

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

Faith Comes by Hearing: Impact of Expository Preaching in the Worldview of Young Adults at SDA Church Plants.

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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In this thesis, expository preaching is proposed as the mechanism to communicate a biblical worldview to Adventist young adults (people ages 18 to 40). This thesis project engaged the young adults of two Adventist church plants: Refuge Church and Triumph Church. The project consisted of preaching Adventist biblical theology through expository sermons, with the thesis that it would be interpreted as a worldview by young adults. The preaching series delivered salvation history, broken down into eight pericopes, and used the Great Controversy as its metanarrative. The goal of each sermon was to expound the assigned passage and its place on salvation history. The project aimed to use the canonical method proposed by Peckham, so it was based exclusively on the biblical canon. The worldview of the young adults who participated was captured before, during, and after the intervention. The project included Adventist young adults from different backgrounds as well as a few non-Christians. The results were a modest but measurable progress in the developing of a biblical worldview, nuanced by Adventism. Hence, the bare exposition of Scriptures should be considered in Adventist church plants and Adventist young adult ministries. For SDA young adults, instead of communicating Adventist doctrine, is more effective to exemplify an Adventist reading of Scripture through expository preaching. A world-story presented through Bible exposition may have a bigger impact at the intellectual, emotional, and existential level than an abstract belief system. Hence, expository preaching may be an effective tool for the Adventist Church to disciple young adults.

Keywords: Adventist theology, biblical theology, biblical canon, biblical worldview, discipleship, expository preaching, Great Controversy, young adults

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Abbreviations

<i>DMIN</i>	<i>Doctor of Ministry</i>
ESV	<i>English Standard Version</i>
GC	<i>General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists</i>
LEB	<i>Lexham English Bible</i>
MDIV	<i>Master of Divinity</i>
NAD	<i>North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists</i>
NET	<i>New English Translation</i>
NIV	<i>New International Version</i>
SDA	<i>Seventh-day Adventist</i>
UW	University of Washington

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) young adults are losing their SDA identity. Even worse, they are losing, disregarding, or not acquiring a biblical worldview. Though Adventist young adults are usually the product of Adventist education (K-12 schools and universities), they do not adhere to historical, orthodox Christianity. A recent survey showed that the main reason for young adults to leave Adventism in the United States (US) is that Christian beliefs are perceived to be untenable.¹

One of the most effective tools to communicate a biblical worldview is expository preaching. This type of preaching allows presenting ideas straight from the highest authority in Christianity: the Bible. Even so, expository preaching has not been widely used in Adventism. That is why this project thesis sought to use expository preaching to develop a biblical worldview in young adults (individuals ages eighteen to forty). The project was executed in two Adventist church plants in the greater Seattle area: Refuge Church and Triumph Church.

Ministry Context

As a starting point, a summary of the two church plants that the researcher leads is presented. The background, history, culture, strengths, goals, and progress of both churches are included.

¹ Allan Parker, “Stemming the Exodus of Young Adults,” October 20, 2022, <https://www.nadmultiply.org/new-blog/2022/10/20/stemming-the-exodus-of-young-adults-by-allan-parker>

Refuge Church

Refuge Church is a Seventh-day Adventist church plant in Seattle, WA. Its mission is: “To help everyone find refuge in Jesus.” The church has three core values that have come to define the DNA of the church:

- 1) Gospel centrality.
- 2) Unconditional friendship.
- 3) Sacrificial service.

Concerning the first core value, Refuge highlights the gospel, understood as Jesus' death on the cross for the forgiveness of sins. The church emphasizes the good news and its derivatives: the Fatherhood of God, Christ's love, grace towards imperfection, the possibility of redemption, acquiring a holistic lifestyle, and so on. Refuge wants to be known for what they stand for, not for what they stand against.

Regarding the second core value, Refuge is a community that welcomes everyone. Being in Seattle, the members appreciate the embracing of people from all backgrounds. The undertone of this core value can be perceived as an affirmation of all lifestyles. While that is not true, Refuge resides in the tension of extending genuine friendship to everyone while being faithful to the Bible.

The third core value reflects the passion of millennials and centennials to speak up and advocate for social justice. Refuge does not shy away from making pronouncements about social issues, always bringing a biblical perspective to them. The church is explicit in not supporting either the Democratic or the Republican party, and it has called out both when they promote unbiblical policies. Moreover, the church has partnered with World Relief Seattle, a non-profit

that helps immigrants and refugees. The church donates 8 percent of its local budget to this organization. It also supports refugees as they settle in the area.

The church was planted by the researcher in May 2018, after almost a year of building a core group and a few soft launches. In the first few months, there were around ten core leaders and twenty regular members. The plant started with a young Hispanic atmosphere, with most of its members coming from Spanish-speaking contexts and being younger than thirty years old. The services were held in English, though, and the goal was to eventually become multicultural. By the first anniversary, the total membership had increased to around forty people, with a few more non-Hispanic members. Refuge was officially upgraded from “Group” status to “Company” status by the Washington Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.² Then the COVID-19 pandemic happened, and from 2020 to 2021, Refuge struggled to stay afloat. At some point, it considered closing or merging with another Adventist church.

By early 2022, only around twenty people from the original membership were around. However, twenty more had been incorporated, coming back to a similar state before the pandemic. Then, changes in leadership and location accelerated its progression. By 2023, Refuge Church had around sixty adult members, had increased its presence in the community, and was granted “Church” status by the Conference on its fifth anniversary (May 2023). Around half of the members are Hispanic young adults, but the other half are people from different races and ages. There are around ten countries represented in the membership, and the age range has widened from infants to people in their sixties. A regular worship service can have from fifty to sixty people, plus kids.

² In Adventism, any new plant needs to move through three stages before being considered a full church: Group status, Company status, and Church status. The criteria to move from one to another are mainly membership, tithing, and leadership. The benefits are an increase in independence from the Conference, as well as equal participation in common decisions affecting the entire Conference.

Refuge Church was originally planted for young people with no Christian background. It was located close to the University Of Washington (UW). Some of its original members were students at UW, who helped coordinate evangelistic efforts on campus. However, the pandemic forced some changes: the church moved to a second and then a third location, still in Seattle but away from the university district. The students graduated. Single young adults got married and had kids. Currently, the church still has a young atmosphere, but it has become multi-generational, and its main emphasis is on young families.

Originally, one of the strategies to attract young people was to keep the denominational culture to a minimum. Refuge is a Seventh-day Adventist church belonging to the local SDA Conference, but it does not look like most Adventist churches. For example, the church does not follow the traditional worship liturgy and does not include the SDA logo in its marketing. Even though the original goal to reach young adults was reduced, the denominational strategy was kept. The membership supports Adventism, but it may not be their main identity. Some of the members have found in this church an alternative to the overly denominational, even cultish version of Adventism that they experienced in the past. People baptized at Refuge are not very familiar with Adventism as an organization. Most of the contended issues in the denomination have not been a problem at Refuge. For example, whereas the ordination of women is highly contested in the denomination, the head elder at Refuge is a woman. When it comes to the leaders, the pastor and the elders are totally committed to the Bible as the source of authority. All of them fall within the evangelical spectrum. Yet, their enthusiasm towards Adventism differs from each other.

Refuge has had a single pastor since the beginning: the researcher of this project. However, he started as a lay pastor, working full-time at Microsoft as a Senior Software

Engineer. That changed in June 2022 when he received a call from the Washington Conference to become a full-time pastor. The plan was to continue at Refuge Church while taking another church plant, still in Group status, Triumph Church.

Triumph Church

Triumph was planted in 2019 in Auburn, WA. It was the result of the organic growth of the Auburn Hispanic SDA Church. Most of the youth from that church felt more comfortable speaking English and preferred a contemporary worship service. Hence, they started worshipping in a side room in the same building. They were quickly approved as a Group by the Conference, and the worship service was attended by up to forty people. The church was gaining steam, but the pandemic stopped its progress. Several of the core leaders moved away or unplugged from the church. In January 2021, they started worshipping in person again, but the momentum had been lost. The worship service was attended by as few as ten people some Saturdays. Also, the church did not have a common vision, an expansion plan, or a solid leadership team. They were just sincere young people (ages eighteen to twenty-six) who wanted to worship God without the high liturgy of their parents.

In June 2022, the researcher was installed as the new pastor of Triumph. The start was turbulent since people were attached and in some cases related, to the original pastor. Also, since there was no mission, vision, or growth plan in place, there were strong disagreements among the leaders. After six months of working out the differences and recruiting new people, the researcher set up a new leadership team. They are getting along and agreeing on the fundamentals of ministry.

By the beginning of 2023, Triumph had more than thirty members. All of them are senior youth or young adults (ages seventeenth to thirty-four). Most of them are Hispanic, and the rest

are Asian and Anglo. There are a few marriages but no kids. The educational level and career progression are broad. Some of them did not finish high school and are working entry jobs, whereas some others have college education and have high-paying jobs. Around half of them grew up in Adventism and are familiar with the Bible, but the other half are relatively new believers and do not have high biblical literacy.

To this day, Triumph does not have a defined mission or vision. They do not have a comprehensive expansion plan either. They worship in the same secondary room, while the mother church worships in the main sanctuary. However, they have the strength of the youth. They are committed to their faith and eager to do ministry. Because it is full of young adults, the growth is organic. From the moment the researcher came, the church has integrated close to twenty ex-Adventists or disconnected Adventists. The church has become effective in rescuing discouraged members. There have been some baptisms, too.

The Conference granted them the Company status in April of 2023. The next step is to become an organized Church, just as Refuge did in May of 2023. That can happen in the next three to five years. Recently, the leadership team decided to change their worship time to allow the researcher to be at Refuge first and then at Triumph on the same day.

Problem Presented

Secularism and postmodernism are leading forces in the world. They have influence over everyone, including Christians. According to the latest report of *The State of Theology*,³ from 2022, self-denominated evangelicals do not hold historically evangelical positions. McGarry has

³ “The State of Theology,” accessed September 30, 2022, <https://thestateoftheology.com/>.

summarized the results among young people.⁴ According to the survey, evangelicals between the ages of eighteen and forty-nine years old do not hold the basics of Christianity. More than half of surveyed young evangelicals do not believe either that Jesus is God or that the Holy Spirit is a personal being. Most of the other responses are equally alarming. There are no current statistics specific to Adventism,⁵ but it is reasonable to believe they are similar. Young adults who identify as Adventists are usually the product of Adventist education (K-12 schools and universities). They value the community and cultural diversity they find in the denomination. However, many of them do not know or believe the biblical theology expressed in Adventism. As with any other Christian group, secularism is capturing the minds of young Adventists. Their worldview is more influenced by the Western ethos than by the Scriptures. This is true, at least in the church plants that the researcher leads. The problem at Refuge and Triumph is the absence of a biblical worldview, as expressed in Adventism, among members ages eighteen to forty.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this DMIN project thesis is to prepare and preach a series of expository sermons,⁶ with reflection tools to develop an Adventist-informed biblical worldview. Young adults who are part of the Adventist church may be losing their Adventist identity and may not have a high biblical literacy, but they still see the Bible as a form of (some) authority. Hence, a series of expository messages that go through salvation history (from an Adventist perspective)

⁴ Mike McGarry, "The State of Theology in Youth Ministry," September 21, 2022, <https://www.youthpastortheologian.com/blog/the-state-of-theology-in-youth-ministry>.

⁵ There are no broad studies on Adventist youth. But check: Leanne M. Sigvartsen, Jan A. Sigvartsen, and Paul B. Petersen. *Beyond Beliefs 1: What Millennial Young Adults Really Think of the 28 Beliefs of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church*, (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Department of Religion & Biblical Languages, 2014). Their work presents the theological beliefs of thirty-seven millennials studying at Andrews University.

⁶ The definition of "expository preaching" is below.

will be prepared. The purpose of the series will not be to affirm every point of Adventist theology or to validate the "Twenty-Eight Fundamental Beliefs" of the denomination. Instead, the sermons will provide an overview of biblical theology. They will analyze Christian fundamentals and Adventist distinctives when they naturally flow from the pericopes, which represent the main phases of salvation history. By the end of the series, the participants' worldview should have been moved, by a measurable degree, towards a biblical conception of reality.

Basic Assumptions

The philosophical assumption of this project is that human beings possess free will and are able to exercise it to make decisions, acquire knowledge, and develop a worldview. The assumed worldview is formally called Christian theism. Within that framework, the self-attestation of Christian Scriptures (that they are "breathed out by God" [2 Tim 3:16, English Standard Version]) is assumed to be true. Therefore, although Christian theism has many legitimate expressions, the one that takes the Scriptures as the highest form of authority is to be preferred. The Protestant tenets are assumed to be faithful heirs of primitive Christianity.⁷ Contemporary evangelicalism is assumed to carry on the aims of the Reformation. Furthermore, it is assumed that Seventh-day Adventism is a valid expression of historical Protestantism and contemporary evangelicalism. Hence, the project thesis will operate within a biblically-based, Adventist-informed perspective.

From a practical standpoint, the project thesis assumes the participation of the members at Refuge Church and Triumph Church. From the nearly sixty members between the ages

⁷ Sola Scriptura, Sola Fide, Sola Gratia, Solus Christus, Soli Deo Gloria.

eighteen to forty at both churches, the researcher expects that around 50 percent of them agree to participate, and up to twelve individuals agree to be interviewed before and after the preaching series. The researcher assumes that the participants have sympathy towards Christianity and the Bible. It is not assumed that they have deep knowledge of biblical theology or Adventist distinctives. It is expected, though, that after the project is completed, the worldview of the participants overlaps more with biblical theology, as expressed in Adventism.

Definitions

The following is a list of terms that are heavily used in this project thesis, with their definitions and the precise nuance used here.

Adventist Theology. Richard Davidson explains the self-understanding of Adventism: “Seventh-day Adventists are the hermeneutical heirs of the Reformation. And as did the radical reformers of the sixteenth century, they continually seek to go ‘back to the roots’ to base all presuppositions, their principles of interpretation, their faith, and their practice upon the absolute authority of God’s infallible Word.”⁸ Most Adventist beliefs align with evangelicalism. For example, the trinitarian understanding of the Godhead, salvation by faith, and the principle of *Sola Scriptura*. However, they part ways from traditional views if they see in them the influence of the medieval church or Greek philosophy rather than clear scriptural support. Some Adventist distinctives are the commandment to keep the Seventh-day Sabbath, annihilationism, and the historicist interpretation of apocalyptic literature. They have encapsulated their belief system as “Twenty-Eight Fundamental Beliefs,” grouped in the doctrine of the Godhead, human nature,

⁸ Richard M. Davidson, “Biblical Interpretation,” in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, MD, Review & Herald, 2000), 97.

soteriology, ecclesiology, Christian ethics, and eschatology.⁹ Most of them agree with evangelicalism, and they all fall within the Protestant spectrum.

Biblical Theology. In his classical work, Geerhardus Vos defines biblical theology as “that branch of Exegetical Theology which deals with the process of the self-revelation of God deposited in the Bible.”¹⁰ Goldsworthy provides the key nuance that sets biblical theology apart from systematic: “[biblical theology] does contain many timeless principles, but not in the abstract. They are given in a historical context of progressive revelation.”¹¹ As such, biblical theology is intrinsically connected with salvation history and the progression of divine revelation. *Heilsgeschichte*, as salvation history is also known, is usually described through a unifying theme and a list of epochs.¹² Different scholars have proposed different controlling themes: the Sovereignty of God, the Temple motif, the establishment of the kingdom of God, and so on. Adventism uses the “Great Controversy” as the unifying theme (see definition below). The epoch division of redemptive history also varies from scholar to scholar (see discussion in Chapter 2).

Biblical Worldview. Christian philosophers J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig define worldview as “an ordered set of propositions that one believes, especially propositions

⁹ General Conference of Seventh-Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* (Silver Spring, MD: Review & Herald, 2018).

¹⁰ Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1948), 13.

¹¹ Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 22.

¹² The word *Heilsgeschichte* was coined in the nineteenth century by German theologians. Its current usage can convey something different than factual history. Such a connotation is not implied in the current project thesis. Here, “salvation history” and *Heilsgeschichte* are used interchangeably to denote actual events that occurred in the past.

about life's most important questions."¹³ They use the term in the philosophical, technical sense, which includes postulations about the different disciplines of their field: logic, value theory, and so on.¹⁴ In a more popular sense, a worldview is the glasses through which people see, understand, and interpret the world.¹⁵ Combining both popular and technical meanings, a worldview is the meta-narrative that individuals use to process and interpret reality. It answers, consciously or unconsciously, ontological, metaphysical, epistemological, ethical, and anthropological questions.

A religious belief system can be a worldview. Historian and theologian N. T. Wright defines a religious worldview as a set of stories, symbols, and praxis.¹⁶ Since biblical theology can provide a meta-narrative of the universe, as well as stories that inform the human experience, it can be expressed as a worldview. A biblical worldview is then a biblical theology.

In contemporary literature, "biblical worldview" is often limited too strictly to a particular type of evangelicalism, for example, Reformed. But as Boyd and Eddy break down, there is a spectrum of beliefs about secondary issues within evangelicalism.¹⁷ In the present work, "biblical worldview" will include divergent views that honestly attempt to root themselves in Scripture. A way of defining such attempts is through historical-grammatical hermeneutics. Kwabena Donkor argues that this method makes justice to Scripture's self-understanding: "macro-presuppositions that are faithful to Scripture influence the preference for a particular [hermeneutical] method—

¹³ J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview, Second Edition* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017), 15.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Tawa J. Anderson, W. Michael Clark, and David Naugle, *An Introduction to Christian Worldview: Pursuing God's Perspective in a Pluralistic World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 28.

¹⁶ N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991), 369.

¹⁷ Gregory A. Boyd and Paul R. Eddy, *Across the Spectrum: Understanding Issues in Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2022).

namely, the historical-grammatical method. Its presuppositions include, among other aspects, the inspiration of the Bible, scriptural perspicuity, authorial intentionality, and objectivity.”¹⁸ Thus, any biblical theology that flows from historical-grammatical hermeneutics can be described as biblical worldview.¹⁹

Expository Preaching. Its definition can be strict in Baptist and Presbyterian traditions (see discussion in Chapter 2). However, a general definition that fits the greater evangelical world will be sufficient. Tony Merida defines this type of preaching by the values it pursues rather than the mechanics of its preparation. He says: "expository preaching is Word-centered, Word-driven, or Word-saturated preaching.... Word-driven expositors are committed to the careful explanation and application of the biblical text."²⁰ A general definition will allow the development of the biblical themes found in the selected passage. According to Timothy Keller, "all expository preaching is partially topical."²¹ By that, he means that expository preaching ought not to be a running commentary of the main pericope, but it should be sensible to the themes and doctrines presented or assumed on it.²² Moreover, John Stott, one of the most respected expositors, rarely preached through full books of the Bible.²³ Hence, *lectio continua* is

¹⁸ Kwabena Donkor, "Presuppositions in Hermeneutics," in *Biblical Hermeneutics: An Adventist Approach*, ed. Frank M. Hasel (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2022), 26.

¹⁹ Adventists seek to build their theology on grammatical-historical hermeneutics (contra the historical-critical method). Some of their conclusions, though founded entirely on canonical Scripture, differ from most other evangelicals. A reason is that Adventists try to disassociate their theology from the Greek heritage of the medieval church and instead use a Jewish framework, as the authors of both the Old and New Testament had, as well as the primitive church. Contemporary theologians from several persuasions acknowledge the Platonist influence on Augustine and the Aristotelic influence on Aquinas.

²⁰ Tony Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor: A Field Guide for Word-Driven Disciple Makers* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2016), 16.

²¹ Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism* (New York, NY: Penguin Group, 2016), 31.

²² *Ibid.*, 32.

²³ John Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), 168.

not to be equated with expository preaching. For the purposes of this project, expository preaching can be defined as the Christ-centered proclamation of a self-contained biblical passage, which comprises the explanation of the original meaning, its theological contours, and its application to the contemporary audience.

Great Controversy. Frank Hasel explains the Adventist approach to biblical theology: “The Bible is not just a collection of short, disconnected words and sentences or unrelated paragraphs. The Bible tells many stories that are embedded in a large metanarrative. In Adventist parlance, the Bible tells us about the great controversy between good and evil.”²⁴ The main differentiator with Western Christianity is that the conflict between Christ and Satan is not of power but of ideas. The resolution of the conflict will be the vindication of God's character before the universe. This system sees *Heilsgeschichte* as the demonstration of God's moral superiority over Satan. John C. Peckham, an Adventist theologian, has recently developed this metanarrative as a “theodicy of love.” He explains: “When the cosmic conflict is finally ended, all will clearly see that God has done only and always what is best. All will understand that God is love; all his commandments have always been and always will be out of love, for the ultimate happiness of all. So God's name will finally be vindicated (cf. Phil 2:10).”²⁵

Systematic Theology. John MacArthur defines systematic theology like this: “The organization of Scripture by a synthesis of scriptural teaching, summarized using major categories that encompass the entirety of God's written revelation.”²⁶ Systematic theology has a

²⁴ Frank M. Hasel, “Elements of Biblical Hermeneutics in Harmony with Scripture's Self-Claims,” in *Biblical Hermeneutics: An Adventist Approach*, ed. Frank M. Hasel (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2022), 50.

²⁵ John C. Peckham, *Theodicy of Love: Cosmic Conflict and the Problem of Evil* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018), 136.

²⁶ John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 36.

higher level of abstraction than biblical theology. Wayne Grudem explains that systematic theology “makes use of the material of biblical theology and often builds on the results of biblical theology.”²⁷ By nature, systematic theology is dogmatic: it must have an answer to all theological questions instead of leaving issues unanswered.²⁸ Because of its need to create a coherent whole, it can be reductionist, and it can dilute the tensions that exist in the raw text. Also, it is more influenced by the denomination or tradition behind it. For example, a Reformed church will espouse a Reformed systematic theology, whereas a Wesleyan tradition will espouse a Wesleyan systematic theology. Hence, it more easily falls into a denominational creed than a worldview (as defined above). Because of that, it goes beyond the scope of the current project thesis.

Limitations

The more Adventism grows, the more diverse it becomes, both culturally and theologically. Fifteen years ago, SDA scholar John Paulien described four types of Adventism: creative traditionalism, respectful biblicism, indifferent minimalism, and passionate creativity.²⁹ Paulien describes the third group as people “motivated more by what works on Monday than by some objective standard of exegesis or missionary necessity... This kind of functional Adventism focuses on those few doctrines that seem to make the most difference on Monday morning. In

²⁷ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 23.

²⁸ For example, to the question: "What is God's relationship with modern-day Israel?" biblical theology will not have a definitive answer. Instead, it will point out how God has dealt progressively with His people in the history of salvation. Systematic theologies will have an answer: Covenant Theology, Dispensationalism, or some other system.

²⁹ John Paulien, “Questions on Doctrine and the Church: Present and Future,” October 24, 2007, <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1020&context=qod>.

broad terms, most of the younger, post-modern Adventist generation also fits into this group.”³⁰

The current project thesis will interact with the Adventism found at Refuge Church and Triumph Church, which could be imperfectly categorized as “indifferent minimalism.” What works or not in that context may not be generalized to other types of Adventism.

The proposed project thesis will be executed over the course of eight weeks. A worldview cannot be fully developed in such a short time. The previous worldview of the participants has been developed throughout their lives. Even if the entire action research was focused on a single aspect of the biblical worldview, like metaphysics or ethics, what could be realistically expected was a slight worldview adjustment rather than a conversion (see the difference in the Theoretical Foundations in Chapter 2). Furthermore, contested topics in contemporary culture, like sexuality, will not be covered other than in passing comments. The current action research will not be able to make a meaningful impact on those. Hence, the project is limited to the essential contours of any worldview (see the seven main components in the Literature Review in Chapter 2). At the practical level, consistency among the participants is expected to diminish as time goes by.

Delimitations

The current research project will produce a series of expository sermons that go through *Heilsgeschichte*. Such a series will cover the basic components of a biblical worldview, extracted from selected pericopes that represent the high points of redemptive history. Hence, the intervention and measurement will be delimited to those basic components.

³⁰ Paulien, “Questions on Doctrine and the Church.”

The preaching series will interact with Christian fundamentals and Adventist distinctives only as they naturally flow from the chosen pericopes. The unifying theme of *Heilsgeschichte* will be the Adventist one: the Great Controversy. The main SDA distinctives will be covered: Sabbath as part of Creation and historicist eschatology as part of the church epoch. That said, the series will not be a comprehensive review of Adventist theology. A full list of the topics is included in Chapter 3 as part of the intervention design.

Since the project focuses on young adults,³¹ two generations will be included: millennials and centennials. People older than the millennial generation will not be able to enroll (in 2023, people older than forty years old). Centennials are currently in their teens and twenties. To streamline the IRB approval process, the researcher decided not to work with minors. Hence, the selected age group is from eighteen to forty years old.

Members from Refuge or Triumph who choose to participate will take a worldview questionnaire before and after the intervention. Up to twelve participants will be invited to be part of an online interview before and after the preaching series. All participants will be asked to perform weekly tasks throughout the duration of the project:

- Listen to the sermon, either in-person or online.
- Fill out the sermon online provided by the researcher.
- Answer reflective questions the night of the service.

As observed, the intervention centers in the weekly sermon. Since the series will be used as the main preaching resource at both churches, devotional material, and midweek small groups will revolve around salvation history, too. That material, though, will not be included in the

³¹ Understood as the life stage after adolescence, regularly from eighteen years old, and until mid or late thirties. In 2023, the young adult generations are millennials and centennials.

intervention. Participants will not be required to engage with those who are part of the project thesis.

Thesis Statement

The most promising solution to the loss of biblical literacy and biblical worldview is opening the Bible again. As Spurgeon said: “Open the door and let the lion out; he will take care of himself.... The answer to every objection against the Bible is the Bible.”³² What young adults need to embrace a biblical worldview is to hear it clearly and authoritatively from the Bible. Expository preaching is one of the best methods to communicate biblical truths, yet it has not gained prominence in Adventism. Therefore, the researcher believes that if young adults from his churches are exposed to expository preaching, their worldview will tilt towards a biblical worldview nuanced by Adventism. The thesis of this project is not that they will fully embrace Adventist theology nor that they will trust the denomination as the infallible guardian of truth. Instead, the thesis is that they will grow into a worldview that goes back to the Bible to evaluate and process reality. The goal is the adoption of an Adventist biblical theology as a biblical worldview through expository preaching. Adventist systematic theology is beyond the scope of this project.³³ The thesis is that if the members from Refuge and Triumph who are eighteen to forty years old are exposed to expository preaching, then they will strengthen, to a measurable degree, a biblical worldview nuanced by Adventism.

