Churches mentioned above are done as church plants rather than with existing congregations, they can be built correctly from the start.



PLANT IN AREAS OF HIGH ADVENTIST CONCENTRATION

Picture for a second a heat map of Adventist membership in the United States with tiny lights representing where every single Adventist lives. Some areas on this map will have a much higher concentration of light than others. When we choose the location where the model churches will be planted, we should go with those areas with the highest Adventist concentration. By planting our Model Churches in such areas, the members of nearby churches will have the chance to visit the Model and to see for themselves what the end goal is.

In essence, the strategy would be to find the locations with the highest concentration of Adventists per 100 mile radius, plant model churches in the center, begin working with the neighboring churches and move outward from there. It will be a lot easier to bring transformation to our churches when the members have already seen for themselves how their church could be better.

Probably the simplest way to paint a picture of what these model churches could be like would be to think back to the GYC experience, for those familiar with it. People came, heard powerful messages, received training on important topics, worshipped and fellowshipped together, studied the Bible, interacted with and witnessed to people in the community, organized missionary activities, were energized and strengthened, and left ready to take on life with a new sense of purpose and responsibility.

This very experience can be replicated in these model churches with the added benefit that those who are converted thereby can also be discipled into mature Christians. Every facet of church life can be optimized, be it the Sabbath school, the worship service, the sermon, prayer meetings, care groups, outreach activities or missionary endeavors.

The churches can be planted by teams that can be organized with leaders, preachers, teachers, Bible workers and supporting staff. The supporting staff can be families that have a good way of supporting themselves financially while also helping with the church or students who can enroll in school nearby and at the same time help with the project for the several years they are there.

The process should be started with two or three church planting teams in different locations working to perfect a model that can be replicated everywhere else. The teams should try out various strategies and approaches, collecting accurate data that can be used to determine what is and isn't working. The key is not to depend on "personalities" or on strategies that do not scale well across the board.

"Once our own congregations are revived, however, our evangelistic efforts will prove successful as well."

And that is essentially what it will take to revitalize a movement within Adventism. If church leaders work out their differences enough to lead, they can start by reorganizing and revitalizing the young people. The GYC conference is still taking place once a year, so they would not need to start entirely from scratch. Having developed an efficient communication system, they could organize these young people and anyone else interested into Model Church planting teams in cities with a high Adventist presence. Using these churches as the home base and the young people as workers, they could then take the revival to any other Adventist church that is interested.

Revival cannot happen without evangelism, so I am not implying here that we should not do any outreach until our churches are completely

revived. However, until our denomination can be again transformed into a movement where most members are working together in unison, our efforts to reach the world with the gospel will meet with only limited success. Once our own congregations are revived, however, our evangelistic efforts will prove successful as well.

CONCLUSION

Given the lateness of the hour, the Adventist Church cannot afford to postpone this conversation any further. But even though we have fallen behind schedule when it comes to the work that we were placed on this earth to do, it is not too late for us to get back on track. My hope with this book is that the reader has begun to see a way forward: to understand where we are, where we need to be and how we can actually get there. And, more importantly, I am hoping the reader will see that the steps needed to reawaken this movement are not as difficult as one might imagine. Virtually all the components are almost ready to go if we could move past our differences and work unitedly. It is my prayer that our people will make this their highest priority and will support with their time, energy and finances those who are doing likewise.

Appendix A
Article on the Nature of Christ bit.ly/sdaconvos-a

Appendix B
Article on the Sanctuary and the Gospel bit.ly/sdaconvos-b

Appendix C
Article on Music and Outreach
bit.ly/sdaconvos-c

Appendix D
Article on SDA Public Image bit.ly/sdaconvos-d



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