³² “The Bible: Speech at Annual Meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society, May 5, 1875,” in *Speeches by C.H. Spurgeon at Home and Abroad*, ed GH Pike (London, 1878).

³³ See definitions of biblical and systematic theology above.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This project is at the intersection of expository preaching, Adventist theology, and biblical worldview. The thesis is that if biblical theology is preached in expository form, it can be interpreted as worldview by young adults. Therefore, a literary review of expository preaching, Adventist preaching, and biblical worldview is pertinent. Next, a theology of preaching and its impact on the individual's worldview will be established. The biblical theology used in the current intervention will also be summarized. Lastly, a theoretical framework for worldview transformation will be laid down.

Literature Review

Expository preaching has arguably been practiced since the dawn of the church. However, in the evangelical world, it has been defined and used in a technical sense only since the nineteenth century. A historical sketch of the practice, the spectrum of definitions, and its assumed goals are necessary to delimitate the concept. Once a definition has been established within the evangelical world, the focus will be on Adventist preaching. A historical review of Adventist preaching, as well as current trends in the denomination, will be outlined. Lastly, the concept of worldview will be analyzed on its historical context, as well as its evangelical and Adventist usage.

Expository Preaching in Evangelicalism

A summary of the literature of expository preaching is presented below. A brief history, the multifaceted definition, and the proposed goals of expository preaching will be covered.

Historical Precedents

After the passing of the apostles, Scripture was the theological authority in the early church. Justin Martyr shared how the churches focused on reading and teaching Scripture: "The memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are being read as long as it is allowable."¹ Wright published a study on communal reading in the early church. He concluded: "Christ-believing communities were much like other scholastic communities in that they focused on the reading and interpretation of texts."² As the practice of preaching was formalized in the ante-Nicene period, Scripture maintained the highest level of respect. The first-ever manual on preaching, by Augustine, assumed that the purpose of preaching was explaining Scripture. He started his work by listing the two steps of the preaching process: studying Scripture and explaining it.³ Eventually, allegorical interpretation crept in, but the literary expounding of Scripture was maintained by several prominent fathers: Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, John Chrysostom, and others (though they themselves indulged in allegory from time to time). The last example is notable: Chrysostom was known for using *lectio continua*, the consecutive preaching of books of the Bible for long periods of time.⁴ Entire collections of his sermons from some books of the Bible have been preserved.⁵

The medieval church lacked the teaching of, and even access to, Scriptures. Yet the reformers rekindled an unquenchable fire simply by opening the Bible. Before the Reformation

¹ 1 Apol. 67.3.

² Brian J. Wright, *Communal Reading in the Time of Jesus: A Window into Early Christian Reading Practices* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2017), 117.

³ Augustine, *On Christian Teaching* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 8.

⁴ Paul A. Hartog, "John Chrysostom: Golden-Mouthed Preacher," in *A Legacy of Preaching: Apostles to the Revivalist*, ed. Benjamin K. Forrest et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 133.

⁵ For example, John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Philippians*, translated by Pauline Allen (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013).

proper, Wycliffe in London and Huss in Prague created movements around access to biblical teaching. Later, Zwingli was the first known reformer to revive *lectio continua*.⁶ Both Luther and Calvin practiced and advised on expository preaching. Luther said: “One of the books should be selected and one or two chapters, or half a chapter, be read, until the book is finished. After that another book should be selected, and so on, until the entire Bible has been read through.”⁷ Calvin was the most consistent on *lectio continua*. He advised: “Mortal man shall not be so bold as to mangle the Scripture and to pull it in pieces, that he may diminish this or that at his pleasure, that he may obscure something and suppress many things; but shall deliver whatsoever is revealed in the Scripture.”⁸

The Puritans that came after them kept a high view of the Bible. However, they did not use expository preaching as consistently as the reformers. They tended to focus on doctrinal precision and systematic theology. William Perkins, who wrote the first preaching manual in English, *The Art of Prophesying*, advised to focus on doctrines that stemmed from the selected passage.⁹ Breidenbaugh explains: “The English puritans latched on to the theological teaching of the Reformation, resulting in a doctrinal-thematic style of preaching.”¹⁰

⁶ Jon Balserak and Jim West, *From Zwingli to Amyraut Exploring the Growth of European Reformed Traditions* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 31.

⁷ Martin Luther, “Concerning the Order of Public Worship (1523),” in *Liturgy and Hymns*, vol. 53 of Luther’s Works, trans. Paul Zeller Strodach, rev. Ulrich S. Leupold (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1965), 12.

⁸ Commentary on Acts 20:26.

⁹ William Perkins, *The Art of Prophesying and the Calling of the Ministry* (East Peoria, IL: Banner of Truth, 1966), 53-59.

¹⁰ Joel Breidenbaugh, *Preaching for Bodybuilding Revised Edition: Integrating Doctrine and Expository Preaching for the 21st Century* (Renovate Publishing Group, 2020), 10.

Expository preaching had a renaissance in the nineteenth century, thanks to John Broadus and his highly influential *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*.¹¹ McKibben notes: "For seventy years or more, every work on preaching was merely a supplement to that of Broadus."¹² It was around this time that expository preaching became a technical term (definitions below). The Englishmen Martyn Lloyd-Jones and John Stott popularized expository preaching outside of Baptists' contexts.¹³ It is claimed that Stott singlehandedly "converted" the Anglican Church in Australia into expository preaching.¹⁴ Notable works on expository preaching in the twentieth century are *Biblical Preaching*, by Haddon W. Robinson, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, by Bryan Chapell, and *Power in the Pulpit*, by Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix. Proctor points out that "there has been a revival of expository preaching in the last thirty years. This has given rise to a plethora of books written on this subject."¹⁵ Nevertheless, the definition of the subject fluctuates from tradition to tradition.

Definition Spectrum

Despite the sea of literature on expository preaching, there is no settled definition for it. Every author presents a unique understanding. Although definitions overlap with each other, they do present variations. Whitney, in his doctoral dissertation, examined all contemporary literature

¹¹ John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons, Fourth Edition* (New York, NY: HarperOne, 1979).

¹² Thomas R. McKibbens, "John A. Broadus: Shaper of Baptist Preaching," *Baptist History and Heritage* 40, no. 2 (2005): 18.

¹³ *A Legacy of Preaching: Enlightenment to the Present Day*, ed. Benjamin K. Forrest et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan: 2018), 323-352.

¹⁴ See Jonathan Holt, "The emergence of expository preaching in Sydney Anglican churches," in *St. Mark's Review*, no. 230 (2014).

¹⁵ David Proctor, "Developing an expository preaching model that will aid the participants in the understanding and practice of expository preaching at Texas Baptist Institute-Seminary, Henderson, Texas" (Doctoral Thesis, Union University, 2017), 17. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

on expository preaching and identified eight characteristics that delimit it. Yet he did not define it himself.¹⁶ On the other hand, Robinson,¹⁷ Vines and Shaddix,¹⁸ and Chapell¹⁹ provide their own definitions in their influential textbooks on expository preaching. They have their own nuances, although they all agree on two basic characteristics: a) the explanation of the original meaning of the text and b) the application of that meaning to contemporary hearers. A key differentiator of "expository" in all these contexts is that the passage should drive the message instead of the other way around.²⁰ Proper and thorough exegesis of the preached passage is assumed by these manuals, and they spend time detailing the process.²¹

Respectable expositors like MacArthur,²² Lawson,²³ or Dever²⁴ seem to include *lectio continua* in their definition of expository sermons. Yet Keller²⁵ says preaching can be expository by limiting it to a pericope, and it is not practical to preach through an entire book of the Bible. Willie Edward Hucks II, chair of the Department of Practical & Applied Theology at Andrews

¹⁶ Timothy P. Whitney, "An Expository Sermon Matrix" (PhD diss., Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2021). ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

¹⁷ Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages, Third Edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academy, 2014), 13.

¹⁸ Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons, Revised Edition* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2017), 30.

¹⁹ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming Expository Preaching, Third Edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018), 8-9.

²⁰ "The concept comes from the text," Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 7, "Expository preaching is not about a sermon form, but a process by which the words of God are first discovered and then communicated." Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 33. "The meaning of the passage is the message of the sermon. The text governs the preacher." Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 10.

²¹ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 47-66. Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 139-180. Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 87-112.

²² John MacArthur, *Preaching: How to Preach Biblically* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 279.

²³ Steven Lawson, *Called to Preach: Fulfilling the High Calling of Expository Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2022), 81-82.

²⁴ Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church, Third Edition* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 33.

²⁵ Keller, *Preaching*, 40-41.

University and professor of homiletics, believes the same; expository preaching refers to expounding the text on its original context and does not need *lectio continua*.²⁶ Likewise, Stott did not require going through books of the Bible; he advised paying attention to different factors in choosing the passage to preach: liturgical, pastoral, external, and internal factors.²⁷ D. A. Carson defines expository preaching as that which “emerges directly and demonstrably from a passage or passages of Scriptures.”²⁸ He allows not having a main pericope as long as the sermon is “controlled by a Scripture text or texts.”²⁹

Not everyone agrees that expository preaching is the most useful of modes. Since the 1970s, the “New Homiletics” opposed propositional preaching and the deductive method. Instead, they advanced an inductive approach that may or may not have a central idea.³⁰ Craddock, the originator of the New Homiletics, criticized the deductive sermon for extracting a “main idea” from the biblical text and communicating that instead. “The minister boils off all the water and then preaches the stain at the bottom of the cup,” he famously said.³¹ Currently, Myers proposes a new approach to preaching beyond both expository and narrative. He calls it “conductive preaching.”³²

²⁶ From personal conversation.

²⁷ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 169.

²⁸ D. A. Carson “Teaching the Whole Bible,” in *The Art & Craft of Biblical Preaching: A Comprehensive Resource for Today’s Communicators*, ed. Haddon Robinson and Craig Brian Larson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 404.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Melbert B. Baga. “Preaching for Congregational Transformation: A Willardian Vision-Intent-Means Approach to Spiritual Growth and Its Effectiveness in Nurturing the Faith of the Fullerton Seventh-day Adventist Church” (Doctoral Thesis, Andrews University, 2012), 47. Digital Commons at Andrews University.

³¹ Fred B. Craddock, *Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1985), 123.

³² Jacob D. Myers, “Conductive Preaching: Narratology, Homiletics, and the Poststructural Turn,” *ExpTim* 132, no. 4 (August 2020): 163-174.

In Protestantism, there are a variety of definitions and opinions about expository preaching. Based on the literature, expository preaching is more rigidly defined the more to the right one goes. The definition can include the length of the explanation portion,³³ the usage of *lectio continua* (see above), and even the preacher: only men can engage in expository preaching.³⁴ Around the center-right, there is still a specific definition, but there is flexibility in implementation. That is where the most used textbooks lie: Robinson's, Chapell's, and Vines & Shaddix's. Moving to the center of the spectrum, expository preaching is still appreciated but more loosely defined.³⁵ Still, within evangelicalism, Adventism lies close to the center-left, with a theoretical appreciation but not a precise definition and no regular use. Moving further to the left into mainline Protestantism, expository preaching is less understood and commonly disregarded.

The reasons to engage or not in expository preaching may be more than just theological convictions. Some other factors may be denominational history, cultural diversity within the tradition, and the perceived vision of the denomination. For example, Adventism is theologically conservative but has a strong evangelistic emphasis, which affected its preaching culture since its inception.

³³ "The explanation of the text component should comprise fifty percent of each message." Robert W. Page, "Increasing the Biblical Literacy of the Members of Sharon Baptist Church, Charlotte, North Carolina through Expository Preaching" (Doctoral Thesis, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017), 4, ProQuest Dissertations & Thesis Global.

³⁴ "Only men of God can preach." MacArthur, *Preaching*, 20.

³⁵ "Expository preaching' need not be conceived of, exclusively, as the enslavement to a line-by-line crawl through the passage." Aaron Edwards, "Thus Saith the Word: The Theological Relationship between Biblical Exposition and Prophetic Utterance in Preaching," *ExpTim* 125, no. 11 (August 2014): 524.

Proposed Goals for Expository Preaching

The goal of the expository sermon is not agreed on among its proponents. Breidenbaugh believes that its goal is the assimilation of doctrines, and he proposes a hybrid method: expository-doctrinal preaching.³⁶ Kuruvilla instead argues that preaching should be transformational, and he suggests a “Christiconic” approach, where the goal of the sermon is to show a phase of Christ’s character for believers to imitate.³⁷ Most expositors believe that it is essential to include application in the expository sermon, though MacArthur does not see the need for it.³⁸ Mohler says, “Application is absolutely necessary, but it is also fraught with danger.”³⁹ It seems that in some circles, the mere development of the application is interpreted as equating it with the Word of God.

Whereas there is literature on application, few works focus on the connection between expository preaching and worldview transformation. Application is described as the practical steps to take in day-to-day life. Examples from a preaching manual are “you can love your neighbor” and “you can deal with your pride.”⁴⁰ Application is not seen as a holistic, gradual process of worldview transformation. There is a gap in the literature because, for the most part, the application is described (if at all) as short-term and action-based. It ignores the potential of a progressive worldview transformation, which is long-term and paradigm-shift-based. Akin is an exception; he develops the application of the sermon from a cognitive framework. He asserts, “1)

³⁶ Breidenbaugh, *Preaching for Bodybuilding*, 192.

³⁷ Abraham Kuruvilla, “Christiconic Interpretation,” *BibSac* 173, no. 690 (June 2016): 145.

³⁸ Sung Wook Shin, “The Application and the Role of the Preacher in Expository Preaching,” *ACTS 신학저널* 20 (2014): 160.

³⁹ Albert T. Mohler Jr, *He Is Not Silent: Preaching in a Postmodern World* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2019), 49.

⁴⁰ Wayne McDill, *12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2018), 197.

All behavior is based on a belief...3) Change always starts in the mind...4) to help people change, we must change their beliefs first.”⁴¹ His approach resembles the worldview transformation work of Anderson or Hiebert (see Theoretical Foundations below). This researcher proposes that the goal of expository sermons is worldview transformation (see Theological Foundations below).

Remarkably, most treatises do not explicitly include a christocentric goal for the sermon. Among major expository scholars, just Keller⁴² and Chapell⁴³ develop at length the christocentric goal. Chapell even receives pushback from Kuruvilla and others on Christ being the climax of every sermon.⁴⁴ Theologians like Clowney⁴⁵ and Goldsworthy⁴⁶ do emphasize the centrality of Christ in the Scriptures. However, they are best known for biblical theology and not for homiletical theory. As seen below, Adventism does prioritize christocentric preaching.

Adventist Preaching

The Seventh-day Adventist church was born out of the Millerite movement during the Second Great Awakening. William Miller, a Baptist preacher, concluded that Jesus was coming in 1843 and then in 1844. When He did not, a core of Miller’s disappointed followers continued studying the Bible. Their goal was to start from the ground up, basing their beliefs entirely on the

⁴¹ Daniel L. Akin, “Applying a Text-Driven Sermon” in *Text-Driven Preaching: God’s Word At the Heart of Every Sermon* ed. Daniel L. Akin et al. (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 277-28.

⁴² Keller, *Preaching*, 70-120.

⁴³ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 257-274.

⁴⁴ *Homiletics and Hermeneutics: Four Views on Preaching Today*, ed. Scott M. Gibson and Matthew D. Kim (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academy, 2018), 30-41. Chapell argues for his christocentric goal (called the Redemptive-Historic view) and receives replies from three other scholars, who later advocate their own views: Christ-iconic view, Theocentric view, and Law-Gospel view.

⁴⁵ Edmund P. Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003). His book is a collection of christocentric sermons from different sections of Scripture. It contains little homiletical or christocentric theory.

⁴⁶ For example, Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture*.

Bible, thus becoming a form of restorationism. Eventually, the group became a denomination.

They largely aligned with Protestantism but came to have a few distinctive doctrines. Two of the main ones are:

- 1) The Sabbath is Saturday and is still binding for Christians and
- 2) Christ's return is imminent, based on a historicist framework for Daniel and Revelation.⁴⁷

According to the latest statistics, the denomination has a membership of almost twenty-two million members,⁴⁸ and it is present in all countries recognized by the United Nations.⁴⁹ In the US, it is the most racially diverse religious group.⁵⁰

As will be observed below, there is no unique definition or practice of preaching in Adventism. However, a historical review of Adventism will throw light on the extent of the adoption of expository preaching, as well as current trends on homiletics in the denomination.

Early Adventist Preaching

The expository preaching renaissance of the nineteenth century was largely ignored in Adventism. There are at least four reasons, all coming from the pioneers of the movement: their hermeneutical heritage, their belief in the uniqueness of their message, their evangelistic urgency, and their christocentric focus.

The pioneers were the product of the Puritan movement and the First Great Awakening. As such, they followed the Puritan ethos for preaching, which originated in William Perkins.

⁴⁷ After the "Great Disappointment" of 1844, they gave up trying to set dates for the coming of Jesus.

⁴⁸ "Seventh-day Adventist World Church Statistics 2021," February 14, 2022, <https://www.adventist.org/statistics/>.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Michael Lipka, "The Most and Least Racially Diverse US Religious Groups," July 27, 2015, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/07/27/the-most-and-least-racially-diverse-u-s-religious-groups/>.

They focused heavily on topical and doctrinal preaching. Blanco says: "The early Adventists' choice of thematic/doctrinal sermons was not by chance. Early Adventist hermeneutical presupposition of the Bible as a harmonious system of truth, and their systematic approach to do theology led them to use the analogy of Scripture as a tool in their theological and homiletical methodologies."⁵¹ The pioneers lived by the analogy of Scripture principle: "Scripture interprets Scripture."⁵²

Secondly, in a largely Christian nation, the pioneers believed it was their duty to preach certain ignored or overlooked biblical truths. They believed in the entire Bible, yet they thought it was their calling to focus on those ignored areas. For example, Uriah Smith, a prominent early theologian, published a commentary on apocalyptic books called *Daniel and The Revelation*.⁵³ James White, a founder of the denomination, established Review & Herald, a publishing house to expound the Adventist distinctives. The publishing house still operates today.

Thirdly, the movement had a strong evangelistic zeal. Taking upon themselves the message of the three angels of Revelation 14, who proclaim the gospel just before the Parousia, the pioneers were relentless about spreading the message. Unlike other denominations, where pastors settled in a single church and occupied the pulpit for the rest of their lives, early Adventist pastors were primarily evangelists and missionaries. WagenerSmith documents how early Adventist pastors replicated Paul's style: planting a church in a new town, organizing a

⁵¹ Marcos Blanco, "Early Adventists' Homiletical Principles and the Expository-vs-Thematic sermons Discussions." *DavarLogos* vol. XVI, no. 1 (2017): 58.

⁵² Formally stated as: "The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself" Westminster Confession 1.2.

⁵³ First edition: Uriah Smith, *Daniel and The Revelation* (Mountain View, CA: Review & Herald, 1885).

body of elders, and moving on to the next town.⁵⁴ He provides evidence that, in those days, a requisite for ordination was church-planting experience.⁵⁵ The two-fold result of that approach was that pastors would focus on evangelistic efforts, whereas lay people (with less preparation) would preach in established churches.

Lastly, after a turbulent identity crisis that culminated in a public conflict at the General Conference of 1888,⁵⁶ the denomination summoned zeal to put Christ at the center of its theology. Ellen White, one of the founders of the denomination, believed to have the prophetic gift,⁵⁷ said: “Of all professing Christians, Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in uplifting Christ before the world.”⁵⁸ Historian George Knight recounts that shortly after 1888, “realizing more fully than ever the hardness and barrenness of a church overemphasizing doctrine, she [Ellen White] began to stress the loving character of Jesus and His righteousness.”⁵⁹ White, alongside A.T. Jones and E.J. Waggoner, campaigned throughout the denomination to bring a Christ-centered focus.⁶⁰

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Adventist church had grown into an international movement that extended rapidly, that preached Christ in the context of their own

⁵⁴ Anthony WagenerSmith, “The Decline and Recovery of Apostolic Leadership in Adventist Ministry,” *JAMS* 17, no. 1 (2021):19-42.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁵⁶ C. Mervyn Maxwell, *Tell it to the World: The Story of Seventh-day Adventists, Revised* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1982), 231-240.

⁵⁷ Her prophetic gift was always understood as subordinate to Scripture. For the role of her writings on preaching, see the excursus in the Theological Foundations section below.

⁵⁸ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington: Review & Herald, 1946), 188.

⁵⁹ George R. Knight, *A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists, Second Edition* (Washington: Review & Herald, 2013), 94.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 95.

systematic theology, that trained pastors to be evangelists, and that entrusted laypeople to run established churches. In such a context, there was little space to explore expository preaching.

Adventist Preaching in the Twentieth Century

By the middle of the twentieth century, Adventism was expanding in the world but settling in the US. It is then that there was an attempt to pick up expository preaching in the denomination. To understand the trends, it must be noticed that since its inception, Adventism has been cordial towards past and current Christian movements. White, in her summary of church history, presents Adventism as a product of the Reformation principles. She speaks positively of Wycliffe, Huss, Zwingli, Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Whitefield, and others.⁶¹ She quotes her contemporary Spurgeon.⁶² In this dialectic relationship, Adventist scholars were receptive to developments in evangelicalism.⁶³ Two prominent homileticians looked up to expository preachers and tried to import the method into Adventism. They were H.M.S. Richards (1894 –1985) and Roy Allen Anderson (1895 – 1985). Brief notes on each scholar follow.

Richards is considered the most influential Adventist homiletician of the twentieth century.⁶⁴ He delivered a series of lectures on preaching at the Washington Missionary College in 1957. His lectures were edited into a book, *Feed My Sheep*, which became a definitive work on preaching.⁶⁵ Richards leveraged homiletical theory from the greater evangelical world. He used

⁶¹ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Altamont: TN, Harvestime, 1988). Wycliffe: 99-115, Huss: 116-138, Zwingli: 189-201, Luther: 203-114, Calvin: 240-244, Wesley: 280-286, Whitefield: 276-279.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 405.

⁶³ By the early twentieth century, evangelicalism had redefined itself as a group different from mainline Protestantism.

⁶⁴ John Harold Hobart Mathews, "Towards Understanding Distinctive Seventh-Day Adventist Preaching" (Doctoral Thesis, Andrews University, 1991), 58. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

⁶⁵ The book has gone out of circulation in English. The researcher used the Spanish version, *Apacienta Mis Ovejas*. All quotes were translated back to English by the researcher.

Philip Brooks' *Yale Lectures on Preaching*,⁶⁶ Charles Spurgeon's sermons,⁶⁷ Henry Ward Beecher's works, and others.⁶⁸ He commended his contemporaries Martyn Lloyd-Jones⁶⁹ and Billy Graham.⁷⁰ He stated: "All principles of good preaching are applicable to Adventist preaching."⁷¹

Richards was aware of expository preaching and urged Adventist pastors to use it. He said, "There should be more expository sermons. Of course, we all know that expository sermons are the hardest to preach, but why shouldn't we preach them? Some of our pastors do it in an excellent way."⁷² In preparation for his lectures, he surveyed more than two hundred pastors, mostly in North America. He summarized the answers like this: "Almost all letters exhort Adventist preachers to preach the Word, to be biblical preachers, to use the Bible abundantly, to be absorbed in the Holy Scriptures."⁷³ Most pastors complained on the growing list of responsibilities that left little time for sermon preparation.⁷⁴ In a recent Doctoral thesis, Eric M. Doran attempted to define Richard's philosophy of preaching. After analyzing all his works and sermons, he summarized Richards' views this way: Adventist preaching should be christocentric, biblical, and proclaiming the Adventist distinctives.⁷⁵

⁶⁶ H. M. S. Richards, *Apacienta Mis Ovejas* (Tampa: FL, IADPA, 2008), 24, 43, 47, 349, 373, etc.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 44, 54, 68, 81, 153, etc.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 74, 93, 121, 212, 348, etc.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 264.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 279.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 230.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 246.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 250.

⁷⁵ Eric M. Doran, "Utilizing H.M.S. Richards' Sermons and Writings in the Development of Sermons that Focus on the Unique Aspects of Seventh-day Adventist Preaching as Implemented at the Kress Memorial Church in Winter Park, Florida," (Doctoral Thesis, Andrews University, 2011). 116-117. Digital Commons at Andrews University.

Anderson was even more vocal about expository preaching. In his lectures on preaching in 1962 (called "Richards Lectureship on Preaching"), Anderson laid the foundation of expository preaching in the Adventist context. His lectures were published as a book, *Preachers of Righteousness*. They explicitly proposed expository preaching. Anderson highlighted expositors like Dwight L. Moody⁷⁶ and G. Campbell Morgan (the mentor of Martyn Lloyd-Jones),⁷⁷ as models for Adventist preaching. He argued this method should be the regular diet in the local churches: "Nothing will do so much for a congregation spiritually, evangelistically, culturally, or socially as expository preaching."⁷⁸ He said the same about evangelistic settings since the authority goes back to the Bible.⁷⁹ He made the poignant observation that expository preaching has always been somewhat used in Adventism, but mostly for Daniel and Revelation.⁸⁰ He urged the denomination to extend the method to the entire Bible.

Both Richards and Anderson became respected homiletics in the Adventist church, with Doctoral theses being done about the Lectureship they were part of.⁸¹ However, despite both speaking favorably on expository preaching, the Adventist church did not fully embrace it. Louis Venden, in his influential dissertation on Adventist preaching, points out that neither of them properly defined "expository preaching," leaving behind a catchy term devoid of a clear

⁷⁶ Roy Allan Anderson, *Preachers of Righteousness* (Nashville: TN, Southern Publishing Association, 1963), 61, 114.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 57-58.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 154.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 151.

⁸¹ For example, Edwin Francis, Jr. Buck, "A Study of The H. M. S. Richards Lectureship With Emphasis Upon Some Of The Basic Elements Of Persuasive Preaching." (PhD diss, Michigan State University, 1968). ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. Richards and Anderson are by far the most quoted lecturers in this research.

definition.⁸² The Lectureship continued until 1970, with few other lecturers discussing expository preaching.⁸³

In the second half of the twentieth century, academic circles in Adventism were calling to embrace expository preaching in the local church. A number of doctoral theses were published, showcasing the lack of exposition in Adventists' pulpits around the world.⁸⁴ In the official Adventist periodical for ministers, *Ministry Magazine*, articles on expository preaching were published every now and then.⁸⁵ However, they did not accomplish incorporating expository preaching into the Adventist DNA. One reason was the lack of clarity; "biblical" and "expository" became almost synonymous around this time. Another reason was the multifaceted role of the pastor, already called out by Richards. Lastly, neither of the poles of the Adventist identity required expository preaching. By this point, the denomination had become a diverse organism that swung from a christocentric focus to a doctrinal emphasis. At the end of the twentieth century, some of the most famous preachers were Morris Venden (1932 – 2013), with a strong emphasis on justification by faith, and Doug Batchelor (1957 –), who taught Adventist distinctive. The first produced mostly devotional sermons, and the second mostly doctrinal ones. In neither approach was an exposition of the whole Bible deemed necessary.

⁸² Louis Venden, "A Critical Analysis of Contemporary Seventh-Day Adventist Preaching and A Constructive Proposal of Guiding Principles for Homiletical Pedagogy" (PhD diss, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1979), 25, 54. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

⁸³ Ibid., 136.

⁸⁴ Samuel Donald Smith, "An Evaluation of Selected Seventh-day Adventist Sermons in Mexico Against Certain Criteria for Biblical Preaching" (Doctoral Thesis, Andrews University, 1978). Also, Chongo Yang, "A Plan for Strengthening Expository Preaching by Korean Seventh-day Adventist Pastors" (Doctoral Thesis, Andrews University, 1996). Digital Commons at Andrews University.

⁸⁵ From a single year: Floyd Bresee, "Expository Preaching," *Ministry Magazine* 67, no. 1 (Jan 1994):7-10. William G. Johnson, "The Art of Expository Preaching," *Ministry Magazine* 67, no. 5 (May 1994):6-9. Rex D. Edwards, "The Art of Expository Preaching," *Ministry Magazine* 67, no. 12 (Dec 1994):5-8.

Contemporary Adventist Preaching

A recent definition of “Adventist Preaching” states: “Christ-centered, expository preaching is indispensable to Seventh-day Adventism; the Adventist movement cannot survive or thrive without it.”⁸⁶ The same author presents his definition of expository preaching in an academic entry: “The spirit-empowered proclamation of a single idea from God’s Word, based on the grammatical-theological exegesis and homiletical synthesis... resulting in cognitive, affective, and behavioral change, first in the preacher, then in the listener.”⁸⁷ On the surface, it would appear that Adventism assimilated expository preaching after all. In reality, only the academy embraced it.

Andrews is one of the few Adventist universities in the US that offers a Masters of Divinity (MDIV). Most intern pastors at SDA Conferences are sponsored to complete their MDIV at Andrews. The homiletics professors at Andrews are interested in developing "biblical" or "expository" skills in their students.⁸⁸ Other styles of preaching are also taught, like evangelistic or prophetic preaching.⁸⁹ The professors see the need to improve the homiletical skills of the students; a recent doctoral thesis from an Andrews professor explains: “Three of these observations [in Adventist preaching] are failure to observe simple public speaking rules and guidelines, inadequate sermon preparation, and preaching sermons that lack a contagious

⁸⁶ Judson Lake, “What is Seventh-day Adventist Preaching?” *Elders Digest* 21, no. 1 (Jan 2015), 6.

⁸⁷ Judson Lake, “Preaching the Word of God for the People of God: A Proposed Definition of Seventh-Day Adventist Preaching,” in *Word of God for the People of God: A Tribute to the Ministry of Jack Blanco*, ed. Ron du Preez (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2004): 473.

⁸⁸ From private conversations with Willie Edward Hucks II and Rodney Palmer, professors of Homiletics at Andrews University. Both denounce “proof-texting” sermons, and both seek to train their students with robust biblical interpretation and proclamation.

⁸⁹ Private conversation with Hyveth Williams. More on her below.

passion.”⁹⁰ Beyond the training they provide at Andrews, there is not a lot more that academics can do due to the congregationalist culture of the denomination.

At the local congregation, many sermons are still in the hands of laypeople. Unless the church is big enough, an Adventist pastor needs to be divided into two or more churches. Elders and laypeople preach in the absence of the pastor. Efforts have been made to train elders in preaching, but they are limited.⁹¹ In most cases, untrained individuals occupy the pulpit Sabbath after Sabbath.⁹² On the other hand, the preaching culture in the local church will gravitate towards the current pastor, which results in no standardized method. Whereas there is a consistent style of preaching in evangelistic settings (expounding the Adventist distinctives), there is no one for the local church. Pastors and laypeople will preach according to their own training, experience, interests, and passion for Adventist theology.

In the last ten years, a few books on preaching have been published by Adventist authors.⁹³ A brief review of each is pertinent. First, *¿Predica Bien?!*, by Roger Hernandez. This

⁹⁰ Micheal Lawrence Goetz, "Testing A New Method of Teaching Homiletics at The Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary: CHMN 505" (Doctoral Thesis, Andrews University, 2015), 55. Digital Commons at Andrews University.

⁹¹ Yeury Ferreira, "Desarrollo e Implementación de Un Programa de Entrenamiento para Predicadores Laicos en las Iglesias Adventistas del Distrito de Fort Washington, Nueva York" (Doctoral Thesis, Andrews University, 2019). Also, Cedric N. Belcher Sr, "Training Elders in the Alexandria District of the Southwest Region Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to Preach Expository Sermons" (Doctoral Thesis, Andrews University, 2010). Digital Commons at Andrews University.

⁹² Hyveth Williams points out: "preaching is the only profession where an untrained individual is allowed to perform" (from a private conversation).

⁹³ One book not included in detail is Mervyn A. Warren and Benjamin F. Reaves *Sharpening and Shaping Your Sermons: A Call for Authentic Preaching* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2019). This is a booklet full of images and undeveloped ideas. It seems like it is material to be used for/with a preaching workshop but not as a stand-alone work. A couple of other works were published in the ten years prior (2003-2013). First, Mervyn A. Warren, *Ellen White on Preaching: Insights for Sharing God's Word* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2010). This is a compilation of Ellen White's quotes. The only original content is the way the White's quotes are arranged, plus a few introductory comments for them. It focuses mostly on the delivery of sermons. Second, R. Clifford Jones, *Preaching with Power: Black Preachers Share Secrets for Effective Preaching* (Silver Spring, MD: Review & Herald, 2005). This volume is a collection of interviews, much like *Powerful Biblical Preaching*, by Derek J. Morris, as discussed below. However, its focus is on black preachers only. While appreciated, the content is beyond the scope of the current project thesis.

is a short booklet aimed at Hispanic lay preachers. Hernandez shares four practical points for better preaching: preach Jesus, preach with points, preach simply, and preach with illustrations.⁹⁴ Expository preaching is mentioned once as a type among many.⁹⁵ Roger describes the type of sermon that is popular among Adventist lay preachers: christocentric and practical. Roger's style could be called devotional or inspirational.

Powerful Biblical Preaching, by Derek J. Morris, is probably the most thorough. Morris was a professor of Homiletics at Southern Adventist University. In his book, he compiles interviews with the most prominent preachers in the evangelical world.⁹⁶ Interestingly, he presents his interview with Haddon W. Robinson right next to Fred B. Craddock, who are on opposite sides of the spectrum of preaching.⁹⁷ For Morris, preaching methods are tools that can be used depending on different circumstances. Other interviewees are Gardner C. Taylor, Josh McDowell, Lee Strobel, and even John Stott.

Nothing But the Best, by Hyveth Williams, is a preaching manual.⁹⁸ Williams is the director of the preaching concentration of the Doctor of Ministry program at Andrews University. She is one of the most respected voices on preaching in Adventism. In her book, she presents the theology, methodology, and practice of preaching. Interestingly, she claims that “in the history of homiletics, almost every sermon has been taught, prepared, and preached as

⁹⁴ Roger Hernandez, *¡Predica Bien! Seis Secretos Para Predicar Sermones Que Conectan e Impactan* (Orlando, FL: Roger Hernandez, 2018).

⁹⁵ Ibid, 29.

⁹⁶ Derek J. Morris, *Powerful Biblical Preaching: Practical Pointers from Master Preachers* (Orlando, FL: Trilogy Scripture Resources, 2012).

⁹⁷ Ibid., 61-74.

⁹⁸ Hyveth Williams, *Nothing But the Best: A Guide to Preaching Powerful Sermons* (Pittsburg: PA, AuhorsPress, 2022).

expository.”⁹⁹ She states, without providing a direct quote, that “Robinson asserts that all sermons are expository.”¹⁰⁰ Such a declaration is not found in Robinson’s textbook, though.¹⁰¹ Williams’ surprising comments can be understood if one realizes that she uses “expository preaching” in an elastic way. For her, “expository” and “biblical” are synonymous, and as long as the sermon includes ideas derived from a biblical passage, it can be categorized as expository.

Williams is also known in Adventism for prophetic preaching, a relatively new type of preaching that seeks to speak against social evils. It originated in Brueggemann’s studies on the prophetic spirit and was popularized by *Prophetic Preaching* by Leonora Tubbs.¹⁰² Morris interviewed Williams in his own book on this very type of preaching.¹⁰³ Prophetic preaching has been gaining steam in Adventism; it was included as one of the three chapters about preaching in a recent manual for SDA ministers in the US.¹⁰⁴ The author of the entry states: “The Adventist preacher cannot afford to keep talking about the future without talking about the present struggles.... Every biblical text has a social context that has an element of social injustice, discrimination, or exploitation. In order to be faithful to the fullness of the text and be relevant to the twenty-first-century audience, we must expose these social contexts.”¹⁰⁵

Contemporary Adventist preaching is diverse; not a single style leads on. Nevertheless, based on the literature and academic review, the following generalizations can be made:

⁹⁹ Williams, *Nothing But the Best*, 81.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*.

¹⁰² Williams, *Nothing But the Best*, 45.

¹⁰³ Morris, *Powerful Biblical Preaching*, 117-123.

¹⁰⁴ C. Wesley Knight, “Bringing the Biblical Text to Life,” in *Called: Core Qualities for Ministry*, ed. Nikolaus Stajmayer and Ivan L. Williams Sr. (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2015).

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 129.

- 1) Evangelistic preaching has remained unchanged since the beginning. It focuses on preaching the Adventist distinctives. It can be categorized as doctrinal.
- 2) Lay preaching is unorganized and led by felt needs. It can be categorized as devotional.
- 3) Professional preaching is not homogenous. Pastors use expository, doctrinal, narrative, and other types. It can be described as “biblical” only in a general sense.¹⁰⁶

Despite their diversity, all camps would probably agree with the goal of the sermon suggested by White: “Lift up Jesus, you that teach the people, lift Him up in sermon, in song, in prayer.... Let the science of salvation be the burden of every sermon, the theme of every song. Let it be poured forth in every supplication. Bring nothing into your preaching to supplement Christ, the wisdom and power of God.”¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, the assumption of all types of Adventist preaching is that the three-angel message (the eternal gospel) must be shared with the entire world. In all their divergence, Adventist preachers share two common motivations:

- Christ should be the message of the sermon.
- Evangelism should be the objective of the sermon.

If expository preaching can carry those two, it can surely flourish in the denomination.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Venden's concern for Adventist preaching in the 1970s could very well be applied to the twenty-first century, too: "It appears that Adventist preachers want to believe they are 'preaching the Bible.' But Adventist preaching, as presented here [his PhD diss.], needs to ask itself whether or not it is unwittingly fostering an illusion, while in reality it often fails to take the Bible seriously as the major source in which the sermon has its roots, from which it draws its substance. In a clear majority of the messages, the preacher seems to turn to Scripture for authority, asking the Bible to support what he is saying, rather than asking the Bible what it is that must be said." Venden, "Contemporary Seventh-day Adventist Preaching," 174.

¹⁰⁷ White, *Evangelism*, 158.

¹⁰⁸ As long as “evangelism” is understood in a more comprehensive way. Traditionally, evangelism is understood as a one-time decision for Jesus. But recently, SDA scholars have realized the need to understand evangelism as a transformation of worldview. See the Adventist Worldview section below.

Biblical Worldview

Before having a meaningful discussion about worldview, a brief survey of the concept must be included. Then, an overview of "biblical worldview," with its essential contours, will be laid down. Lastly, the contribution of Adventism to biblical worldview will be sketched.

Historical Precedents

The concept of worldview, *Weltanschauung*, was coined in German by Immanuel Kant in his *Critique of Judgment*. He uses the term once, in passing, and in context; it means the perception of the world originated in the senses.¹⁰⁹ It was Schelling who changed its meaning within a decade, from the sensorial perception of the world to the cognitive assumptions of it as it is currently used today.¹¹⁰ The word was quickly incorporated into the philosophical discourse and used by Hegel and Kierkegaard. The term remained in philosophy for the first few decades and was later borrowed by theology. About *Weltanschauung*, James Orr said a century after its inception: "Within the last two or three decades the word [*Weltanschauung*] has become exceedingly common in all kinds of books dealing with higher questions of religion and philosophy –so much as to have become in a manner indispensable."¹¹¹

Since then, the term has also been adopted by natural and social sciences. Freud used it to delimit the extent of psychoanalysis (for psychoanalysts possess their own worldview).¹¹² Jung

¹⁰⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment: Including the First Introduction*, translated by Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1987), 111.

¹¹⁰ Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1982), 4.

¹¹¹ James Orr, *The Christian View of God and the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1989), 365.

¹¹² Sigmund Freud, *The Concordance to the Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (Boston, MA, G. K. Hall, 1980), 158.

proposed five relationships between psychotherapy and worldview.¹¹³ Naugle presents a comprehensive history of the concept.¹¹⁴ Sire offers a contemporary definition.¹¹⁵ Currently, worldview is a fundamental concept in philosophy, theology, and social sciences.

Biblical Worldview in Evangelicalism

James Orr was the first to use *Weltanschauung* for Christianity in a series of lectures at the end of the nineteenth century.¹¹⁶ Orr was both a theologian and a philosopher and admired Kant, so he approvingly used Kant's term to describe Christianity in a comprehensive way. After him, *Weltanschauung* was used by Abraham Kuyper to encapsulate Calvinism,¹¹⁷ and by Francis Schaeffer to present Christianity as an all-encompassing alternative for meaningful living amidst the postmodern spirit of his time.¹¹⁸ Thanks to Schaeffer, the "Christian worldview" was broadly adopted by evangelicalism. As Michelle Sanchez has proven, Christian scholarship contextualized Christianity into a worldview between the 1970s and 1980s. Sanchez shows how, before 1980, the concept of "Christian worldview" was virtually non-existent in English literature, and since then, it has exponentially exploded.¹¹⁹ About this development, Naugle says:

¹¹³ C. G. Jung, "Psychotherapy and a philosophy of life," in *The Practice of Psychotherapy: Essays on the Psychology of The Transference and Other Subjects* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966) 76-78.

¹¹⁴ David K. Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002).

¹¹⁵ "A worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) that we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being." James W. Sire, *Naming the Elephant: Worldview as a Concept* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 145.

¹¹⁶ Orr, *The Christian View of God and the World*.

¹¹⁷ Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism: Six Lectures Delivered at Princeton University under Auspices of the L. P. Stone Foundation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994).

¹¹⁸ Francis Schaeffer, *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: A Christian Worldview*, Second Edition (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1982).

¹¹⁹ Michelle C. Sanchez, "Orr and Kant: An analysis of the intellectual encounter behind 'The Christian worldview,'" *SJT* 74, no. 2 (2021):103-122, n2.

“Conceiving Christianity as a worldview has been one of the most significant developments in the recent history of the church.”¹²⁰ Arguably, the most renowned evangelical scholars on the subject are David K. Naugle, James W. Sire, and Paul G. Hiebert.

"Christian worldview" and "biblical worldview" are almost always interchangeable in recent literature. The term is elastic, however. In some cases, it is used in an interdisciplinary mode, merging theology with philosophy and social sciences.¹²¹ In other cases, the term is used to present a systematic theology, leaving behind the philosophical and scientific elements associated with the concept.¹²² Roger E. Olson prefers not to use the term “Christian worldview,” since worldview can mean different things in different disciplines. He instead talks about the “biblical-Christian perspective of reality.”¹²³ He also uses the term “blik,” coined by R. M. Hare.¹²⁴ A “blik” is similar to a worldview but is restricted to the metaphysical/religious assumptions of the individual and is used mostly as a technical term in philosophical discussions.

A common deficiency among theologians who attempt to define “biblical worldview,” is that they include their theological tradition as the definitive “biblical” worldview.¹²⁵ Douglas S. Huffman is right in clarifying that there is no “one” biblical worldview. He says: “The biblical worldview is Christ’s view of the world. None of us fully grasps the biblical worldview. It exists

¹²⁰ Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept*, 4.

¹²¹ Nash introduces philosophy as the proposal for any worldview’s basic components. Ronald H. Nash, *Life’s Ultimate Questions: An Introduction to Philosophy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 13-33.

¹²² MacArthur, in his volume on “biblical worldview,” starts with an exposition of the doctrine of inspiration. He uses language and assumptions that are meaningful only to his tradition. John MacArthur, *Think Biblically! Recovering a Christian Worldview* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009), 21-36.

¹²³ Roger E. Olson, *On the Essentials of Christian Thought: Seeing Reality Through the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017), 229.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹²⁵ For example, when describing the basics of the Christian worldview, Anderson et al. describe their theological conviction that resurrection is a spiritual reality that happens right after death. By doing that, they exclude evangelical and Protestant nuances that see resurrection as a physical event at the coming of Christ, also based on the Bible. Tawa J. Anderson et al., *An Introduction to Christian Worldview*, 173.

in Christ alone.”¹²⁶ Even in communities that share a unified worldview, individuals will grasp it and express it in unique ways. N. T. Wright uses the term “mindset” to differentiate the individual's understanding of a worldview versus the worldview itself.¹²⁷

Evangelicals who talk about the “Christian worldview” give two main emphases to the term. The pastoral emphasis of some theologians is to urge Christians to think biblically about all issues in life.¹²⁸ The philosophical emphasis of Christian philosophers is to propose the Christian system against competing worldviews, both religious and irreligious. They usually define worldview in general and then provide answers from the Christian perspective. Here are some of the common elements that Christian authors use to define a worldview:

- Anderson et al. propose four questions: What is our nature? What is our world? What is our problem? What is our end?¹²⁹
- Similarly, Smith proposes four questions: Who am I? Where am I? What is wrong? What is the answer?¹³⁰
- Sire, one of the leading evangelical scholars on worldview, has eight questions: What is prime reality? What is the nature of external reality? What is a human being? What happens to a person at death? Why is it possible to know anything at all? How do we

¹²⁶ Douglas S. Huffman, “Is there Just One Biblical Worldview?” in *Christian Contours: How a Biblical Worldview Shapes the Mind and Heart*, ed. Douglas S. Huffman (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2011), 48.

¹²⁷ N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1996), 100.

¹²⁸ Wash and Middleton discuss how a Christian should interact with culture, higher education, and philosophy. See Brian J. Walsh and J. Richard Middleton, *The Transforming Vision: Shaping a Christian World View* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984). MacArthur et al. provide theological responses (from their own theological tradition) to masculinity, arts, science, economics, etc. See MacArthur, *Think Biblically! Recovering a Christian Worldview*.

¹²⁹ Anderson et al., *An Introduction to Christian Worldview*, 19-21.

¹³⁰ C. Fred Smith, *Developing a Biblical Worldview: Seeing Things God's Way* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2015), 10.

know what is right and wrong? What is the meaning of human history? And, what personal, life-orienting core communities are consistent with this worldview?¹³¹

- Instead of questions, Nash proposes five elements of a worldview: God, metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and human nature.¹³²
- Cosgrove lists similar concepts: ontology, epistemology, anthropology, ethics, theodicy, the meaning of life, and human desire.¹³³
- Nelson, sounding more like a theologian, suggests theology, anthropology, ethics, soteriology, and epistemology.¹³⁴
- Adventist scholar Lichtenwalter includes the following themes: the existence and character of God, origins, human nature, the basis of authority and norms, the problem of evil, hope, and epistemology.¹³⁵

As Goheen and Bartholomew have explained, a useful way to see worldview is to place it within the theological continuum:

- Scripture.
- Biblical theology.
- Christian worldview.
- Systematic theology.¹³⁶

¹³¹ James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog* (Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020), 8-9.

¹³² Ronald H. Nash, *Worldviews in Conflict: Choosing Christianity in a World of Ideas* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 26-30.

¹³³ Mark P. Cosgrove, *Foundations of Christian Thought: Faith, Learning, and the Christian Worldview* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2006), 30-32.

¹³⁴ Randy W. Nelson, "What is a Worldview?" in *Christian Contours: How a Biblical Worldview Shapes the Mind and Heart*, ed. Douglas S. Huffman (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2011), 28-30.

¹³⁵ Larry L. Lichtenwalter, "Worldview Transformation and Mission: Narrative, Theology, and Ritual in John's Apocalypse," *JATS* 21, nos 1-2 (2010): 226.

For the theory of worldview transformation, see the section in “Theoretical Foundations” later in this chapter.

Biblical Worldview in Adventism

Adventists started engaging the concept of worldview in the twenty-first century. The first scholarly article is from Paulo de Oliveira, a leading missiologist in the denomination and current professor at Andrews University. He addresses one of the most prevailing problems in the denomination: short-lived conversions. He proposes that the evangelistic strategy should move beyond behavioral change or doctrinal assimilation and it should work at a deeper level: worldview transformation.¹³⁷ He addresses cultural colonialism in trans-cultural evangelism. Instead of trying to impose American Adventism on new grounds, he argues, missionaries should try to transform the underlying worldview, respecting and honoring the local culture whenever possible.¹³⁸ Oliveira says: "The final purpose of the Adventist mission is to create a biblically shaped worldview in any given cultural context."¹³⁹ Oliveira relies on Hiebert's work to define and describe the transformation of worldviews.¹⁴⁰ It is worthwhile noticing that his views have further evolved from the writing of his paper. He currently believes that there is no such thing as a “biblical worldview,” but a “biblically shaped worldview.” In his view, a “biblical worldview” is a theoretical abstraction that is not possible to transmit to an individual. Hence, instead of

¹³⁶ Michael W. Goheen and Craig G. Bartholomew, *Living at the Crossroads: An Introduction to Christian Worldview* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 27.

¹³⁷ Paulo de Oliveira, “Worldview: Vital for Mission and Ministry in the 21st Century,” in *JAMS* 5, no. 1 (2009):22-41.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁴⁰ He uses Hiebert's levels of culture, dimensions of culture, etc., from Hiebert's *Transforming Worldviews*.

teaching a biblical worldview, the job of the church is to inform, critique, expand, and strengthen the current and inherited worldview of the individual.¹⁴¹

Bruce Bauer builds on top of Oliveira's work and highlights that the Adventist strategy for evangelism was born within a Christian culture. Adventists who only try to share their distinctives fall short in non-Christian and non-evangelical contexts (most of the Western world in the twenty-first century).¹⁴² He concludes: “the traditional approach of evangelism had some serious flaws when used among non-Christian groups.”¹⁴³ He also borrows from Hiebert’s work to propose worldview transformation as part of a full evangelism strategy.¹⁴⁴

Larry Lichtenwalter also brought worldview transformation to the Adventist radar. In a ground-breaking paper, he presents John’s Revelation as a clash of worldviews.¹⁴⁵ The two competing worldviews in John's book are those who dwell on earth and those who hold to the testimony of Jesus.¹⁴⁶ As he describes both worldviews, he presents his own definition of the term and highlights that a worldview is more than a set of presuppositions. It also includes narrative, rational, and ritual components.¹⁴⁷ Like most evangelical scholars, he sets forth his narrative component as the succession of epochs. In his case, they are creation, fall, divine faithfulness, redemption, and new creation.¹⁴⁸ But unlike most evangelicals, he argues that the

¹⁴¹ From personal conversation and his forthcoming PhD diss.

¹⁴² Bruce L. Bauer, “The Importance of Worldview Change in the Discipling Process,” in *JAMS* 12, no. 2 (2016):184-193.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 185.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 191.

¹⁴⁵ Lichtenwalter, “Worldview Transformation and Mission...,” 211-244.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 220.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 225.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 232.

metanarrative that controls the biblical worldview is the justification of God's character.¹⁴⁹ Such is the worldview of those who "hold to the testimony of Jesus." He bases his worldview theory on Naugle's and Hiebert's work,¹⁵⁰ and his missiological implications in Oliveira's referred to above.

Adventist scholars have come to contribute to the discussion on worldviews among evangelicals. John Peckham is the leading advocate of the "theodicy of love" as the metanarrative of a biblical worldview. Based on Platinga's view of free will, Peckham has reworked the traditional Adventist theme of "the Great Controversy" to present a compelling justification for suffering in the world.¹⁵¹ In 2018, Andrews University hosted a Conference on "Transforming Worldviews," where the scholars above, plus others, presented papers: Bauer, Lichtenwalter, and Peckham. The keynote speaker, evangelical scholar Kevin J. Vanhoozer, emphasized the need to keep forming a Bible-based worldview, implicitly inviting his Adventist peers to continue contributing to the discussion on worldview.¹⁵²

Theological Foundations

In this section, a biblical definition of preacher and preaching will be elaborated. For the second term, preaching, further development of its method, message, and goal will be presented. It will be argued that expository preaching (method) that proclaims Christ (message) in the context of salvation history is how believers transform their worldview (goal). Since an

¹⁴⁹ Lichtenwalter, "Worldview Transformation and Mission...", 218.

¹⁵⁰ He heavily quotes Naugle's *Worldview: The History of a Concept* and Hiebert's *Transforming Worldviews*.

¹⁵¹ See John C. Peckham, "Retrieving Cosmic Conflict Worldview" (Parts 1 and 2), in *The Worldview Bulletin* (2020).

¹⁵² Esther Green, "Transforming Worldview(s) Conference: Biblical Faithfulness in a Pluralistic Age," November 29, 2018, <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1383&context=campus-news>.

individual sermon assumes an entire salvation history, a version of Adventist *Heilsgeschichte* will be laid down. This *Heilsgeschichte* is what will be used in the current intervention. Lastly, an excursus on the role of Ellen White in Adventist preaching will be summarized.

The Preacher

The character of the messenger of God is more important than the way the message is delivered. In the Old Testament, obedience is a prerequisite for communicating the oracles of God. Moses and Ezra, the two teachers of the Law par excellence, show as much. After Moses was commanded to go back to Egypt, Scripture says that the Lord met him on the way and sought to kill him. Zipporah had to circumcise his son for the Lord to be appeased (Exod 4:24-26). Though the account is problematic to modern sensibilities, commentators agree that the point of the story is that Moses was not a qualified messenger until he himself obeyed.¹⁵³ Prager, a Jewish commentator, sees the unperformed circumcision as the key to the story.¹⁵⁴

During the return of the diaspora to Jerusalem, Ezra led the religious reform. Ezra is considered a second Moses and the founder of the scribal persona that produced second-temple Judaism.¹⁵⁵ After Nehemiah rebuilt the wall, Ezra expounded the law of Moses during the feast of Tabernacles. The result was repentance (Neh 8:9) and reform (Neh 8:13-18). Such a revival originated some twelve years earlier, when “Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the LORD, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel” (Ezra 7:10, ESV). Before Ezra

¹⁵³ Peter Enns, *Exodus, NIVAC* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 133-134.

¹⁵⁴ Dennis Prager, *Exodus, TRB* (Washington: Regnery Publishing, 2018), 59-60.

¹⁵⁵ Mervin Breneman, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, NAC* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 1993), 58.

was ready to teach the law of Moses, he had to study it and obey it himself. Evans says: "If you follow Ezra's lead... you will discover that preaching is first and foremost for yourself."¹⁵⁶

The New Testament also highlights the need for the preacher to learn and obey first. In Romans, Paul shares his logic for the need of preachers (Rom 11:13-17). Commenting on this section, Goetz highlights that in preaching, "there is an audience and a preacher, and the former is dependent on the latter to be saved."¹⁵⁷ The preacher must not only be saved but is called to a higher standard. The apostle warns: "Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness" (Jas 3:1, ESV).

That said, it should be clarified that preaching is not for "authorized" people only. Griffiths, in his biblical-theological study of preaching in the New Testament, comes to the surprising conclusion that "nowhere does the New Testament call or instruct believers as a whole group to 'preach.'"¹⁵⁸ The idea that only pastors are called to preach does not come from the Bible but from the Reformed tradition. It originated in Calvin¹⁵⁹ and is foreign to other Christian traditions. Scripture states that preaching/admonishing is to be done, at one level or another, by all members of the body of Christ: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing *one another* in all wisdom" (Col 3:16, ESV).¹⁶⁰ The priesthood of all believers (1

¹⁵⁶ Tony Evans, *The Power of Preaching: Crafting a Creative Expository Sermon* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2019), 23.

¹⁵⁷ Goetz, "Testing A New Method of Teaching Homiletics...", 22.

¹⁵⁸ Jonathan I. Griffiths, *Preaching in the New Testament: An Exegetical and Biblical-theological Study* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2017), 49.

¹⁵⁹ "The preaching of the heavenly doctrine has been enjoined upon the pastors." John Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.1.5.

¹⁶⁰ Getz, in his biblical and historical review of eldership, comes to the same conclusion. Gene A. Getz, *Elders and Leaders: A Biblical, Historical and Cultural Perspective* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2003), 113-114.

Pet 2:9-10) dismantles the idea that only professional ministers are called to preach.¹⁶¹ And whoever is called to preach needs to be prepared first. Maclaren, the renowned Scottish preacher, said: “The first, second, and third requisite for our work is personal godliness.... It takes a crucified man to preach a crucified Savior.”¹⁶²

The Sermon

Smith has identified three Greek verbs that are used for “preaching” in the New Testament: *evangelizomai*, *katangello* and *kerysso*.¹⁶³ Griffiths has conveniently listed each instance.¹⁶⁴ Upon reviewing them all, he defines preaching as “the public proclamation of God’s word.”¹⁶⁵ Based on Paul’s words, “when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God” (1 Thess 2:13, ESV), Griffiths argues that preaching the written word communicates the very words of God.¹⁶⁶ By staying truthful to the Word, the preacher is assured of success, for the Lord promised, “my word... shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I send it” (Isa 55:11, ESV).

In the New Testament, the kingdom of God is ushered in through preaching. Jesus pointed out that His mission was to preach (Mark 1:38), and He preached time after time (Mark 1:21, 4:1-2; 6:2; 6:34). As Jesus proclaimed the good news (Mark 1:14-15), the kingdom was

¹⁶¹ This is one of the reasons why, since its inception, Adventism allowed women to preach.

¹⁶² Quoted in Tony Merida, *Faithful Preaching: Declaring Scripture with Responsibility, Passion, And Authenticity* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2009), 124.

¹⁶³ Claire S. Smith, “‘Preaching’: toward Lexical Clarity for Better Practice,” in *Theology is for Preaching: Biblical Foundations, Method & Practice*, ed. Chase R. Kuhn and Paul Grimmond (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2021), 35-36.

¹⁶⁴ Griffiths, *Preaching in the New Testament*, 20-32.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 102.

actualized amidst the people (Luke 17:21). Blomberg explains: "the kingdom of God is present in the ministry of Christ but not with irresistible power [yet]."¹⁶⁷ Jesus sent His apostles to preach before and after His passion (Matt 10:7; 28:19-20) as a way of establishing His kingdom. In Acts, the plot progresses from one sermon to another. The kingdom of God moved from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth, first by Peter's sermons (Acts 2:14-36; 3:11-26; 10:34-43) and later by Paul's (Acts 13:16-47; 17:22-31; 20:18-25; 22:1-21; 24:10-21; 26:1-29). The gospel will continue to be proclaimed around the world until the coming of Christ (Matt 24:14). In the meantime, the church is "to proclaim to those who dwell on the earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people" the "eternal gospel" (Rev 14:6, ESV).

Scripture has something to say about the different dimensions of preaching: its method, its message, and its goal. Below is a brief description of each.

The Method of Preaching: Expository

Expository preaching can be traced back to the formation of the nation of Israel. The people of God received written revelation since its very inception: the Torah of Moses. Right before entering the Promised Land, the Lord commanded that this law should be read out loud every seven years during the Feast of Booths (Deut 31:9-11), which necessarily developed into an explanation of the text. Throughout the history of Israel, individuals read and taught the Torah, both privately and publicly: Joshua (Josh 8:34-35), Josiah (2 Chr 34:15-18), and others. The prophets also relied on written revelation. To invite people to repent, they invoked previous prophets. Isaiah tells Judah: "To the teaching and to the testimony! If they will not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn" (Isa 8:20, ESV). The prophets rehashed

¹⁶⁷ Craig B. Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey, Second Edition* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2009), 451.

the covenantal blessings and curses in new ways, but always within the margins of the previous revelation.¹⁶⁸

In the rebuilding of Jerusalem, Ezra led the religious reform among the repatriates. During the Feast of Booths, Ezra took a copy of the Torah and read it before the assembly, while several Levites explained the meaning of the text: “They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading” (Neh 8:8, ESV). While there is scholarly division on the role of the Levites (it is unclear if they translated¹⁶⁹ or explained¹⁷⁰ the Torah), the basics of expository preaching were established since the days of Ezra. The practice had two major characteristics: reading the Torah in an authoritative fashion and translating or explaining it to apply it to contemporary situations.

By New Testament times, the synagogue had grown into a separate institution. The reading of the Law was an essential part of the weekly service there. Kuruvilla explains: “Appropriately divided sections of the text (pericopes) were read in continuous fashion... from week to week, each subsequent reading taking up from where the previous one had left off.”¹⁷¹ Jesus was part of this practice (Luke 4:16-21). He first read the assigned pericope and then explained its meaning.

The church, consisting firstly of messianic Jews, kept many of the Jewish forms of worship. The apostles adapted the synagogue pattern to the new messianic communities.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ Gordon D. Fee and Douglas K. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth, Fourth Edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 191.

¹⁶⁹ T. J. Betts, *Nehemiah: A Pastoral & Exegetical Commentary* (Ashland, OR: Lexham Press, 2020), 107.

¹⁷⁰ David J. Shepherd and Christopher J. H. Wright, *Ezra and Nehemiah, THOTC* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 70.

¹⁷¹ Abraham Kuruvilla, “Applicational Preaching,” *BibSac* 173, no. 692 (Oct 2016): 389.

¹⁷² Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 72.

Advising Timothy on his pastoral ministry, Paul says: “Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching” (1 Tim 4:13, ESV). The same dimensions from Ezra's revival are observed in the newly formed church: reading of Scripture and explaining/teaching its meaning in the current context. The apostles also commanded to "read aloud" (Rev 1:3, ESV) or to "read to all the brothers" (1 Thess 5:27, ESV) their own writings, presumably assigning the same authority to them as to the OT (called by them "the Scriptures").

There is precedent for expository preaching, even in the form of a Bible book. Most commentators agree that the book of Hebrews, a "word of exhortation" (Heb 13:22, ESV), was a sermon delivered orally first and then packaged into a circular letter.¹⁷³ Hebrews does not conform to the contemporary anatomy of expository sermons, and its exegesis is foreign to modern hermeneutics. Even so, it is an outstanding example of biblical exposition with a strong christocentric focus. The book expounds the Torah (Heb 9:1-5; Ex 25:31-39), the prophets (Heb 8:8-12; Jer 31:31-24), and the writings (Heb 3:7-11; Ps 95:7-11). In each case, the author provides, implicitly or explicitly, the original context, a contemporary application, and a christocentric climax.

The Message of Preaching: Christ

Christ as the *kerygma* of the sermon is a clear discontinuity between Second Temple Judaism and the primitive church. Whereas the rabbinical tradition was proud of their comprehensive understanding of the Torah, Jesus argued that they missed the main point: the Messiah (John 5:39). After His resurrection, Jesus opened the eyes of His disciples to show that

¹⁷³ David Peterson, Eckhard J. Schnabel, and Nicholas, Perrin. *Hebrews, TNTC* (Westmont, IL: IVP Academic, 2020), 5.

Scripture as a whole testified about Him (Luke 24:27, 44). Both Greidanus and Clowney propose that the Christ-centered reinterpretation of the Tanakh must have originated in Jesus Himself.¹⁷⁴

After his personal encounter with Christ, Paul's worldview was turned upside down. He came to understand that the Torah was not an end in itself but the means to understand the Messiah. He said in Romans 10:4: *Telos gar nomou Christos*, meaning: “the Messiah is the goal of the law.”¹⁷⁵ Paul went so far as to say that it was impossible to understand the Old Testament without Christ: “Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed” (2 Cor 3:15-16, ESV).¹⁷⁶ That is why he decided to preach nothing “except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Cor 2:2, ESV).

The rest of the apostles agreed with Paul. Peter reflected on the mission of the apostles: “And he [Jesus] commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead” (Acts 10:42, ESV). Like Paul, he preached Christ at every opportunity. He did so by expounding Scripture in its original context. Speaking about his first sermon in Acts, Lee observes that “Peter respects Joel's original intent of the OT context.”¹⁷⁷ The same could be said of all other sermons in Acts. The table below shows the apostolic sermons in Acts, their OT text, and their christocentric core.

¹⁷⁴ Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture*, 39. He attributes the insight to Greidanus.

¹⁷⁵ N. T. Wright, *Paul: A Biography* (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2018), 332.

¹⁷⁶ This does not disqualify the Old Testament in any way. Garland clarifies: “The old covenant is not veiled, but Israel is.... The fault, however, is not on Moses or the law but in those who hear it.” David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, NAC (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 1999), 192.

¹⁷⁷ Kyoochan Lee, *Christ-Oriented Expository Preaching* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2020), 70. He develops in detail the intertextual relationship between the OT quotes and Peter's sermon (71-80).

Table 2.1. Apostolic Sermons in Acts

Sermon	Audience	Expounded text(s)	Christocentric Idea
Peter (Acts 2:14-36).	Diaspora at Pentecost.	Psalm 16:8-11.	"Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified" Acts 2:36.
Peter (Acts 3:12-26).	Jews at the temple.	Deuteronomy 18:15-16, Genesis 22:18, plus a summary of salvation history.	"God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness" Acts 3:26.
Peter (Acts 10:34-43)	Cornelius and his household.	None. The ministry and crucifixion of Jesus is narrated.	"To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name" Acts 10:43.
Paul (Acts 13:16-41).	Synagogue at Antioch of Psidia.	String of quotes from the Psalms and the Prophets, plus a summary of salvation history.	"And by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses" Acts 13:39.
Paul (Acts 17:22-31).	Greeks at Mars Hill.	None. But biblical themes of creation and human nature are presented.	"Because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead" Acts 17:31.
Paul (20:18-25).	Elders from Ephesus.	None. Yet he recalls he did not "shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God," 20:27, which likely meant exposition of Scriptures.	"But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God" Acts 20:24.
Paul (22:1-21).	Jews at the Temple.	None. Paul shares his testimony.	"And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name" Acts 22:16.
Paul (24:10-21).	Felix and Paul's accusers.	None. Paul shares his testimony.	Indirectly. Paul simply refers to his faith in resurrection (Acts 24:21).
Paul (26:1-29).	Agrippa.	None. Paul shares his testimony and a summary of salvation history.	"To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles" Acts 26:22-23.

It can be observed that every sermon preached in a worship context used a biblical passage (i.e., was expository). Sermons not proclaimed in a religious setting still contained

biblical themes, though they did not quote Scripture. Also, it is seen that Paul and Peter used similar strategies:

- They both had Christ as the core of their messages.
- They both focused on Christ's ministry, death, and resurrection.
- They both used salvation history to frame the story of Jesus.

From a literary perspective, the similarities could suggest a Lukan standardization of their sermons and a Pauline influence on Peter's speeches.¹⁷⁸ Moving into canonical theology, though, the common components can be used to biblically describe a sermon. It should have a biblical foundation (either a base passage or a biblical theme), be framed within salvation history, and have Christ as the core of the message. As argued in the next section, biblical theology is the way in which the three are united. Goldsworthy states: "Preaching Christ from every part of the Bible need never degenerate into predictable platitudes about Jesus. The riches of Christ are inexhaustible, and biblical theology is the way to uncover them."¹⁷⁹

The Goal of Preaching: Worldview Transformation

The Bible speaks of a transformation that needs to happen in the people of God. Moses refers to it as "circumcise... your heart" (Deut 10:10, ESV), Christ as being "born again" (John 3:3, ESV), and Paul as being a "new creation" (2 Cor 5:17, ESV). In systematic theology, this transformation has three sequential steps: salvation, sanctification, and glorification. Preaching is one way that transformation takes place. Preaching is needed first at regeneration. Paul argues that people will come to believe only if there is "someone preaching" (Rom 10:14, ESV).

¹⁷⁸ Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary Vol. 1: Introduction and 1:1-2:47* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 303.

¹⁷⁹ Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Scripture as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 30.

Preaching is the way people can make a decision about salvation, for "it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe" (1 Cor 1:21, ESV).

Once a person is saved, he or she must strive for a life-long process of sanctification. In the primitive church, this process was called following "The Way" (Acts 9:2, ESV).¹⁸⁰ From a psychological-philosophical perspective, such a process could be called "worldview transformation" (see Theoretical Foundations below). Mindset development has different nuances from the religious and psychological points of view, but a transformation of the mind is at the center of both. From the theological angle, believers are to be "transformed by the renewal of [their] mind" (Rom 12:2, ESV), to think in "whatever is pure, whatever is honorable, whatever is lovely" (Phil 4:8, ESV), and to "set [their] minds on the things that are above, not on things that are on earth" (Col 3:2, ESV). Paul argues that the battle of the Christian is in destroying "every argument and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and tak[ing] every thought captive to obey Christ" (2 Cor 10:5, ESV). He also says that believers have "the mind of Christ" (1 Cor 2:16, ESV).¹⁸¹ It is through preaching that the mind of Christ is received.

Preaching, then, is simultaneously to call nonbelievers to faith and believers to sanctification.¹⁸² As Claire suggests, "teaching [the Word of God] remains one of the main ways that God's people learn and are transformed by his word."¹⁸³ Likewise, Gillham proposes that

¹⁸⁰ It continued to be introduced that way even in the post-apostolic generation, as seen in the Didache: "There are two ways, one of life and one of death, and there is a great difference between these two ways" *The Didache* 1:1.

¹⁸¹ Some commentators will say that the "we" who have the mind of Christ are the apostles only, but the overall context points to believers in general. See Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *1 Corinthians, PNTC* (Chicago, IL: Eerdmans, 2010), 163.

¹⁸² Contra Charles H. Dodd, who a generation ago dissented that preaching was for unbelievers and teaching for believers.

¹⁸³ Smith, "Preaching...", 49.

“there is a connection between theology and transformation.”¹⁸⁴ The acquisition of a biblical worldview produces change. As believers internalize the biblical presuppositions of reality and practice them, the transformation occurs. Certainly, such internalization happens in multiple ways, for example, by individual devotional habits, mentorship, and Christian counseling. Yet, hearing the Word of God in a worship setting has biblical precedents, as observed above. When believers listen to the preached Word week after week, they a) learn to see the Bible as the highest form of authority, b) go through a progressive shift from a secular to biblical worldview, and c) acquire habits that allow them to live out "The Way."

This worldview transformation will be Christian only insofar as Christ is at the center of it. Speaking of Christ as the key to understanding the Scriptures, Paul touches on transformation: "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another" (2 Cor 3:18, ESV). By contemplating Christ in Scriptures, the believer's mind is transformed.

In summary, sermons that are expository and proclaim Christ in the context of salvation history are how believers transform their worldview.

An Adventist Biblical Theology

As defined in Chapter 1, biblical theology is the branch of theology that deals with the progression of God's self-disclosure in the Bible. Biblical theology is intrinsically linked to *Heilsgeschichte* and the meta-narrative that joins it together. To be "biblical," this type of theology must be based on the Bible. Peckham proposes "Canonical Sola Scriptura" as the most

¹⁸⁴ Simon Gillham, "Theological Formation Through the Preached Word: A Biblical-Theological Account," in *Theology is for Preaching: Biblical Foundations, Method & Practice*, ed. Chase R. Kuhn and Paul Grimmond (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2021), 254.

promising method to do theology.¹⁸⁵ His method is “canonical,” because it derives exclusively from the biblical canon, not from communitarian approaches, historical theology, or even the rule of faith. Canonical theology is rooted in the historical-grammatical method,¹⁸⁶ and uses microhermeneutical and macrophenomological exegesis to interpret the text.¹⁸⁷ The conclusions of canonical theology remain forever tentative since the canon is the text, not the produced system. Yet the system “endeavors to persistently move toward through correspondence and rigorous inner coherence.”¹⁸⁸ Based on canonical *sola scriptura*, Adventists work out a biblical theology that is like other Protestant alternatives but with a unique metanarrative: the Great Controversy. What follows is a biblical theology nuanced by Adventism, which will be used as the core of the current intervention.¹⁸⁹

The story of the Bible is the story of the Triune, self-giving, other-centered God. Since eternity past, each member of the Trinity was loving and focused on the other members (John 17:24). God is love because He is a Trinity. He did not need other creatures, so He must have created the universe not out of necessity but as a free, love-motivated decision.¹⁹⁰ Indeed, the three members of the Godhead were present at the creation of the world (Gen 1:1-2; John 1:1).

¹⁸⁵ John C. Peckham, *Canonical Theology: The Biblical Canon, Sola Scriptura, and Theological Method* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016), 12.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 203.

¹⁸⁷ Microhermeneutical exegesis refers to the usual literary analysis of a pericope. “Macrophenomenological exegesis consist of looking for the conceptual framework implicit in the text as a canon. That is macrophenomenological exegesis utilizes exegetically derived canonical data in order to uncover and abstract the (metaphysical, epistemological, and axiological) conceptual framework implicit in the canon.... This level of interpretation goes beyond the limited pericope to seek the horizon of the text as canon, which also impacts textual meaning itself.” *Ibid.*, 214.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 217.

¹⁸⁹ Until recently, there has been no work in Adventist biblical theology. Peckham released the first volume of this kind on August 2023: John C. Peckham, *God With Us: An Introduction to Adventist Theology* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2023). The researcher was not able to meaningfully consult this volume.

¹⁹⁰ John C. Peckham, *Divine Attributes: Knowing the Covenantal God of Scriptures* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2021), 247.

Paul Gregor points out that the word used to describe the Spirit's activity at creation conveys that "God's love and the tender care He shows as a Parent was present from the very beginning of His creation."¹⁹¹ The world was created out of love and as the object of God's fatherly love.

Following the canonical method, classical conceptions of God must be discarded. Unlike the God of the church fathers, the God of the Bible is not purely impassible or deterministic.¹⁹² God is omnipotent, but He does not force His will on others. God is love (1 John 4:18), and He invites His creatures to love Him back (Deut 10:12; Jer 29:13; Rev 3:20). Freewill is an implication and a necessity of divine love.¹⁹³

In the Bible, free will is observed not just in human beings but also in heavenly creatures. The "mystery of iniquity" is that out of the perfect state of communion between the Godhead and heavenly beings, Satan rebelled (Isa 14:12-15; Ezek 28:11-19). He desired to occupy God's throne. He was cast down to earth, although apparently, he still had some access to God's presence (Job 1:6; Zech 3:1). God did not immediately destroy him because his accusations would not be eliminated but exacerbated by a violent uprooting. This "great conflict" (Dan 10:1, ESV) between God and heavenly potentates is not a war of power, for God is almighty, and they

¹⁹¹ Paul Gregor, "Creation Revisited: Echoes of Genesis 1 and 2 in the Pentateuch," in *The Genesis Creation Account and Its Reverberations in the Old Testament*, ed. Gerald A. Klingbell (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2015), 146.

¹⁹² Based on his canonical method, Peckham proposes "qualified passibility," where God really feels, listens, and relents. Peckham, *Divine Attributes*, 61-70. A form of passibility has gained esteem in evangelicalism, as documented by the renowned Anglican theologian Richard Bauckham. In the article below, he lists five arguments for why some form of passibility is to be preferred. He concludes by saying: "It seems increasingly obvious that the Greek philosophical inheritance in traditional theology was adopted without the necessary critical effect of the central Christian insight into the divine nature: the love of God revealed in the cross of Christ." Richard Bauckham, "'Only the Suffering God Can Help': Divine Passibility in Modern Theology," *Themelios* 9, no. 3 (April 1984):6-9.

¹⁹³ Miller presents the historical witnessing of free-will Protestantism from the Reformation to today. He goes through Arminius, Grotius, Nathaniel Taylor, Jonathan Weasley, Billy Graham, etc. Nicholas P. Miller, "History of the Relationship Among Human Free Will, God's Character of Love, and The Great Controversy," in *Salvation: Contours of Adventist Soteriology*, ed. Matin E. Hanna et al. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2018), 3:18.

would not stand a chance. This a war of ideas.¹⁹⁴ God's character was put on trial before sentient, freewill creatures. Once Satan was cast down, his strategy was not to overpower God's good creation but to deceive them with lies ("Did God actually say?" Gen 3:1, ESV). The mission of the "god of this world" is to "blind the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Cor 4:4, ESV). In this framework, Satan has been granted some level of authority in the world so he can make his case.¹⁹⁵ It is he, not God, who is the author of pain and suffering in the world. In Christ's words: "an enemy has done this" (Matt 13:28, ESV). God is neither the origin nor the culprit of evil.

Based on canonical *sola scriptura*, the metanarrative of Scripture is the vindication of God's character. The incarnation of the Son, the plan of salvation, and the cross entail more than just forgiving mankind's sins. The core of the gospel is to manifest the "righteousness of God" (Rom 3:21, ESV). Gulley says: "'*God is just*' is the ultimate truth standing at the center of the cosmic controversy. A systematic theology must look at all the major foci from the vantage point of the cosmic controversy and examine them through the light of God's justice."¹⁹⁶ The great conflict, then, cannot be solved by force but by love. Creation, including human beings and heavenly creatures, need to be persuaded that God is indeed faithful, loving, and just.

¹⁹⁴ "From Genesis to Revelation, questions regarding God's character and government are raised in heaven and on earth. Since the enemy's slanderous allegations are epistemic in nature, they cannot be effectively answered by any display of power, however great. Indeed, no amount of power exercised by a king would prove to his subjects that he is not unjust.... A conflict over character cannot be settled by sheer power but requires demonstration." Peckham, *Theodicy of Love*, 91.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 103-118. See also Heiser's work, who is not an Adventist himself. Michael S. Heiser, *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015).

¹⁹⁶ Norman R. Gulley, *Systematic Theology: Prolegomena* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2003), 447. Emphasis original.

To vindicate His name, God “cuts” a series of covenants. In the words of LaRondelle, “the Bible can be understood adequately as the history of God’s covenants.”¹⁹⁷ He made a covenant with Adam, Noah, and eventually Abraham (Gen 12:1). Through him, the Lord planned to bless all nations. Later, He chose Israel. God “is not partial” (Deut 10:17, ESV), though. If He chose them, it was to be a “kingdom of priests” (Exod 19:6, ESV), to bring the knowledge of God to the world by their faithful obedience to the covenant law (Deut 4:6-7). Gane explains: “Israel was to be God’s model nation, showing to all other peoples how well a society could function if it followed YHWH’s unique value system.”¹⁹⁸ Israel broke their part of the covenant. The Lord, being faithful to His word, had to send them into exile. Yet He promised to uphold His covenant with David (2 Sam 7:16) and to bring forth a new covenant (Jer 31:31).

In due time (Gal 4:4), the Son came to display God's covenantal faithfulness to all His promises (2 Cor 1:20). He came to take on Himself the curse of the covenant (Gal 3:13), providing salvation while still being righteous. Furthermore, He came to neutralize the slandering of the devil (1 John 3:8) and to display the true nature of God (John 1:18). In the cross, Christ displayed God's loving character while at the same time, He "cast out the ruler of this world" (John 12:31, ESV). That means that He unmasked Satan before the entire universe. Through His sacrifice, Christ "disarmed the rulers and authorities" by showing their true nature “and put them to open shame” (Col 2:15, ESV).¹⁹⁹ Thanks to Christ's death, Satan lost all benefit

¹⁹⁷ Hans K. LaRondelle, *Our Creator Redeemer: An Introduction to Biblical Covenant Theology* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2005), 17.

¹⁹⁸ Roy E. Gane, *Old Testament Law for Christians: Original Context and Application* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), 55.

¹⁹⁹ Stott documents the “Christus Victor” theme in contemporary theology. See John Stott, *The Cross of Christ, Centennial Edition* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2021), 223-246. He, like most authors, attributes the theme to Gustaf Aulen in the 1930s. In reality, Adventist theologians had been using a very similar motif since the nineteenth century.

of the doubt among freewill heavenly beings, who, up to this point, may not have fully understood his character. Once his case was proven false, he was thrown down (Rev 12:9). Satan still has power on earth, but his case has been lost in heaven.

Christ inaugurated His kingdom on earth, the church. Like Israel of old, the church was to be a lineage of priests (1 Pet 2:9) to bring the nations to the knowledge of the Messiah. The church would have its ups and downs, just like Israel. Near Christ's second coming, there would be a remaining (*loipon*) that stays faithful to Jesus and keeps His commandments (Rev 12:17). This group is not a denomination but a movement, the true offspring of the woman in the end-times.²⁰⁰ Today, people find their role in this cosmic drama by being part of the *loipon*.

Christ will soon come back to end sin once and for all. On that day, "at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Phil 2:10-11, ESV). Against Calvin's interpretation of forced obedience,²⁰¹ the Great Controversy framework posits that Christ will not force anyone. Instead, every intelligent being will confess, rationally, willingly, that God is all He said He was. Even unrepentant beings that are annihilated will acknowledge God's justice in dealing with them. God's name will be forever vindicated.²⁰²

²⁰⁰ This remaining has also been called the remnant. For influential works on the remnant theme in the OT, see Gerhard F. Hasel, *The Remnant: The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea from Genesis to Isaiah* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1980). In the NT: Hans K. LaRondelle, *The Israel of God in Prophecy: Principles of Prophetic Interpretation* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1983).

²⁰¹ In his commentary of Philippians 2:11, Calvin says: "How will it be, then, when they [things in heaven, things on earth, things under the earth] shall come before the tribunal of Christ? I confess, indeed, that they are not, and never will be, subject of their own accord and by cheerful submission; but Paul is not speaking here of voluntary obedience." Silva documents a view opposite to Calvin. He talks about the "hope that intelligent beings will voluntarily choose submission." Moises Silva, *Philippians, BECNT, Second Edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 111.

²⁰² Peckham, *Theodicy of Love*, 136.

Christ will also cleanse the earth and establish new heavens and new earth. The canonical method suggests not an immaterial eternity in heaven but a bodily experience in the new heavens and new earth (Isa 65:25; Rev 21:1). God's original plan for earth will prevail. Tonstad explains: "God *redeems* and *renews*; God does not *discard* or *replace*."²⁰³ Because of the material reality of resurrection (1 Cor 15:53), the people of God can work faithfully today, "knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain" (1 Cor 15:58, ESV). Whatever is beautiful, fair, and good will be preserved in the "renewal of all things" (Matt 19:28, ESV). In the new heavens and new earth, the redeemed will discover what it really means to be human and forever enjoy that God is love.

Excursus: The Role of Ellen White in Adventist Preaching

Adventists follow the Protestant principle of *sola scriptura*. Their official website states: "Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures."²⁰⁴ The denomination also believes that all spiritual gifts are active (1 Cor 12:27-31), including the gift of prophecy, and that such a gift was manifested in Ellen White, one of the founders of the denomination. Contemporary studies in charismatic gifts have proven the biblical basis of the continuation of the gift of prophecy. Grudem argues that prophecy is not a dead gift. According to the New Testament, the gift of prophecy is a contained phenomenon, subordinated to apostolic authority, and expected to be

²⁰³ Sigve K. Tonstad, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019), 304. Emphasis original. N. T. Wright and Christopher Wright, Anglican theologians, emphasize the physicality of New Creation in their own works. See N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2008), and Christopher J. H. Wright, *The God I Don't Understand: Reflections on Tough Questions of Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016).

²⁰⁴ Official Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, retrieved November 1, 2022, <https://www.adventist.org/beliefs/>.

examined by the church. Grudem shows that some Reformers and Puritans could fit the role of New Testament prophets: John Knox, Richard Baxter, Charles Spurgeon, and others.²⁰⁵

Ellen White, as an Adventist prophetess, pointed people toward the Bible and away from her writings. Despite her claims of receiving visions, she was always clear that her ministry was subordinated to Scripture. Commenting on the Reformation, she said: "There is need of a return to the great Protestant principle –the Bible, and the Bible only, as the rule of faith and duty."²⁰⁶ And on preaching, she stated: "The words of the Bible and the Bible alone, should be heard from the pulpit."²⁰⁷ Early Adventists agreed with the subordination of her gift.²⁰⁸ Contemporary Adventist scholars agree not only in her subordination but also that "we cannot use Ellen White as the determinative arbiter of what Scripture means."²⁰⁹ The church denies that her writings have the same authority as Scripture or that her interpretation of Scripture is exhaustive or infallible.

It is unfortunate, then, that in practice, Adventist preachers have used and abused her writings. On the usage of her writings to prepare a sermon, Richards retells a private conversation between White and his dad. For sermon preparation, White advised him to first and foremost dive into Scripture, then create a manuscript, and only after that, check her writings to enrich the preacher's understanding of the preached passage.²¹⁰ In essence, she uses her writings as a Bible commentary. "After that, and here is the most important thing, she said: 'go to the

²⁰⁵ Wayne Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2000).

²⁰⁶ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Washington: Review & Herald, 1911), 224.

²⁰⁷ Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings* (Washington: Review & Herald, 1917), 470.

²⁰⁸ George Knight, *Prophets in Conflict: Issues in Authority* (Tampa: Pacific Press, 2020), chap. 2, Kindle.

²⁰⁹ Hans K. LaRondelle, *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies of the Bible* (Sarasota, FL: First Impressions, 1997), 494. Appendix A of LaRondelle's work includes a thorough list of Adventist scholars that delimit White's authority.

²¹⁰ Richards, *Apacienta Mis Ovejas*, 117.

people and preach the message of *the Bible*.”²¹¹ Respecting her legacy and following the explicit goals of this project thesis, Ellen White's writings will neither be directly quoted in the intervention nor used as an authoritative source.

Theoretical Foundations

The goal of preaching is worldview transformation, as detailed in the previous section. Hence, a summary of the previous works on worldview transformation, as well as worldview development among young adults, is necessary. Then, the connection between worldview and biblical theology will be established. Last, a survey of recent attempts to preach biblical worldviews or biblical theology is presented.

Worldview Transformation

During childhood, the individual's worldview is influenced by upbringing, education, and environment. A recent thesis demonstrated that after a year of education, the worldview of high school students tended to shift toward their teacher's worldview.²¹² As the individual matures, the list of influences grows to include peers, the workplace, and even social media. A study showed that adults in the US spent an average of seven hours and fifty minutes a day on social media in 2021.²¹³ Such exposure influences the individual's worldview.

Anderson documents how worldviews are changed. There can be worldview adjustment or conversion. In the first case, peripherals are given up or evolved to save the core of the worldview. In the second, the previous set of "glasses" is found lacking at a rational or

²¹¹ Richards, *Apacienta Mis Ovejas*, 117, emphasis added.

²¹² James A. Fyock, "The Effect of the Teacher's Worldviews on the Worldviews of High School Seniors" (Doctoral Thesis, Liberty University, 2008), 55. Digital Commons at Liberty University.

²¹³ Ethan Cramer-Flood, "US Time Spent with Media 2021 Update," February 4, 2021, <https://www.insiderintelligence.com/content/us-time-spent-with-media-2021-update>.

experiential level and replaced by a new set.²¹⁴ To transform their current worldview, individuals need to be exposed to influences different than the ones modeled by their previous one. That is why a traumatic event, higher education, or constant exposure to social media can erode a worldview.

Hiebert created the definitive treatise on worldview transformation.²¹⁵ His work is cited by virtually all scholars working on the subject. He describes worldview transformation as a two-way influence between behavior, beliefs, and worldview. New habits or unexamined behaviors will be able to shift the individual's beliefs to have a consistent cognitive experience. In due time, the change in those beliefs will affect the core of the worldview. Conversely, a change in one's worldview due to reflection, environment, or traumatic experiences will alter peripheral beliefs, which will then change behaviors.²¹⁶ Based on this two-way model, Hiebert suggests ways to consciously transform one's worldview: intentional examination or exposure to other worldviews (bottom-up) or creating new rituals that will settle new beliefs and eventually modify the worldview (top-down).²¹⁷ He further argues that worldviews do not remain static but are in a continuously changing flow. He says: "Most worldview transformations are an ongoing process in all individuals and societies."²¹⁸

²¹⁴ Anderson et al., *An Introduction to Christian Worldview*, 42-51.

²¹⁵ Paul G. Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding on How People Change* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008).

²¹⁶ Ibid., 312-316.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 320-323.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 319.

The newest generations (millennials and centennials) are shaped by their digital consumption.²¹⁹ To be able to develop a biblical worldview among them, it is necessary to understand their cultural milieu. Contrary to common understanding, millennials and centennials do not live in postmodernism but in metamodernism. Kenley D. Hall describes how postmodernism is the residual cultural ethos, but metamodernism is the emergent one. He describes metamodernism as moving "between modern utopian naivete and postmodern skepticism that drives it towards dystopia."²²⁰ He further explains: "Metamodernism oscillates between modern absolutism and postmodern skepticism; modern objectivism and postmodern subjectivism; modern conviction and postmodern relativism."²²¹ Recent studies suggest that for such a cultural atmosphere, communicating ideas through stories has positive results.²²² On the other hand, Sire postulates that a worldview can be summarized as a collection of stories.²²³ Given that stories are effective among metamodernists and worldviews can be communicated through stories, the use of biblical theology (with its implicit metanarrative) to develop a Christian worldview is promising.

Biblical Theology as Biblical Worldview

In Christian traditions, where the Bible is the highest form of authority (traditionally, evangelicalism), a Christian worldview is necessarily a biblical worldview. Such a worldview would answer the basic metaphysical, epistemological, ethical, and anthropological questions of

²¹⁹ Business Wire, "Generation Influence: Gen Z Study Reveals a New Digital Paradigm," July 7, 2020, <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20200706005543/en/Generation-Influence-Gen-Z-Study-Reveals-a-New-Digital-Paradigm>.

²²⁰ Kenley D. Hall, "Exegeting Culture," in *Nothing But the Best* (Pittsburg: PA, AuhorsPress, 2022), 178.

²²¹ Ibid., 180.

²²² Heather Thomson Day, "Use of Stories in Courses and Student Engagement at Southwestern Michigan College" (PhD diss., Andrews University, 2018). Digital Commons at Andrews University.

²²³ Sire, *Naming the Elephant*, 145.

life from the Bible. The options to transmit it, though, are several. Systematic theology, in the form of a catechism, may be an option. Metamodern audiences, however, who are driven by narratives and are less dogmatic, can be reticent to adopt such an abstract approach. Another option is biblical theology.

Biblical theology is a way of interpreting the overall story of the Bible using both a synchronic and a diachronic approach. Its study is intrinsically connected to *Heilsgeschichte* (salvation history); it is usually divided into epochs and is developed through a unifying theme. Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, based on N. T. Wright's framework, portray the biblical story as a drama of six acts: creation, fall, redemption initiated, redemption accomplished, the mission of the church, and redemption completed.²²⁴ D.T. Alexander proposes the temple motif as the main one and breaks down salvation history in the different dwellings of God: Eden, Tabernacle, Christ, Church, and New Jerusalem.²²⁵ Goldsworthy proposes the kingdom of God as the unifying theme. He summarizes salvation history like this: “God’s people in God’s place under God’s rule.”²²⁶ He divides salvation history as the kingdom pattern established, revealed in Israel's history, revealed in prophetic eschatology, revealed in Christ, and the kingdom consummated.²²⁷ He also summarizes other approaches by other evangelical and

²²⁴ Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding our Place in the Biblical Story, Second Edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014).

²²⁵ D. T. Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2013).

²²⁶ Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture*, 86-87.

²²⁷ Graeme Goldsworthy, *According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 232-233.

Adventist scholars: Geerhardus Vos, Edmund P. Clowney, Sidney Greidanus, and Gerhard F. Hasel.²²⁸

Compare the results of these biblical theologians with Christian philosophers who propose a biblical worldview. Tawa J. Anderson and others delineate a biblical worldview first as a narrative and then as propositional truths. In the "narrative contours" of their worldview, they break down the biblical story into four epochs: creation, fall, redemption, and future glorification. As they do so, they derive propositions that assemble a full worldview.²²⁹ Similarly, Graham Ryken describes the basics of the Christian worldview as the history of salvation, divided into God, Creation, Fall, Grace, and Glory.²³⁰ Brian J. Walsh and J. Richard Middleton do the same, keeping it only to three epochs: creation, fall, and redemption.²³¹ Most scholars who discuss biblical worldview mention the stages of salvation history.

Some observations can be drawn from the usage of salvation history among these two disciplines. First, *Heilsgeschichte* necessarily breaks down into epochs. Second, its narrative nature elaborates propositions along the way, either as biblical themes (in biblical theology) or philosophical assertions (in biblical worldview). Thirdly, because such propositions originate in the context of a narrative, they are less abstract and more open-ended. Lastly, *Heilsgeschichte* allows moving between theological and philosophical assertions.

Given that salvation history has been used to draw the contours of a biblical worldview, the usage of biblical theology for worldview communication is warranted. As a matter of fact, that is what Klink III and Locket argue is done by NT. Wright. In their book *Understanding*

²²⁸ Graeme Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 76-109.

²²⁹ Anderson et al., *An Introduction to Christian Worldview*, 119-138.

²³⁰ Philip G. Ryken, *What is the Christian Worldview?* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2006), 11-44.

²³¹ Walsh and Middleton, *The Transforming Vision*, 43-82.

Biblical Theology, they describe five distinct functions of biblical theology, one of which is a “worldview-story.”²³² They see in N. T. Wright the main proponent of such a function. They say: “A ‘story’ and the ‘worldview’ it produces is central to Wright’s notion of biblical theology.”²³³ They show how Wright’s biblical theology is almost exclusively narrative and cumulative towards his own worldview story.²³⁴

Attempts to Develop a Biblical Worldview

A recent book by Roger E. Olson, *The Essentials of Christian Thought*, closely resembles the goal of the current action research. Building on the work of James Richmond, Olson seeks to use biblical narrative for a “heuristic picture of the world as a whole.”²³⁵ Olson proposes gathering the blocks of a Christian worldview from the biblical story. He explains: “Being Christian means, in part, seeing the world as the reality described, or presupposed, by the Bible.”²³⁶ Olson uses a relatively new type of theology: narrative theology, produced at Yale Divinity School.²³⁷ The main differences between Olson’s approach and the current project are:

1. Whereas narrative theology flows from post-liberalism, this research comes from an evangelical perspective.

²³² Edward W. Klink III and Darian R. Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology, A Comparison of Theory and Practice* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 93-107.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 113.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 119.

²³⁵ James Richmond, *Theology and Metaphysics* (New York, NY: Schocken Books, 1971), 68.

²³⁶ Olson, *On the Essentials of Christian Thought*, 43.

²³⁷ George Hunsinger, “Postliberal Theology,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 42-57.

2. Whereas narrative theology sees biblical narratives neither as history nor myth,²³⁸ this research adheres to the traditional view that they are history.
3. Most notably, whereas narrative theology does not inform the practice of preaching, this project thesis seeks to use expository preaching as the delivery mechanism of biblical theology.

Other theses have revolved around biblical worldview and expository preaching in the recent past. Here are three examples: First, Scott Leafe's DMIN thesis is on developing a biblical worldview. However, he used a small-group class and presented the worldview as a set of propositional truths. Hence, his work did not include expository preaching.²³⁹ Second, Jacques Ernst's thesis was done in a context much closer to the current one: expository preaching in an Adventist church.²⁴⁰ Ernst saw the need to inform expository preaching with the "grand redemptive story" of the Bible, so he touched lightly on worldview transformation.²⁴¹ However, he focused on the effectiveness of expository preaching in a multicultural setting, and he did not develop a full worldview to be delivered through preaching.

The last example is the most similar to the current project. Robert Page developed his thesis on expository preaching (method) to increase biblical literacy (goal).²⁴² He defined biblical literacy as "the key terms, symbols, doctrines, practices, sayings, characters, metaphors, and

²³⁸ N. T. Wright, who also engages with this approach, calls it "critical realism." N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 129.

²³⁹ Scott K. Leafe, "Maintaining a Biblical Worldview: Mitigating Emerging Syncretism with Worldly Philosophies Through Focused Instruction in Christian Theology" (Doctoral Thesis, Liberty University, 2017), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

²⁴⁰ Jacques Ernst, "Preaching and Teaching: An Integrative Evaluative Approach to Christian Practices at Fil-Am SDA Church" (Doctoral Thesis, Liberty University, 2020), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

²⁴² Robert W. Page, "Increasing the Biblical Literacy of the Members of Sharon Baptist Church, Charlotte, North Carolina through Expository Preaching" (Doctoral Thesis, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

narratives in the Bible and how they relate to the original context of the passage, contribute to the unity of the Bible's Christ-centered central theme and apply to the life of the modern-day Christian."²⁴³ Such a definition resembles that of worldview, though from a theological point of view. With the similarities noted, a couple of key differences are:

- 1) Page worked in a Baptist context, whereas the current project is Adventist. His discoveries are not directly transferable to the latter denomination.
- 2) Page leaned more toward the inclusion of systematic theology²⁴⁴ on his expository messages, whereas the current project will stick to biblical theology (a step before).

In Adventism, using biblical theology to communicate a biblical worldview has been attempted in the recent past. Kidder and Weakley, Adventist theologians, released a book in 2022 on developing a biblical worldview. They describe biblical worldview as biblical theology. They divide salvation history into four stages: Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Re-Creation, and place each one in the Adventist theme of the "Great Controversy."²⁴⁵ Another example is *The Road*, by Marcos D. Torres, which is a review of salvation history to develop a biblical worldview.²⁴⁶ His stages are loosely defined as God/Creation, War, Restoration, Empire, Protest, and New Creation.²⁴⁷ Torres' work is not linear, though, and goes back and forth in the story. The reason for that is that he tries to include all of Adventist theology in the narrative, something that this work is explicitly avoiding. The last attempt, the *Arise* course, is one of the most

²⁴³ Page, "Increasing the Biblical Literacy...", 3.

²⁴⁴ "Soteriology, hamartiology, Christology, pneumatology, theology proper, creation, anthropology, eschatology, angelology, satanology, (sic) and ecclesiology: the project director felt an introduction to the various doctrines in Scripture was a necessary component to biblical literacy." Ibid., 75.

²⁴⁵ S. Joseph Kidder and Katelyn Campbell Weakley, *Living with the Mind of Jesus: How Beliefs Shape Your Worldview* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2022).

²⁴⁶ Marcos D. Torres, *The Road: A Journey Through the Narrative of Scripture, Second Edition* (Sidney, Story Church Project, 2020).

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 91.

comprehensive ones.²⁴⁸ The course is usually imparted in a three-month period, though it can also be accessed online. It was designed by Ty Gibson and David Asscherick, leading apologists in Adventism. They teach the biblical narrative divided into seven epochs: pre-creation, creation, fall, covenant, Messiah, church, and re-creation. Their project has been highly successful among young adults. Its main weakness is the need to spend three months in a college-like setting to receive it. Gibson and Asscherick have compacted the whole course into a weekend event.²⁴⁹

Some commonalities among the three projects are:

- 1) The three of them are interested in including all of Adventist theology in their proposed worldviews.
- 2) Both Kidder & Weakley and Gibson & Asscherick freely use denominational documents and Ellen White's writings to advance ideas.
- 3) Both Torres and Gibson & Asscherick do what could be defined as expository teaching. However, since their material is for small groups (Torres) or college-level classes (Gibson & Asscherick), they do not use expository preaching.

The current project thesis seeks something like the last three attempts. Indeed, it proposes a biblical worldview nuanced by Adventism, just as they do. The main differences would be the controlled research space, the formal gathering of data, the usage of the Bible as the only source of authority, the limitation to biblical theology (instead of systematic theology, or the "28 Fundamental Beliefs"), and expository preaching as the delivery mechanism.

²⁴⁸ "Arise 2023 Student Handbook", retrieved November 1, 2022, from https://lightbearers.org/downloads/arise/ARISE_Australia_Handbook.pdf.

²⁴⁹ "What is an ARISE Intensive?", retrieved November 11, 2022, <https://ariseintensive.com/#about>.

Conclusion

The current chapter reviewed the recent literature on expository preaching, Adventist preaching, and biblical worldview. Putting them all together revealed a gap in Adventist expository preaching for the purpose of worldview transformation. To define preaching biblically, a theological exploration of the practice, including its method (expository), message (Christ), and goal (worldview transformation), was laid down. Also, precedents for biblical theology as biblical worldview were extracted from other theses or efforts.

The current project thesis will attempt to use expository preaching, as defined by Keller or Stott, to develop a biblical theology that can be used as a biblical worldview, as seen in Olson or Wright. The biblical theology to be used has been summarized in the Theological Foundations section. The results should look like Page's project thesis but in an Adventist context, or as Gibson & Asscherick courses, but using expository preaching as the main method of delivery.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the design and implementation of the project thesis. According to Sensing, a project thesis demands an intervention and change when implemented.¹ As such, the project thesis was executed at both Refuge Church and Triumph Church.

Intervention Design

The intervention consisted of an eight-week series at both Refuge and Triumph, covering the history of salvation from an Adventist perspective. The objective of the series was to communicate Adventist *Heilsgeschichte* as a worldview. Each week, the series delivered an expository sermon. The researcher also created devotional readings, but those were not required for participation (an example is in Appendix J). The intervention required listening to the sermon, in-person or online, and filling out a survey every week. Beginning and ending assessments were also required. For ten people,² two extra online interviews were recorded at the beginning and the end. Below are details on the curriculum, the methodology of sermon preparation, the permissions required, the participants, and the instrumentation used.

Curriculum

The thesis of this project is that expository preaching could impact young adults' worldview. Hence, the implementation must have used expository sermons. Unlike most

¹ Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 16.

² Eleven started, but only ten ended. Details on the implementation are below.

expository series, though, and following the lead of Stott or Keller, the series was not the *lectio continua* of a book of the Bible but the expounding of self-contained passages.³ The pericopes selected are the high points of salvation history. As explained in the Theoretical Foundations in Chapter 2, worldviews can be transmitted as stories. Goheen and Bartholomew say it like this: “A worldview is often expressed as a grand story or master narrative. Worldview is not first a rational system of beliefs but rather a story about the world.”⁴ Thus, the series will be about the ultimate “grand story,” salvation history, nuanced by Adventism.

Scholars describe worldviews as a collection of cognitive elements, as detailed in Chapter 2. Based on the Literature Review, the researcher summarized those elements as seven:

- 1) Epistemology, or the validity and sources of knowledge.
- 2) Metaphysics, or the ultimate reality that sustains the universe.
- 3) Anthropology, or the nature of human beings.
- 4) Ethics, or how human beings should behave.
- 5) Origins, or the story/facts of humanity’s dawn.
- 6) Destiny, or the flow of human history.
- 7) Hope, or the source of motivation for human beings.

The series consisted of eight sermons. The first one was different from the rest since it did not start narrating the story but laid down the foundations of a worldview. It presented the Bible as the source of truth (epistemology) and the Christian God as the reality behind the

³ Keller provides several reasons why *lectio continua* does not work well in the city, which has high levels of turnover. He says: “A strict, consecutive, whole-Bible-book approach will guarantee that most of your people will actually be exposed to less of the Bible variety.” Keller, *Preaching*, 40.

⁴ Goheen and Bartholomew, *Living at the Crossroads*, 18.

universe (metaphysics). The remaining seven sermons told the "grand story." All of them are delineated in Figure 3.1 below. Further details follow.

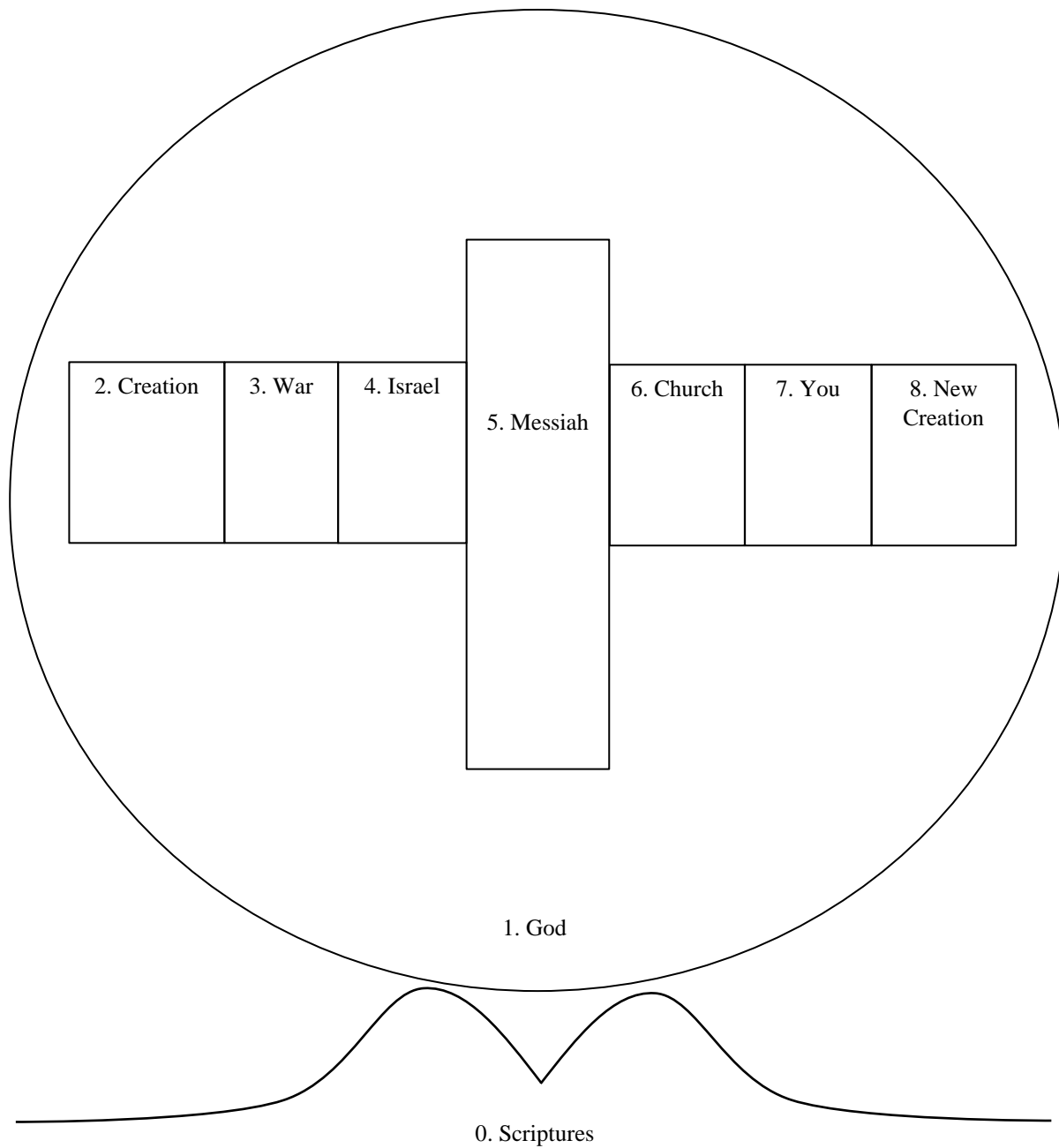


Figure 3.1. Curriculum Design

First Sermon: Epistemology and Metaphysics

W. Gary Phillips and others state that a biblical worldview must start with embracing Scripture as a source of authority.⁵ Similarly, Wilkens and Sanford speak of the Wesleyan Quadrilateral to form a Christian worldview: Scripture, reason, tradition, and experience in that hierarchy.⁶ The first sermon, then, had the objective to present the Bible as the epistemological foundation of the Christian worldview. That is why Scripture is at the base of Figure 3.1 as item 0; everything else flows from it.

In Adventist circles, ultimate reality is often described as the Great Controversy,⁷ but that assumes Christian Theism, and it only tries to persuade on the role of the anti-God force (the devil). A more accurate understanding of metaphysics, or ultimate reality, necessitates God as the only independent agent. Olson says: “The Bible depicts ultimate reality—the highest, best, final, eternal reality upon which all else is dependent— as supernatural and personal,”⁸ namely, the Christian God. God is the most basic aspect of reality. Paul described Him as: “In him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28, ESV). That is why Figure 3.1 presents God as a circle (item 1), which surrounds the entire story.

Due to the nature of the intervention, these two elements (Scripture and God) were to be expounded from a single pericope. An ideal one was Acts 10:34-43. This is the first recorded sermon to a Gentile audience. Peter, who delivered it, advanced his argument in three stages:

⁵ W. Gary Phillips, William E. Brown, and John Stonestreet, *Making Sense of Your World: A Biblical Worldview* (Salem, WI: Sheffield Publishing Company, 2008), 111-143.

⁶ Steve Wilkens and Mark L. Stanford, *Hidden Worldviews: Eight Cultural Stories that Shape our Lives* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 210-214.

⁷ Peckham, “Retrieving Cosmic Conflict Worldview, Part 2.”

⁸ Olson, *The Essentials of Christian Thought*, 53. In the same discussion, Olson argues that a *personal* God must necessarily put himself within the constraints of time (Ibid., 77). Olson, who is not an Adventist but distrusts the Greek influences of Christian philosophy, arrives at the same conclusion that Adventists have about God's immanence.

- 1) God is looking after all individuals from every nation (verses 34-45).
- 2) God revealed Himself definitively in the ministry, death, and resurrection of Christ (verses 36-41).
- 3) Christ commanded the apostles to share His story. The prophets provided the meaning of the story (verses 42-43).

The logic of Peter's sermon goes like this: God is looking after you (Gentiles); you get to understand Him through the person of Christ; and you learn Christ's story and meaning through the apostles and prophets (Old and New Testaments). In this pericope, the Bible is not a timeless book that descended from heaven. It is the record of historical events. This allows one to explore the validity of the Scriptures as a historical document that can be historically verified. Moreover, God is introduced as an ideal present in all cultures, which allows temporary flexibility toward other conceptions of Him. Peter's sermon, then, describes God as the ultimate reality and apostles/prophets' writings as the epistemological capstone. Both epistemology and metaphysics are soundly covered by it.

In the same passage, it is observed that the key to understanding both apostles and prophets is the story of Christ. As Jesus Himself explained on the road to Emmaus: "Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27, ESV). The hermeneutical key to the Scriptures is Christ, as argued in Chapter 2. That is why items 2-8 in Figure 3.1 are cross-shaped: the entire narrative is the fleshing out of Christ's cross.

Second to Eighth Sermons: Rest of Worldview Components

After the foundations of the biblical worldview were covered, *Heilsgeschichte* proper was developed in the remaining seven stages. As the Theoretical Foundations section in Chapter 2

explained, all authors use the Creation-Fall-Redemption framework to develop the Christian worldview.⁹ N. T. Wright says: "Worldviews provide the stories through which human beings view reality. Narrative is the most characteristic expression of worldview, going deeper than the isolated observation or fragmented remark."¹⁰ It is here, and not before, where the "Great Controversy" theme is useful. It becomes the unifying thread that brings together the Creation-Fall-Redemption framework. The key premise of the Great Controversy, "God is working out against His adversary to vindicate His character and redeem creation," is emotionally compelling and intellectually provocative. Hence, the Great Controversy was used as the metanarrative to unify the "grand story." It was first explained in the third sermon, from the assigned pericope (Gen 3:1-19), highlighted when present in the texts of sermons fourth through seventh, and brought to resolution in the eighth sermon.

These are the names of the remaining seven stages. If the name does not clearly convey the content, it is given in parentheses.

- 2) Creation.
- 3) War (the fall of humankind).
- 4) Israel.
- 5) Messiah.
- 6) Church.
- 7) You (the historicist's prophetic framework).
- 8) New Creation.

⁹ Other examples not mentioned in chapter two are Smith, *Developing a Biblical Worldview*, 5. Wilkens and Stanford. *Hidden Worldviews*, 183-200. Goheen and Bartholomew, *Living at the Crossroads*, 31-66.

¹⁰ N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis, Fortress, 1993), 11.

Each stage is a *Heilsgeschichte* epoch. They were developed primarily from the selected pericope while also touching on a worldview component (from the list above). Symmetry in the stages was by design as a mnemonic device. Also, there was an inverse relationship between stages to showcase the area of reparation that was made possible post-Calvary. Here are the epochs with the worldview component that they covered. Table 3.1 below includes further details.

- Creation (2) and New Creation (8). Both covered origins and destiny.
- War (3) and You (7). Both covered anthropology: human nature and human purpose.
- Israel (4) and Church (6). Both covered ethics and community.
- Messiah (5). It covered hope.

Table 3.1. Curriculum Details

<i>Title</i>	<i>Worldview Element</i>	<i>Pericope</i>	<i>Theological themes</i>	<i>Devotional themes</i>
<i>God: What is real?</i>	Metaphysics & Epistemology	Acts 10:34-43	Godhead & Christocentric hermeneutics	1) Biblical worldview 2) Conflicting worldviews 3) Christocentric hermeneutics 4) Metaphysics 5) The Triune God
<i>Creation: Where do we come from?</i>	Origins	Genesis 1:1-2:3	Creation	1) Humanity 2) Work 3) Ecology 4) Marriage 5) Sabbath*
<i>War: What is our problem?</i>	Anthropology	Genesis 3:1-19	Human nature	1) Great Conflict* 2) Sinful nature 3) Soul sleep* 4) Abraham 5) Exodus
<i>Israel: What is good?</i>	Ethics	Exodus 20:1-21	Covenant	1) The law 2) Sanctuary* 3) David 4) Ezra 5) The prophets
<i>Cross: Can we have hope?</i>	Hope	Philippians 2:6-10	Atonement	1) God's character 2) Passion 3) Atonement 4) God's vindication*

<i>Church: How should I behave?</i>	Ethics	Ephesians 4:1-13	Ecclesiology	5) Resurrection 1) Baptism 2) Communion 3) Spiritual gifts 4) Giving 5) Leadership
<i>You: What is my role in the story?</i>	Purpose	Revelation 12	Remnant	1) Primitive Church 2) Medieval Church 3) Revelation 4) Adventism* 5) Three angels*
<i>New Creation: Where are we going?</i>	Destiny	Revelation 21-22	Eschatology	1) Second coming 2) Millennium 3) Annihilation* 4) Resurrection 5) New Earth

* Adventist distinctives are presented here.

There is a key distinction between this project thesis and the published literature. The existing literature can be divided into worldview studies or systematic theology. In the case of worldview studies, the literature focuses on the preciseness of the cognitive elements of the Christian worldview. In the case of systematic theology, the literature focuses on a comprehensive, synthesized study of the given topic through Scripture. The current project focused on neither. Instead, the goal was to expound the pericopes accurately and thoroughly, as well as its contributions to salvation history.

To give an example, sermon three was on the fall of humankind, from Genesis 3:1-19. The sermon focused first on expounding the text and second on its place in the grand story. Whereas it referred to anthropology (worldview component) and hamartiology (theological doctrine), neither of them was the focus. The goal of the sermon was to explain the passage and its place in the Great Controversy. The sermon was not meant to be exhaustive in either worldview or systematic theology. Instead, it was designed to explain the text at the local level, as well as to work towards the overall story. The grand story was to be impactful at the emotional, intellectual, and existential levels.

Sermon Preparation

The sermons were to be expository. From the definition in Chapter 1, expository messages are “the Christ-centered proclamation of a self-contained biblical passage, which comprises both the explanation of the original meaning, its theological contours, and its application to the contemporary audience.” For the purposes of this intervention, the eclectic process¹¹ to craft the sermons comprised five steps:

- A. Perform exegesis of the pericope.
- B. Capture the main idea of the passage.
- C. Develop the body of the sermon.
- D. Add introduction and conclusion.
- E. Practice the delivery.

Brief notes of each are pertinent.

A. Perform Exegesis of The Pericope

The method was a simplified version of Schreiner’s to analyze the Pauline corpus:¹²

- 1) Understand the literary form of the text.
- 2) Investigate any text-critical variants using notes from New English Translation (NET) and Lexham English Bible (LEB) translations.
- 3) Consult different translations.¹³

¹¹ Using mostly the work of Robinson, Shaddix and Vines, Chapell, MacDill, and Kaiser.

¹² Thomas R. Schreiner, *Interpreting the Pauline Epistles, Second Edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 159-62. The most notable difference is the skipping of the tracing of the text (Schreiner’s step six). Though he considers it essential, in practice is redundant with step five.

¹³ This is in lieu of Schreiner’s step on doing a provisional translation. Instead of that, seven translations were regularly consulted: NASB, NET, ESV, NKJV, CSB, NIV, and CJB. The original languages were used in step six for the lexical study.

- 4) Review historical and introductory issues.
- 5) Perform a grammatical analysis (diagramming the text).
- 6) Do a lexical study of critical words in the order of book, author, and canon.
- 7) Do a theological synthesis that harmonizes with canonical theology,¹⁴ in the order of book, author, and canon.
- 8) Probe the significance of the passage for today.

The diagramming of the text, in step five, was performed using the classical method by Kaiser.¹⁵ The lexical study was done through Logos Software and its "Word Study" feature. An example of diagramming and lexical study can be found in Appendix G.

B. Capture The Main Idea of The Passage

Once the text was exegeted, the main idea was sought after, as recommended by Stanley and Lane.¹⁶ Then, the text was broken down into three to five sections, which became the points of the sermon. These points supplemented, not competed with, the main idea.

C. Develop The Body of The Sermon

With the main idea in mind, the points were built using the persuasive elements suggested by McDill: explanation, persuasion, illustration, and application.¹⁷ However, they were

¹⁴ The "canonical method" is from Peckham, not from Schreiner. But it is a more complete approach to biblical interpretation. Peckham's approach considers Tota Scriptura and Analogia Scriptura.

¹⁵ Walter C. Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1998), 58-60. His book is directly quoted by virtually all subsequent manuals on preaching, including McDill, *12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 24; Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 61; Merida, *Faithful Preaching*, 63; etc.

¹⁶ Andy Stanley, Jones, Lane. *Communicating for a Change* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 2006), 101-116.

¹⁷ McDill, *12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 126-128.

not included in every point since it made the oral presentation harder to follow. Instead, they were used at the discretion of the researcher. Here are thoughts on each:

- Explanation. The text was thoroughly explained, using the work from step one (though most of it was left out due to its volume). Theological jargon was avoided, assuming biblical illiteracy in the audience. For the same reason, Bible references were mostly kept to the selected pericope. Original languages were used just when they would help communicate the original meaning, which was rare. This one section occupied around 50 percent of the body of the sermon.
- Persuasion. It was assumed that not everyone in the audience was a believer. Hence, the persuasive elements were developed using Keller's method: A to B. Appeals to respected figures in the popular culture were made to strengthen the biblical case.¹⁸ A two-fold method of honoring and critiquing the culture was used at least once in each sermon.¹⁹ As detailed in Chapter 4, these elements were impactful on non-Christians and made them evaluate their own presuppositions.
- Illustration. They fell mostly into two categories: references to pop culture, which are appreciated by young people, and sketches from the life of the researcher. As described in Chapter 2, storytelling is effective among young adults. Illustrations from other spheres of life were avoided since they are a turn-off among young adults.
- Application. This element was lightly added during the body of the sermon but highlighted at the end of it. A Call to Action (CTA) list was presented after the sermon's

¹⁸ Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 109-111.

¹⁹ Ibid., 124-126.

points, sharing practical actions or habits that could be embraced as a response to the truths discussed.

The main idea, obtained in step B, was sprinkled throughout the sermon. Depending on the literary form, it was stated from the beginning of the sermon (in letters or law passages) or was built up to the climax of it (in narrative passages). Once the main idea was stated, it was repeated multiple times and with slight variations in wording. As detailed in Chapter 4, the participants remembered these single ideas even weeks after the sermons were delivered.

The christocentric climax was added depending on the epoch in *Heilsgeschichte*. In OT texts, the connection with Christ was made at the end since the original context was first covered in the body of the sermon.²⁰ In NT texts, Christ was usually included since the beginning, in the main idea.

D. Add Introduction and Conclusion

The introduction was almost always a light question related to the main point, followed by either a personal story or a noteworthy event. The purpose behind the question was to break the ice and to be humorous; the purpose of the story was to create a connection with the audience. The conclusion summarized the points, the CTA list, and a call to follow Jesus.

E. Practice the Delivery

After a full draft was created, the sermon was rehearsed out loud by the researcher to "feel" its rhythm and timing. Through these practices, a more memorable crafting of the main

²⁰ Using Greidanus' famous seven methods to preach Christ from the Old Testament. Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 227-271.

idea was produced, and redundant ideas were cut out. Table 3.2 displays the layout of every sermon.

Table 3.2. Expository Sermons to Impact the Worldview of Young Adults

<i>Section</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a light question as an icebreaker, followed by: • Either a personal story or a noteworthy event.
Main Idea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main idea should be communicated in a memorable, pithy sentence. • It should be used generously throughout the message. • It can be delivered from the beginning or at the climax of the sermon, depending on the literary form of the passage.
Points (3 – 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pericope should be broken down into three to five sections, and points should be made that complement, not compete with the main idea. • The four persuasive elements should be included in one or several points: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Explanation. Should stay in the preached pericope. b) Persuasion. Should use Keller's A/B method among secular audiences. c) Illustration. Should use pop culture or individual stories among young adults. d) Application. It should be used with judgment. • The body, as a whole, should develop the christocentric focus, either from the beginning (NT) or at the end (OT).
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should recap the subpoints and main idea. • All loose ends should be closed, including personal stories from the beginning. • It should include both immediate and long-term applications. • It should always include the invitation to follow Christ.

Appendix G documents sermon one's preparation process. Appendix H contains sermon one. Appendix I has the feedback of sermon one and sermon six. The feedback was provided by John Brunt, retired Dean of the School of Theology and professor of homiletics at Walla Walla University.

Permissions

Firstly, IRB approval was sought during DMIN 841 (see approval in the back matter). After it was obtained, permissions from the Washington Conference, elders from Refuge and Triumph, and the researcher's mentor were obtained (Appendix A).

There is a unique phenomenon in Northwest churches during summer: attendance fluctuates highly. People choose to spend time outdoors or travel during the few months of

pleasant weather. The researcher chose to start the intervention right after the end of DMIN 841 (technically, during the Spring 2023 D-term). For that to be possible, the IRB approval was obtained early during DMIN 841 and the two subsequent approvals the week after that (by Feb 17, 2023). With the permission of the mentor, the series ran from March 18th to May 6th of 2023, between DMIN 841 and DMIN 881.

Participants, Promotion, and Recruitment

Any young adult (defined as individuals between eighteen to forty years old), a member of Refuge or Triumph, was eligible to enroll in the intervention. Minors who showed interest were unable to enter. People above forty could listen to the sermons and use the devotional materials, as they usually do, but they were not able to formally enter the study.

Participation involved at least two things, and for some, a third one:

- 1) To fill out a worldview questionnaire before and after the series (Appendix E). The next section includes further details.
- 2) To provide weekly attestation and feedback on the sermon (Appendix D).
- 3) For some, a semi-structured online interview before and after the series (Appendix F) is recommended.

The intervention was promoted four weeks before it started. The recruiting happened during the announcements, in the churches' weekly services, as well as the church' chat groups (Appendix B). In these announcements, potential participants were asked to reach out to the researcher if they were interested. He had a short interview with those people to ensure they were qualified and committed.

After the one-to-one screening, the researcher asked them to sign a consent form (Appendix C). The consent form specified that no one was forced to participate. He also

mentioned that all their answers were to be kept private and that neither their responses nor dropping from the study would have negative consequences for the church or the pastor (the researcher). The researcher highlighted those items orally in case the interested individuals did not read the consent form with enough care. If the researcher noticed a higher level of reliability in some, he also asked them to be part of the online interview.

Worldview Instrument

The instrument used to evaluate the participants' worldview was adapted to the needs of Adventist theology. It started from the Summit Ministries' instrument,²¹ which is standard in worldview evaluation,²² and has influenced the nationwide worldview survey by Barna.²³

Summit's instrument could not be used in the current form, though, for it confuses the definition of "biblical worldview" with "Baptist worldview." As mentioned in Chapter 1, a "biblical worldview" should be generous enough to encapsulate all worldviews that originate in a serious reading of Scripture. That is a historical-grammatical hermeneutics of the Bible.²⁴ For example, Adventists believe, based on their biblical hermeneutics, in "soul sleep." That means that when someone dies, they do not receive a reward or punishment right away. Instead, they wait until the second coming of Christ for either. According to the Summit instrument, not believing in an immediate reward constitutes a secular/postmodern view. Hence, an adaptation of

²¹ "Worldview Checkup," accessed November 28, 2022, <https://www.summit.org/individual-worldview-checkup/>.

²² Leafe, "Maintaining a Biblical Worldview...", 173.

²³ "Competing Worldviews Influence Today's Christians," May 9, 2017, <https://www.barna.com/research/competing-worldviews-influence-todays-christians/>. The article highlights the participation of Summit Ministries.

²⁴ "It is part of the foundational conviction of Protestant and Seventh-day Adventist hermeneutics that the literary meaning of holy Scripture can be understood through a careful study of the historical-grammatical meaning of the biblical text." Hasel, "Elements of Biblical Hermeneutics in Harmony with Scripture's Self-Claims," 44-45.

their instrument was required. Modifications were made following the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists' (NAD) theological questions for ministers in 2022.²⁵ For the full instrument, see Appendix E.

Implementation of the Intervention Design

This section documents the implementation of the intervention, starting with the data that was gathered, followed by the narration of the execution, the people who took part, and their level of involvement.

Data Gathering

Following Sensing,²⁶ the researcher had an insider, outsider, and researcher data gathering. The data points were:

- 1) Insider:
 - a. Worldview questionnaire, before and after the intervention, from all participants. There were eighteen questions on worldview, plus four more on statistical data. Microsoft Forms was used to collect them.
 - b. Weekly attestation from all participants. The number of questions (excluding attestation) ranged from three to six. Microsoft Forms was used.
 - c. Transcripts from online interviews with ten participants before and after the intervention. Zoom was used for recordings and transcripts.
- 2) Researcher:
 - a. Journal entries from the sermon preparation process.

²⁵ <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NAD-ICM>.

²⁶ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 74.

- b. Field notes²⁷ from Sabbath, about the sermon delivery and feedback received on the day of the service.
 - c. Field notes from informal interactions with the participants during the week.
- 3) Outsider:
- a. An expert on expository preaching provided written feedback on two of the sermons to evaluate content and delivery. This person must have had a Ph.D., been an Adventist, and been an expert on preaching. Doctor John Brunt, former Dean of the School of Theology at Walla Walla University, agreed to fill this role. He attended sermons one and six. His feedback is in Appendix I.

Implementation Details

The promotion of the series officially launched on February 18th at both churches. Basic screening was performed by the researcher the week after, and thirty-eight people signed up. All interested people signed the consent form. Two weeks prior to the series, the initial worldview questionnaire was sent to all participants. Only twenty-nine participants filled it out, so that was the actual participation pool. Eight individuals were from Triumph, and twenty-one from Refuge. From that group, eleven agreed to be in the online interviews: five from Triumph and six from Refuge.

In the four weeks prior to the series, the researcher focused on studying worldview and biblical theology literature, as well as the eight selected pericopes. He also reached out to Dr. Brunt to secure his feedback on at least two sermons.

²⁷ Sensing makes the difference between journal notes, which are about the researcher's insights, and field notes, which capture details of what took place. Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 181.

The series was delivered at Refuge and Triumph from March 18th to May 6th of 2023. The researcher attended Refuge early in the morning for their main service at 11:00 a.m. He preached the sermon there and went to Triumph right after that. The two churches are thirty-five miles apart, so the commute was from forty to sixty minutes long. The Triumph leadership was kind enough to start their service an hour late (12:00 p.m.). Even so, the researcher made it just in time to preach the sermon. In one instance, on April 29th, there was a traffic jam in Seattle, so the researcher was not able to arrive on time to Triumph. To mitigate that, the researcher shared the link to the Refuge livestream so the Triumph people participating in the study could watch it later.

Week to week, the participants listened to the sermon, either in-person or online (from the Refuge livestream feed), attested to their attendance, and provided feedback on the sermon. Days before Saturday, the researcher programmed an email to be sent right after each service with the link to the attestation form. The original plan was for the participants to fill it out during the weekend. However, since week one, it was clear that the deadline should be extended to give more time. The researcher extended it by two days, until Tuesday night. Even then, the number of people who filled it out decreased as the weeks went by. The researcher kept a matrix with attestations from each participant and a log of physical attendance to both worship services. In some instances, the researcher marked some participants as present from his attendance logs, even though the individuals did not fill out their forms themselves.

The final sermon was delivered at Refuge only as part of their fifth anniversary and celebration as a full-sized church. Triumph was invited to join this special event. By the end of the series, there were three dropouts, all from Triumph. The final number of participants was twenty-six individuals: five from Triumph and twenty-one from Refuge. There were ten online

interviews: four from Triumph and six from Refuge. The Christian practice, age, and engagement with Adventist education were diverse among all twenty-six participants. The data obtained through all channels is evaluated in the next chapter.

Table 3.3. Timeline of Implementation

Activity	Timeline
1. Curriculum design	Fall 2022
2. IRB submission and approval.	Jan 16 - Feb 10, 2023
3. Submission and approval from Washington Conference, Refuge, and Triumph leadership.	Feb 10 – 17, 2023
4. Recruitment started.	Feb 18, 2023
5. Deadline for individual signup.	March 5, 2023
6. Initial questionnaire & online interview.	Mar 10 – 17, 2023
7. Sermon series delivered.	Mar 18 – May 6, 2023
8. Ending questionnaire & online interview.	May 7 – 17, 2023

Conclusion

This chapter presented the design of the intervention as well as the details of its execution. The process of sermon creation was also detailed. All documentation and samples of the content created are included in Appendices A – J. The evaluation of the intervention, as observed in the twenty-six participants, is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

In this chapter, the quantitative results of the intervention are presented. In the first section, general information about the participants, as well as the expected answers, is described. Next, the results of the intervention are detailed and broken down into five groups: Knowledge, Reality, Humanity and Ethics, Origins and Destiny, and Hope. Lastly, a summary and reflection on the data is laid down.

Participants and Prospects

The results of the intervention must be analyzed in context. Hence, demographic information about the participants follows. Also, the prospects of the data gathered are described, including guidelines for what was considered favorable progress.

Participants

Twenty-six participants were part of the intervention from beginning to end: twenty-one were from Refuge, and five were from Triumph. Most of the individuals were female, as seen in Figure 4.1. The ratio of men to women in both churches is close to 1:1, which means that a lot more women decided to participate. Generally, women are more available to serve and volunteer at both churches, so this comes as no surprise. The risk of having skewed results due to gender homogeneity is mitigated by other factors, as explained below.



Figure 4.1. Participants by Gender

The generational distribution was similar to the gender one. As seen in Figure 4.2, there were seven Gen-Z participants (born between 1997 and 2010) and nineteen millennials (born between 1981 and 1996).¹ However, both churches have a lot fewer centennials, so the pool of participants represents fairly the churches' population. Furthermore, most of the participants were right between the split of Gen-Z and Gen-Y. When divided by age groups, the biggest group fell in ages twenty-six to thirty, as seen in Figure 4.3.

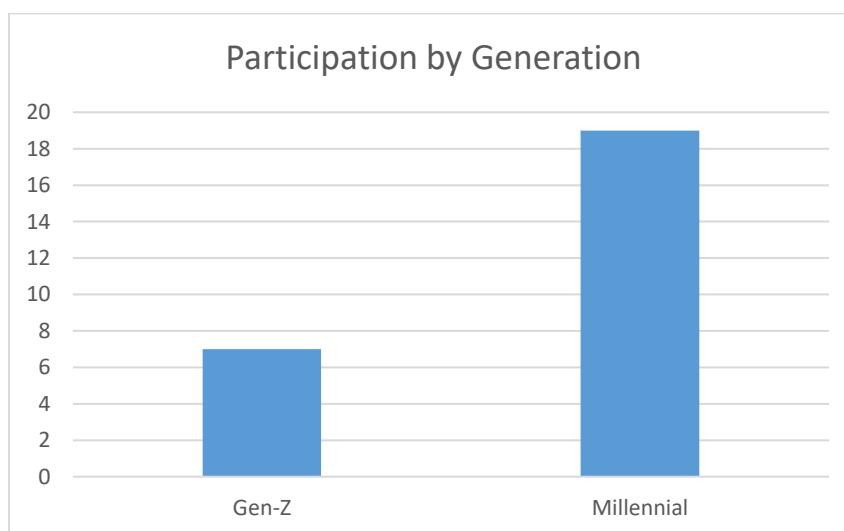


Figure 4.2. Participants by Generation

¹ As described in Chapter 1, the Gen-Z population was further restricted by age: only eighteen-year-olds and up were able to sign up. Same with millennials: only people forty years old or younger were allowed to sign up.

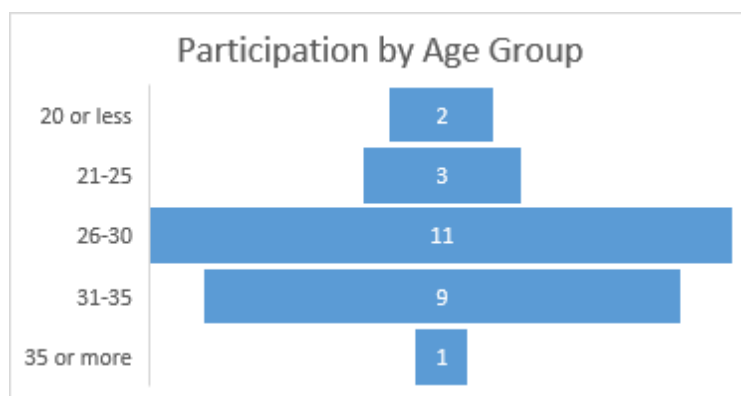


Figure 4.3. Participants by Age Group

As far as Christian background, there were eight people with five years or less of being a Christian or not being Christian at all (Figure 4.4). Those with more than five years in the faith grew up in Adventism. They attended some form of Adventist education (Figure 4.5). Nine of them were part of an Adventist elementary school and eight of an Adventist university or college. Notice that the involvement in Adventist education is not a funnel. There are people who may not have been enrolled in Adventist education as a child but who did attend an Adventist university as an adult.

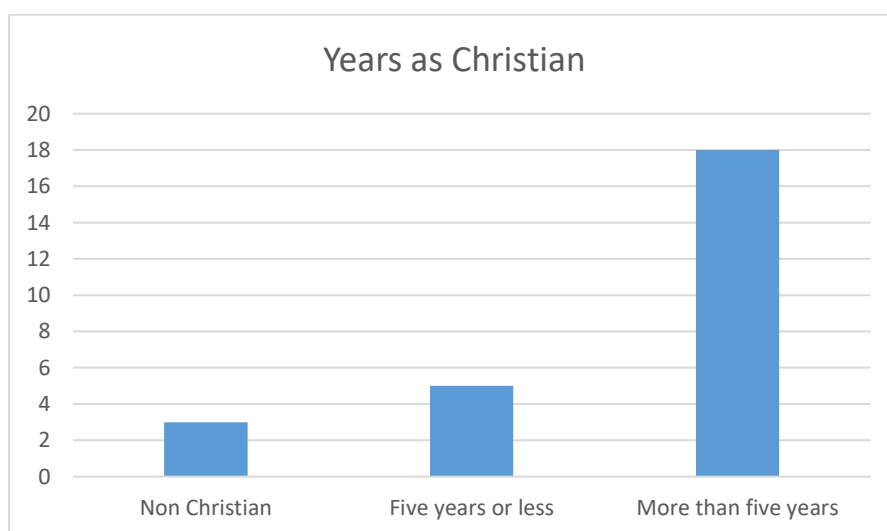


Figure 4.4. Participants by Length of Faith

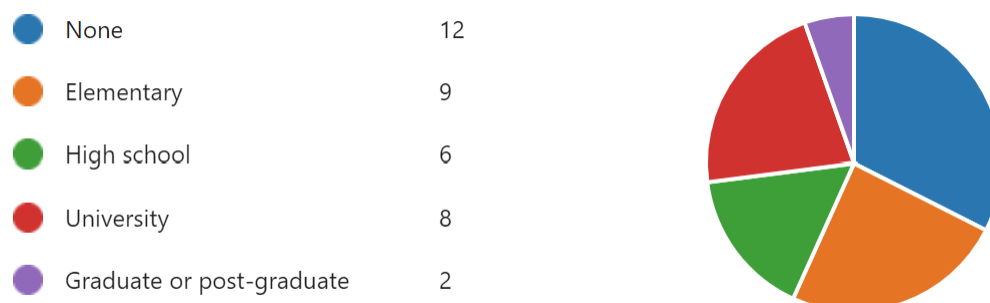


Figure 4.5. Involvement in Adventist Education

The pool of participants was diverse and, except for gender, represented fairly the populations of both Refuge and Triumph. That said, there are a couple of other considerations to keep in mind throughout the analysis of the results. First, there were three non-Christians. They were honest in their responses and were not always persuaded, or even in tune, with the sermons. Their experience is valuable to understand the impact of preaching in the minds of nonbelievers. This group of people will be called Group A for the rest of the chapter. Second, one of the participants, who is one year old in the faith, started strong. However, based on the second sermon, they went through a deconstruction process that made them distance themselves from their faith and congregation. This individual will be called Group B for the rest of the chapter.

Prospects

The tools used had the primary purpose of gathering information, not of evaluating the participants. As such, there are no “right” or “wrong” answers. The research did have expectations of participants adopting a biblical worldview. Even then, there were cases where more than one answer could be interpreted as that. Here are the prospects of data gathered on the three main tools:

- 1) Semi-structured online interviews. Performed by ten participants. The questions here were intended to explore the motivations and implicit narrative of the lives of the individuals. Responses from this tool are included in this chapter when useful.
- 2) Weekly attestation form. Performed by most of the participants in any given week. Its main goal was to confirm the individual heard the sermon, either in-person or online. There were also comprehension questions, like: “What was the main idea of the sermon?” Responses from this tool are included in this chapter when useful.
- 3) Worldview survey. Performed by all twenty-six participants at the beginning and end of the intervention.² There were two main types of questions on this survey:
 - a. General questions. These questions had one option that best reflected the biblical worldview proposed here. The other options, though, may or may not have been on a scale. Question 1, "What is the basis of truth?" It was thought of as a scale, getting closer or further away from the biblical worldview. But Question 5, "Why is there suffering in the world if God is all good and all powerful?" was not a scale. The four options presented are adopted by different Christian traditions. In these latter cases, it was considered progress when an answer compatible with a biblical worldview was selected (and no degrees or "wrong" were perceived in the opposite case).
 - b. Likert scale. Five Likert scales were included in the survey, one per section. They did have grades of closeness to the biblical worldview used here. Any change to the right (from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”) was considered a positive result of the intervention.

² This excludes the three participants who started but did not finish.

Worldview Results

These are the results of the intervention. They are divided into the five sections of the worldview survey: Knowledge, Reality, Humanity and Ethics, Origins and Destiny, and Hope. Due to the small variations between the pre and post-surveys, just the raw numbers are used.

Knowledge

This section includes epistemology or the source and validity of knowledge. The basis of a biblical epistemology was argued in sermon one. All other sermons assumed that the Bible is the epistemological foundation of a Christian worldview. In the first question, different bases of truth were proposed (Figure 4.6). Most participants started on God; the big difference was "God, through the Bible" or "God, through personal experience." By the end of the intervention, all who started on a self-centered point were moved to start with the Bible. The two people who were unmoved and asserted "there is no truth" before and after were part of Group A.

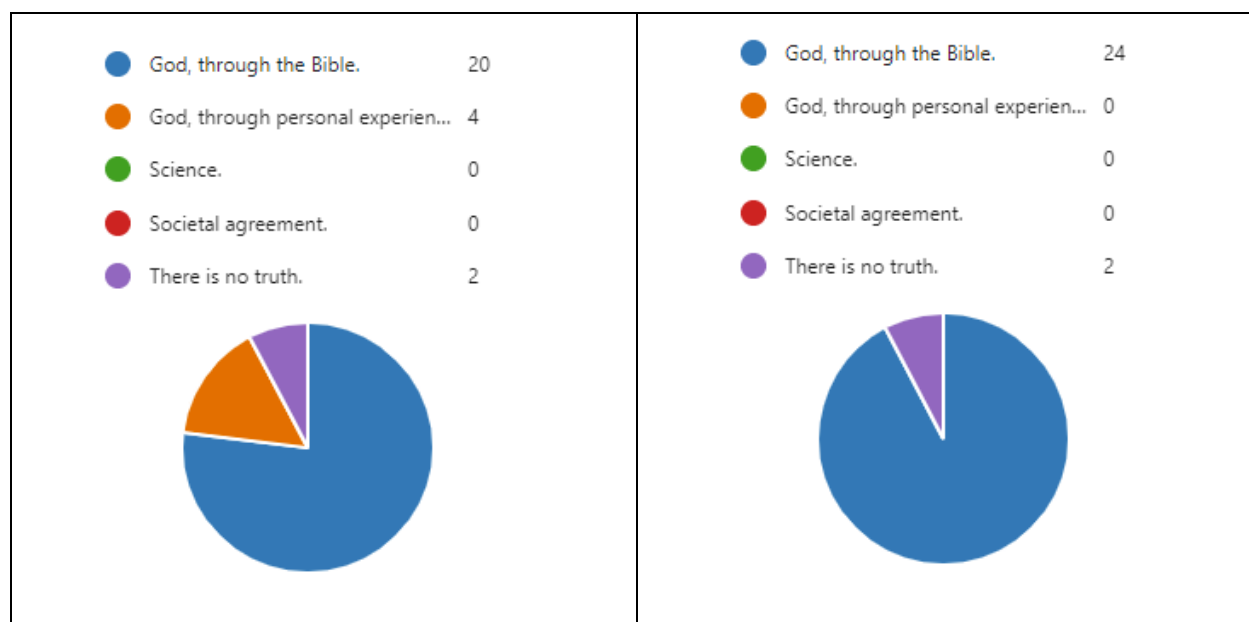


Figure 4.6. What is the Basis of Truth? Before & After

The next question inquired about their view of the Bible. There was also a positive move, though more modest. By the end of the intervention, just one more person came to see the Bible as inspired and (in theological terms) inerrant. Even so, there was progress in Group A. Two of them did not have an opinion about the Bible at the beginning ("I don't know" in Figure 4.7). But by the end, they came to believe that the Bible was inspired, although not to the level of inerrancy. They still see the text as "culturally conditioned, and with scientific and historical errors." One of these individuals shared on the weekly attestation form: "To some extent, I believe the Bible is a great resource, but it has multiple interpretations."³ Although this person is unconvinced about the authority of the Bible, they were able to move from uncertainty to inquiry during the intervention.

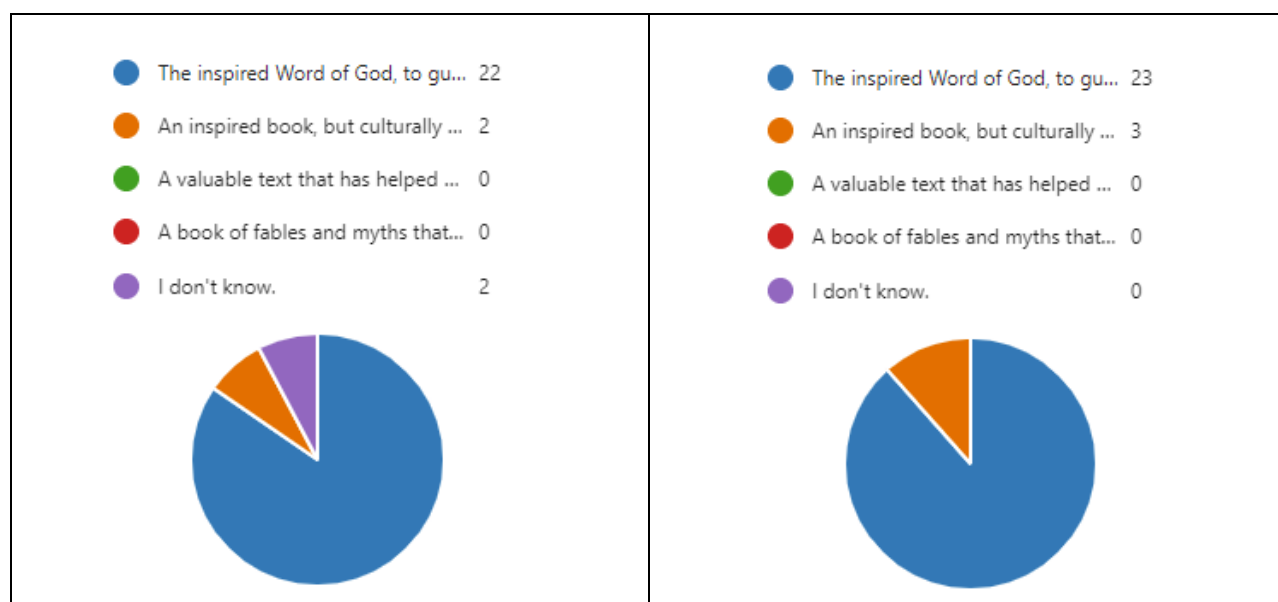


Figure 4.7. Views on the Bible. Before & After

³ The responses from the participants are included verbatim. In some cases, spelling and punctuation are edited for clarity.

The Likert scale presented four questions about the Bible. There was positive movement in all of them, as seen in Figure 4.8. All individuals improved in their view of the Bible and the role it has in their lives. There was an individual who "somewhat disagree[d]" at first but ended up "somewhat agree[ing]" with this statement: "The Bible is to be taken literally." They shared: "The Bible is trustworthy because it is history, the apostles were there to see things happening back then, the prophets are there to make sense of these happenings, and both groups were inspired by God. With faith, trusting the Bible is trusting God." The number of people who decided to take the Bible literally doubled (from nine to eighteen) by the end of the intervention. Also, four people ended up strongly agreeing that the Bible should be the starting point to make sense of the world (from fifteen to nineteen) and that the Bible is the highest authority in their lives (from fourteen to seventeen). The goals of the first sermon were met: the Bible was taken as a historically reliable book that is useful for the present.

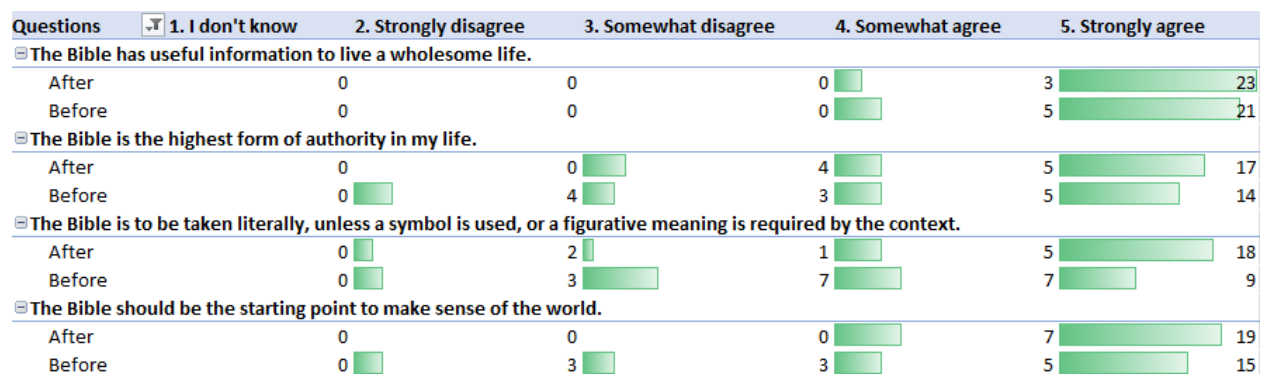


Figure 4.8. Likert Scale on Knowledge. Before & After

Reality

The second section of the survey included metaphysics, with the God of the Bible as the foundation of it and the Great Controversy as its metanarrative. The first question inquired of who God is. At the beginning of the intervention, there were three persons who did not adhere to

the biblical worldview, which is: "The all-powerful, all-knowing, all-good, all-righteous Creator of the universe who rules the world today." By the end of it, there were only two people who did not adhere to it. As it turns out, one of them was Group B. Their case is described below.

Since the second sermon, the researcher noticed that the weekly answers from Group B were out of character with them. Skepticism and confusion were perceived. They did finish the project, but their perception of Christianity and God had regressed. At the last online interview, they revealed the reason for their confusing answers: an idea heard in the second sermon disturbed their faith. Monism, preached in the Creation sermon, sounded foreign to the anthropological assumptions of this person, who was new in the faith. At that moment, they started a deconstruction path, questioning or being skeptical of all Bible interpretations. They came to believe misinformation about the corruption of the biblical text. To the question "I believe God is," this person answered, "A higher power that may exist, but nobody really knows for certain" on the last survey.

Group B has a promising story. After follow-up conversations with the researcher, they came to settle on their personal worldview and are still a member of the church. That part of the story is beyond the project thesis and is not included in the data gathered here.

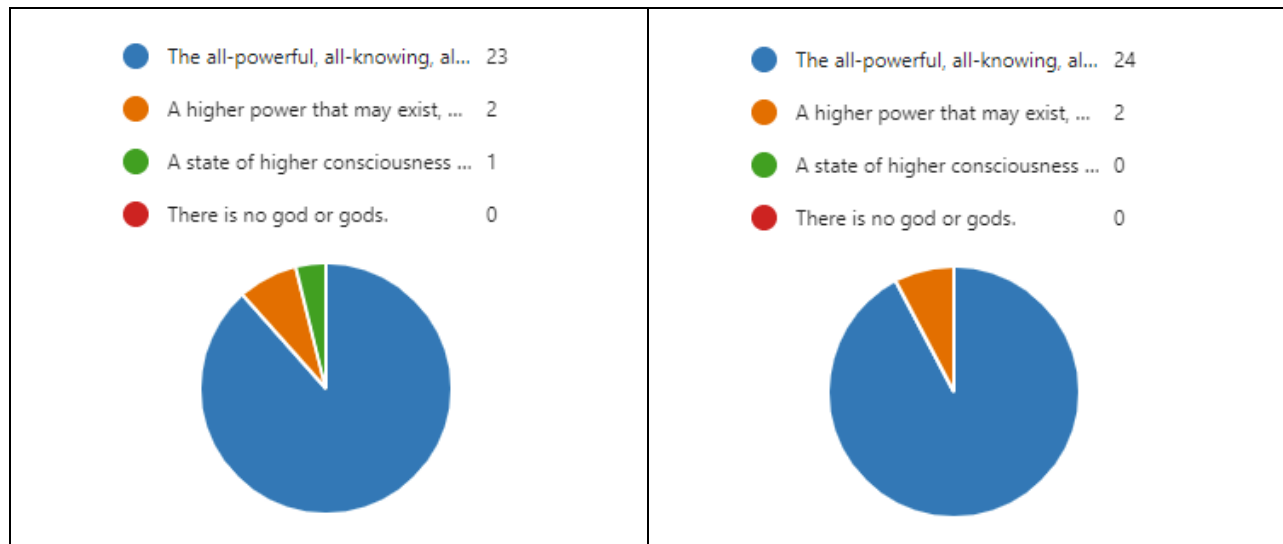


Figure 4.9. Who is God? Before & After

The next question in this section was regarding theodicies: "Why is there suffering in the world if God is all good and all powerful?" All presented options are defended by different Christian traditions. To that extent, all of them can be considered part of a biblical worldview. The option argued in this project thesis, though, is the Great Controversy, as is known in Adventism. This theodicy was received with enthusiasm by most participants. It was a novelty even to those who grew up in an Adventist context. It was warmly welcomed since it was presented strictly from the text (Gen 3). About this theodicy, a participant said: "I agree with the message because I always thought it was a little weird that suffering was often used as being a part of God's plan in our life." Another participant shared: "Evil began with putting God into question. It has since been a battle of ideas. God must demonstrate evil and sin for what it is.... I knew about the great controversy as a battle between good and evil but never framed as a battle of ideas." As seen in Figure 4.10, most of the participants were persuaded, or already believed, in the Great Controversy's conception of evil: that it is independent of God, that it originated in a rogue angelic being, and that it can be redeemed by God.

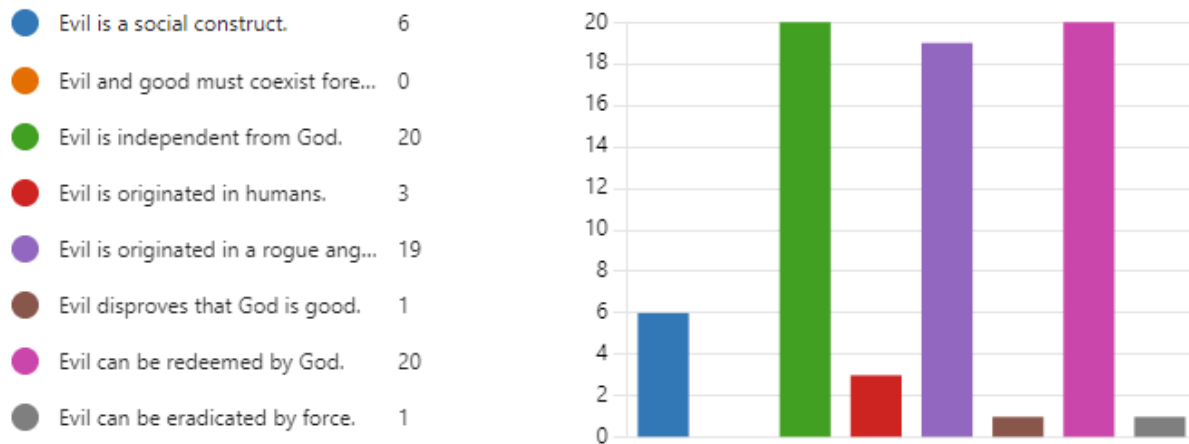


Figure 4.10. Beliefs About Evil After Sermon Three

Even though the "theodicy of love" was well-received by most participants during the third sermon and repeated for the rest of the intervention, it did not have a definitive effect on the participants. The Great Controversy was espoused by eight participants at the beginning and only by 50 percent more at the end, as observed in Figure 4.11. The majority still held the common Christian theodicy (that evil exists due to human beings' selfish actions), which is not incorrect but overlooks the spiritual realm.

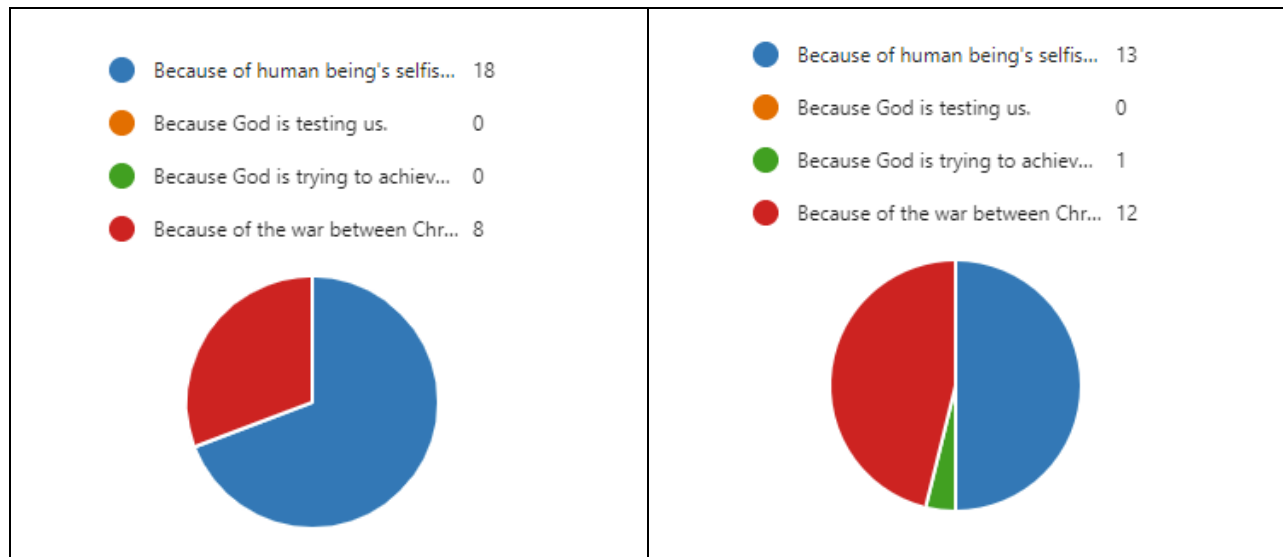


Figure 4.11. Theodicies. Before & After

The results of the Likert scale from this section are omitted. Since the start of the intervention, most answers were “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree.” Hence, it was hard to achieve progress. To see the questions, see Appendix E.

Humanity and Ethics

This section included anthropology and ethics. They were put together since both community and command met in church. The topic of church was then included in this section as well. The first question was about the nature of human beings. According to the biblical theology used, a person does not have a soul but is a soul. A person is an irreducible combination of body and the breath of life. A person does not possess an immaterial soul that can survive without the body. That view was the majority's at the beginning, with twenty responses. Yet, after preaching about it in sermon two from the Creation account, there were four more that were convinced. The two individuals who were not persuaded, as seen in Figure 4.12, belonged to Group A or Group B.

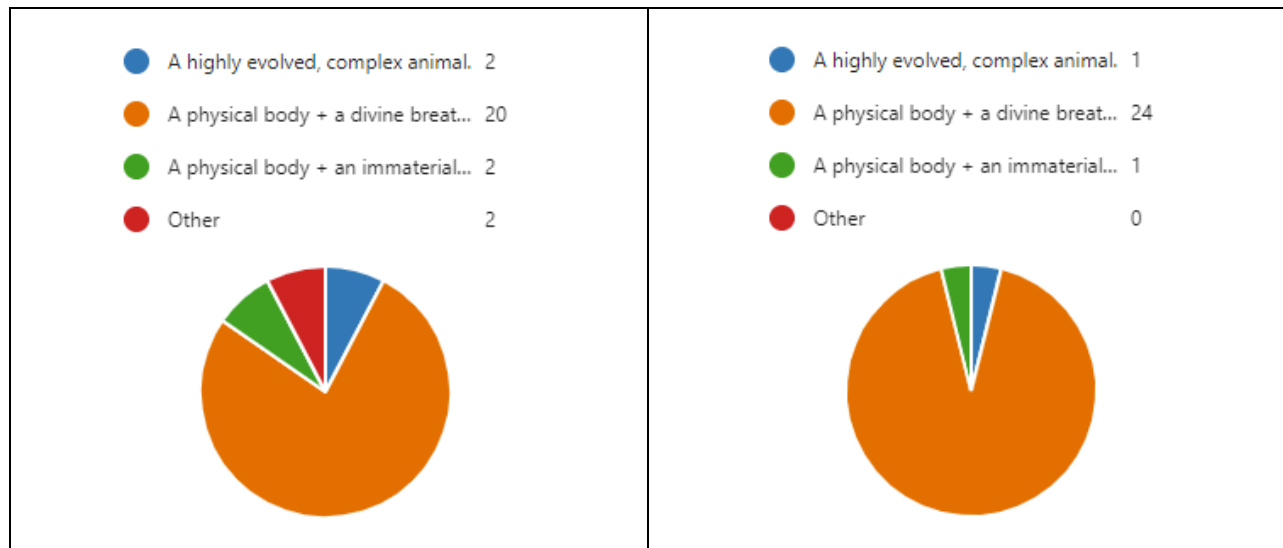


Figure 4.12. What is a Human Being? Before & After

The next question, on human nature, had a surprising movement. Original sin is a tenet of almost all forms of Christianity and definitively part of a biblical worldview. People who believe that human beings are "basically good" use presuppositions outside of the Bible. That is why it is remarkable that the direction of this question (Figure 4.13) went towards people being "basically good." This shows that the participants were developing authentic opinions and were not only seeking to help the researcher.

Here are some possibilities that may explain this change. Out of the four individuals who went from "basically bad" to "basically good," three have been SDA for more than five years. In Adventism, original sin is preached regularly, whereas the concept of *Imago Dei* is not so much. A possibility is that when these three individuals heard the innate dignity of humankind, as preached in sermon two, they may have extrapolated it into innate goodness. A few comments from the second weekly attestation form may show that. One participant commented: "I agree that every person is created in the image of God and should be respected regardless of the categories that we might identify with."

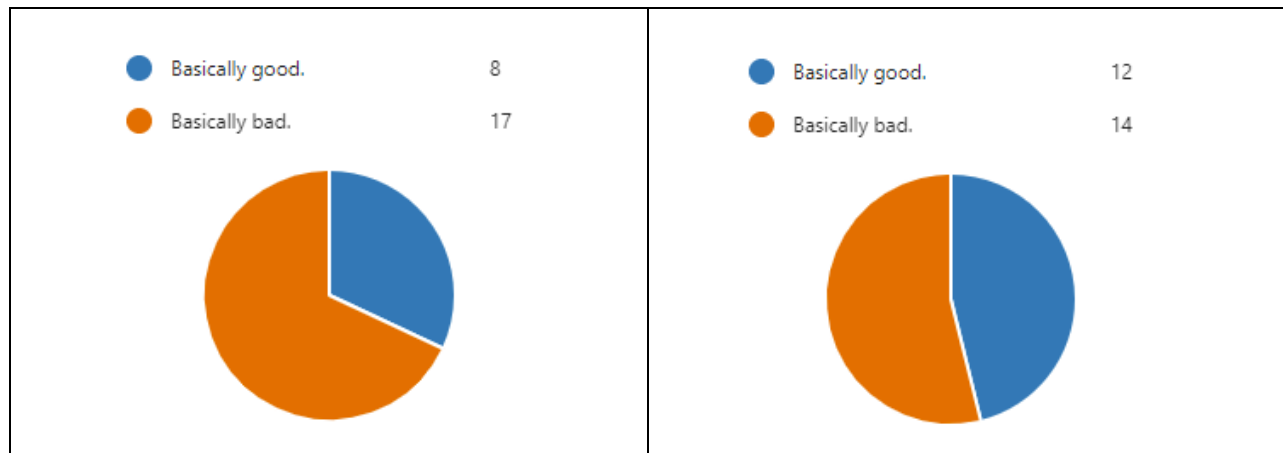


Figure 4.13. Human Nature. Before & After

The Likert scale in this section was geared towards belonging to a church. They all saw positive change. Sermons six and seven were devoted to exploring the church community (sermon six, from Eph 4) and the task of the church in the Great Controversy (sermon seven, from Rev 12). Related to the first two questions in Figure 4.14, a participant commented: "I have found a great community in Refuge and in any church I have attended as well. From Refuge I think Kenneth does a great work on making everyone feel welcome and that helps to build a stronger community. I also see a lot of people helping in church while also doing the things they like, cooking, singing, on audio." Five more people came to believe that serving and belonging to a church community is the best way of doing life.

The third question in the scale was geared towards the SDA church. It should be noted that the denomination was not explicitly mentioned in these two sermons. That is why, at the end of the series, there were still three "I don't know" responses to the question "the SDA church is the closest to the biblical truth." Two out of those three were from Group A. However, given the fact that the ideas in the sermon series were expounded strictly from the Bible, the rest of the participants came to reconcile the views of their denomination with the biblical evidence.

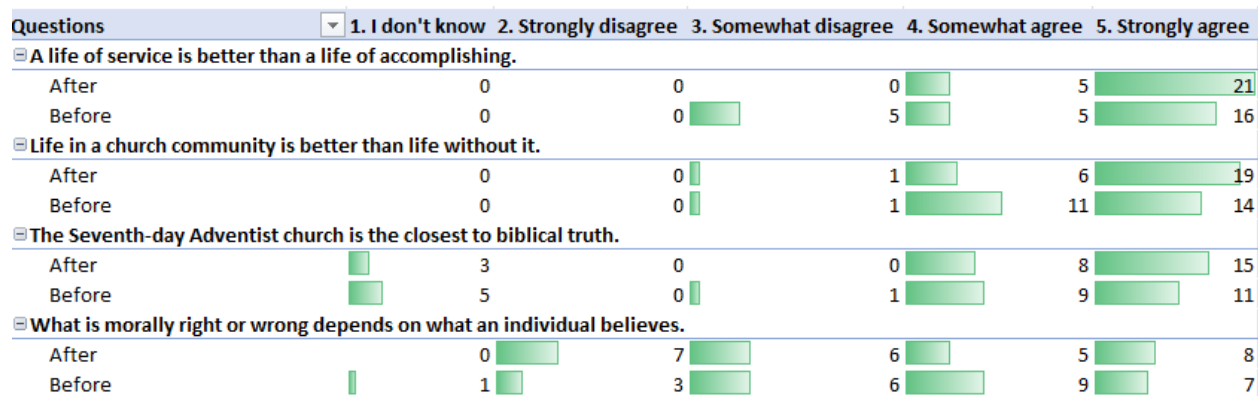


Figure 4.14. Likert Scale on Humanity & Ethics. Before & After

Origins and Destiny

This section included the bookends of the metanarrative. These worldview components move beyond moralistic therapeutic deism and compel the adoption of specific beliefs and ideas that are against the current Zeitgeist. The first question in the section was on the origin of the world (Figure 4.15). The options given were standard theories without the technical titles:

- 1) Young-earth creationism.
- 2) Old-earth creationism.
- 3) Theistic evolution.
- 4) Atheistic evolution.
- 5) Other.

According to the biblical theology used in the intervention, the first two options were equally acceptable. At the beginning of the project, only ten people espoused the first option. That improved by 80 percent, with eighteen people holding that position at the end. Also, options three and four were almost completely abandoned. This change can be traced back to the second sermon, which was the exposition of Genesis 1:1-2:4.

These results provide evidence that the audience can follow the text instead of the preacher. Most people ended up believing in the first option (young-earth creationism) even though, for reasons beyond the current scope, the researcher holds the second one (old-earth creationism). The preacher was careful to just expound the text and not his personal views.

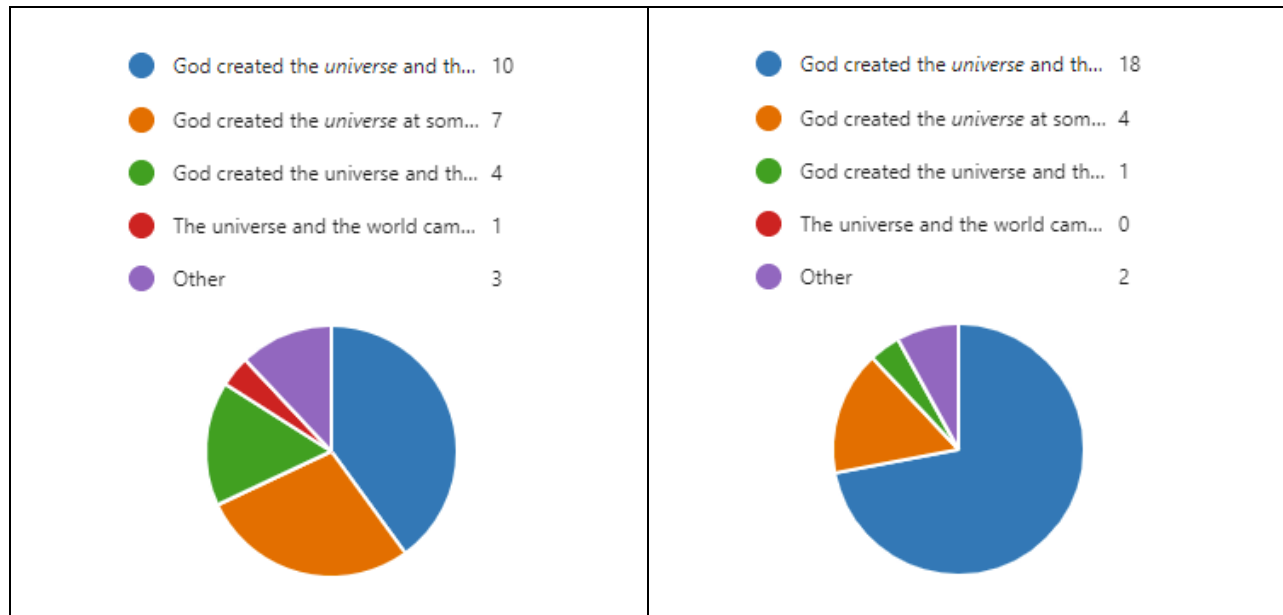


Figure 4.15. Origins of the World. Before & After

The second question is another case study. According to the intervention's biblical theology, there is no conscious state of the dead. A biblical case can be made for "soul sleep." Twenty people believed that at the beginning, but the count decreased to eighteen by the end. Now, the movers did not go towards heaven/hell (the common Christian belief), reincarnation, or universalism. The changes in opinion were towards: "they cease to exist forever" and to "other." Based on the second online interview, there may be two reasons for this change. On the one hand, people came to face the biblical evidence: "in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" (Gen 2:17, ESV) and "for you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Gen 3:19, ESV). That

is why they abandoned other possibilities. Yet, this teaching seemed like a novelty (to them). Hence, they could not accept it at an emotional level. On the other hand, some were disturbed by the idea of unconsciousness during death, and they nuanced their position in a slightly different way (two out of the four "Other" in Figure 4.16).

Despite the decrease in the afterlife view espoused by the researcher, this can still be interpreted as progress. The reason is that the individuals were forced to evaluate their views against the Bible. Even if they did not adopt the presented view or were struggling to accept it, they were looking at the Bible for answers. That is a definitive win for this intervention.



Figure 4.16. Afterlife. Before & After

The Likert scale in this section was mostly eschatological. There was modest progress on the first two questions regarding God being in control of the overall story. A question that had a tepid response was the certainty of the SDA eschatology. Only one more person came to strongly

agree with this (from twelve to thirteen). Again, the denomination was not officially promoted during the sermons, so it is possible that misconceptions about it drove the responses.

The last question did have a considerable increase: the one on new heavens and new earth. The position presented in Revelation 21 was that the destiny of the redeemed is not heaven (God's dwelling) but new heavens and new earth (a renewed planet earth). This view is not unique to Adventism. Both N. T. Wright and Christopher J. H. Wright promote it, as well as other evangelical scholars. Yet, it is virtually unknown among lay members. The series concluded with a sermon on this topic, and it produced a drastic shift in the worldview of several. Some responses from the last attestation form were: "I think the new creation gave me a lot of hope that things will be better. I felt pretty good and excited after the service." Someone else said: "It does [give me hope], because the things we do here on earth will have repercussions in eternity...Resurrection assures our work is not in vain."

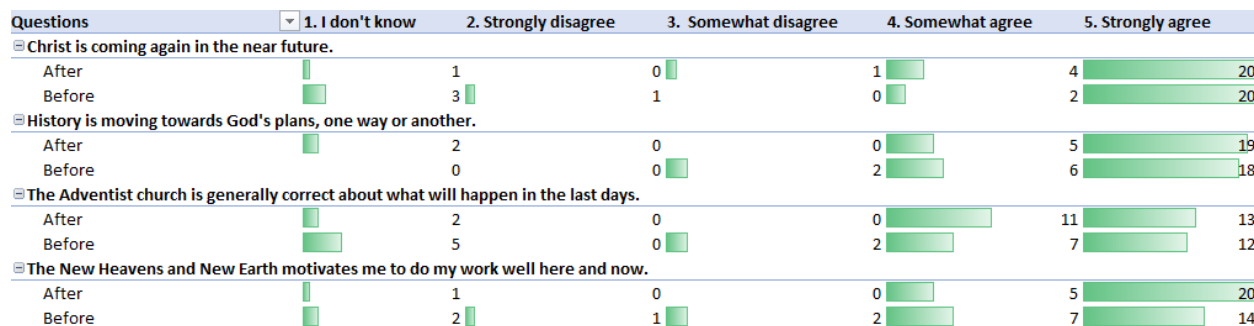


Figure 4.17. Likert Scale on Origins & Destiny. Before & After

Hope

This section included the basics of the gospel: the person and work of Jesus. The non-Likert questions were different from previous ones since many answers could be selected at once. The results of the first question (Figure 4.18) reflect the popular belief of Jesus being a great man, yet less than God. At the beginning of the survey, only sixteen people believed He

was God in the flesh. Surprisingly, only two more came to believe that, despite the christocentric focus on all sermons and the expounding of Philippians 2:6-11 in sermon five. Moreover, twenty-two people believed Him to be the Messiah. Of the remaining four participants, two selected "Is God in the flesh" as the only answer, which could simply mean inattentiveness on their side and believing they could choose only one option. Although this area experienced modest progress, it reveals the current trend of seeing Jesus as a great human being but not God.



Figure 4.18. Jesus' identity. Before & After

The second question was intended to be a summary of the worldview theme. Given all the components discussed in the series, what is the purpose of life? There was a dramatic decrease in the answer "reaching our full potential," which is self-centered. That is progress. Oddly, there was a slight decrease in the first option, too, "knowing and loving God through Christ." The three people who did not select that option at the beginning were all part of Group A. They continued holding that position until the end and were joined by Group B. As mentioned above, Group B went through a regression during the series. This person believed, at the

beginning of the series, that the purpose of life was knowing and loving God. But by the end of it, they believed that life was about "reaching our full potential, whatever a person chooses."

It should be highlighted that all twenty-three/twenty-two believers in the intervention believed life was about knowing and loving God. They sincerely believed that even if they did not have adopted all the elements of a biblical worldview. What this may show is that it is essential to start a discipleship process in a loving relationship with God. If the heart starts there, the mind can be taught the rest of the elements in due time.

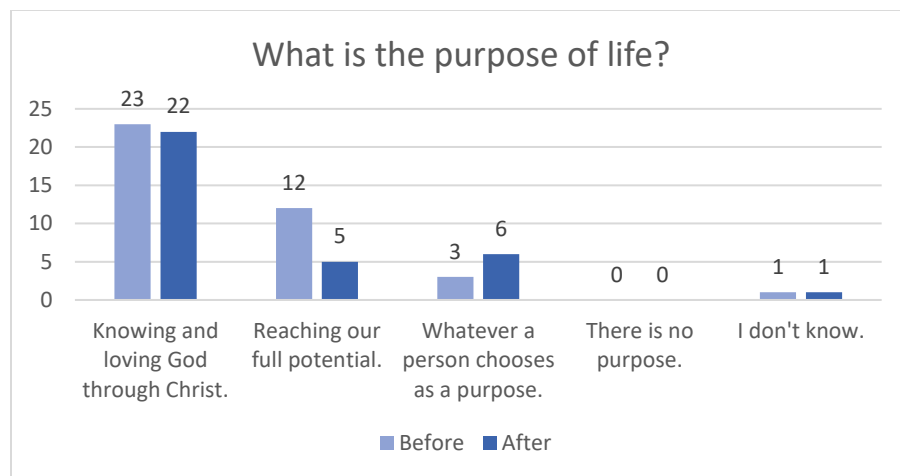


Figure 4.19. Purpose of Life. Before & After

The Likert scale in this section covered the main facts about Jesus, as well as a personal relationship with Him (Figure 4.20). Most people believed that Jesus died an atoning death and literally rose from the dead. Yet, there were many who did not have a meaningful relationship with Him, and up to eleven without assurance of salvation. During the series, the people who felt confident of their salvation moved from fifteen to twenty-one. It is hard to evaluate if someone had a conversion experience. All that can be said is, using the provided answers and comments; there were individuals who moved from distrust to assurance of salvation. The individual who moved from "somewhat disagree" to "strongly agree" commented the following on sermon five

(the sermon on what Jesus accomplished): "Yes, I'm free because he died for me." Another participant who moved up on the Likert scale commented: "Jesus died on the cross for us, and my life is not about me, it is about him."

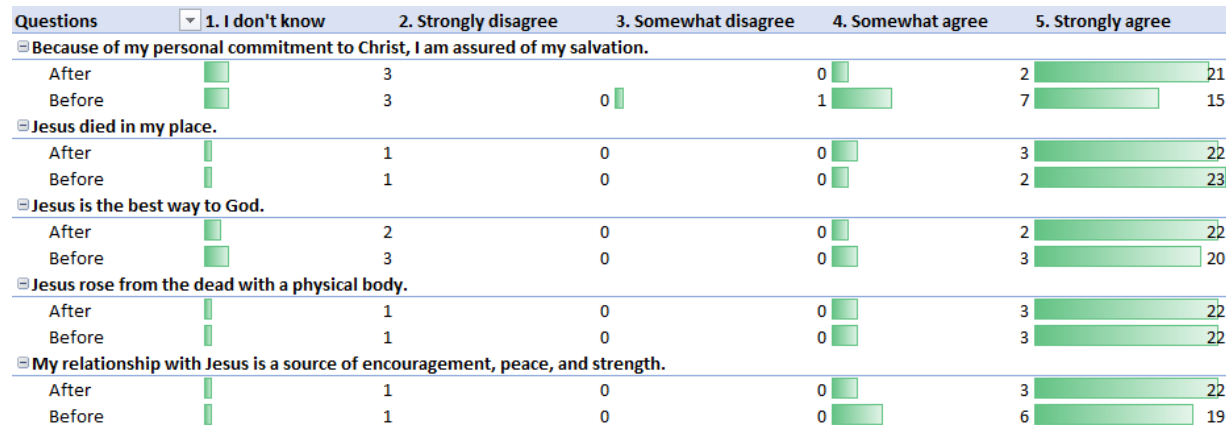


Figure 4.20. Likert Scale on Hope. Before & After

Summary of Results

In Chapter 1, the goal of the thesis was expressed as: "By the end of the series, the participants' worldview should have been moved, by a measurable degree, towards a biblical conception of reality." Using the data gathered and presented in this chapter, it can be concluded that the series achieved its purpose. That said, it is important to differentiate the type of participants. There were three personas in the series, and the impact of expository preaching was different in each one of them.

First, there were committed young adults with a worldview very close to what was presented. For them, the series did not bring new ideas but a reaffirmation of what they already believed. One of the comments in the last survey said: "I think [my worldview] has maintained, as I have held these things to be true." Through the intervention, this person answered all questions with answers that work within the biblical theology presented. For this persona,

expository preaching is not for teaching (new ideas) but for encouraging and strengthening their faith.

Second, the bulk of participants had positive feelings toward Christianity and respect for the Bible. Yet, up to this point, they had not been informed of the components of a biblical worldview. Hence, many of the ideas they held about the world came from extra-biblical sources. These individuals were the most impacted by the series. Some of their comments include:

- “I think minor changes in the way I think about God and heaven has changed.”
- “My worldview has been strengthened that is my faith and identity as a Christian has been reinforced.”
- “My vision of the new heavens and earth has become clearer and that is exciting.”
- “In the last eight weeks, I have noticed that I don't have as much anxiety towards my future. While sometimes I do, at the end, I realize that I no longer have to worry about knowing exactly what career, future job, etc.”

For this group, expository preaching provides the biggest benefit: they learn the biblical truths in their mind and foster love for Christ in their hearts. As they further adopt biblical truths, their day-to-day lives are changed to align with them.

Third, there were people who did not hold the Bible as authoritative, especially people from Group A and Group B. To them, the ideas presented may have been useful but not objectively true. In the next chapter, some thoughts on how to preach to such a persona are suggested. But it is important to notice that even though they treated the Bible in disbelief, the Scriptures did impact them. The online interviews with one of these individuals were enlightening. They had maintained through the series that "there is no truth" in an objective

sense. In the first interview, they expressed disbelief, though they wished they could believe. However, during the last interview, they shared that the last sermon, on new heavens and new earth, had a major impact on them. It forced them to pause what they were doing and go on a walk to ponder the possibility of restoration, to believe the world could have a happy ending. In that last interview, when asked if they had come to believe in God, they said: "I think so."

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

With the results of the project thesis laid down in the previous chapter, its limitations will be specified in this one. Also, the implications and applications of the outcomes will be developed, both at the local level and denominational level. Both contexts have areas of opportunity. At the local level, the researcher continues to be the pastor of Refuge and Triumph, and he still sees the need for further biblical training among his parishioners. At the denominational level, the SDA church in North America continues to look for ways to retain, train, and reach out to the coming generations. After implications and applications, research opportunities for future project theses will be suggested. Finally, a personal reflection to conclude the entire project will be presented.

Research Limitations

After the project thesis was implemented, it was evident that it had certain shortcomings in the methodology, as well as limitations in the execution. The first one was that it was impossible to enforce and verify participation. Out of the twenty-six participants, only three attested by themselves every single week. Ten others were partially attested by the researcher, observing that they were present in the worship service but did not submit the form. The rest, thirteen of them (exactly 50 percent), had at least one missing attestation. That means that they were not present in the worship service and may have, or may have not, watched the sermon online. The researcher made the decision to keep all participants who filled out the beginning and ending worldview assessment, but it is possible that people who answered the second questionnaire did not receive all the content that they were supposed to.

Second, and related to the previous limitation, was the inability to differentiate the effectiveness of in-person versus online watching. In the early stages, the project was designed to distinguish between those two, and a question was added to the attestation form to know if the person watched the sermon in person or online. The idea was to pivot the data by that variable and to answer the question: "Is it more effective to listen to a sermon in person than online?" However, the idea was rescinded later in the design. Even if that data point was gathered, it would be hard to make definitive conclusions: Was the person really paying attention while being in person, or were they distracted? Was the person multitasking while watching online, or were they focused? Did the person who was in-person also watch online, or did the person who watched online do so more than once? Due to all these possibilities, the researcher decided not to analyze this question as part of the project. It is then unknown if people who occasionally attended online were at a disadvantage compared to those who were present all the time.

Third, the researcher attempted to digitally deliver the slides to a subset of participants using Proclaim software. The idea behind it was to learn if individuals with slides at hand would grasp more of the sermon. However, due to variables like those in the previous point, it was decided that no conclusive information could be gathered. Although the slides were sent to a subset of people on Saturday mornings, no analysis was performed when the series finished.

Late in the intervention, the researcher discovered the capability of creating fill-in-the-blank handouts in Logos software, which can be printed and delivered to the in-person participants. The researcher created one of those for the very last sermon, as observed in Appendix K. Such fill-in-the-blank notes could have been used to effectively differentiate in-person vs online participation. If these notes were handed out in the physical service and asked to be returned at the end of it, there would be data to evaluate individuals that were in-person,

engaged, and listened only once versus all other combinations (in-person but not engaged [no notes returned], listened again at home, online watching only, etc.) The usage of these fill-in-the-blank handouts would be a promising area for further research.

Fourth, as observed in the online interviews, there were external factors that may have affected the development of a biblical worldview. The following influences were explicitly mentioned in the semi-structured online interviews: long conversations with other participants, social media usage, and sermons from other pastors. Of course, a worldview is not developed only in a worship service but at all times and in all places. With the current methodology, it is impossible to clearly distinguish how much the sermons helped in the evolution of the individual's worldview and how much was due to other influences in the same period of time.

Lastly, an eight-week period is standard in this type of project thesis. But as documented by Page,¹ eight weeks is a small amount of time to cover a broad range of topics. Leafé also concluded that eight weeks is not enough to communicate a full biblical worldview. Longer curriculums should be created to dive deeper into worldview studies.² In the current implementation, the worldview changes were small and not measurable in all instances.

Research Implications

As detailed in Chapter 4, the participants of this action research project moved their worldviews toward a biblical one. It is safe to conclude that expository preaching does impact the worldview of young adults. A few more implications can be drawn from this project. First, the exposition of Scripture is useful not only to develop a worldview but to communicate biblical truths in general. Expository preaching could be used to teach wholesome living, interpersonal

¹ Page, "Increasing the Biblical Literacy...", 101.

² Leafé, "Maintaining a Biblical Worldview...", 127.

relationships, living out one's faith, and other topics. Also, *lectio continua*, which is a legitimate form of expository preaching, should continue at Refuge and be attempted at Triumph. In contexts like these, like SDA church plants or SDA churches with a high concentration of young adults, the adoption of expository preaching is warranted.

Second, for young adults to consider the claims of Christianity, appeals to Scripture are more favorable than appeals to a denomination or tradition. As has been documented, millennials and centennials do not work well with hierarchies.³ As explored by Barna, the Christian practice that appeals to a human institution, being a local church, a denomination, or a nation, may start a deconstruction process in today's believers.⁴ Based on the results of this project thesis, if the Bible is presented as what it is, the Word of God, and all arguments are derived from it, young adults may be more likely to adopt a biblical worldview.

Third, it can be argued that for expository preaching to be effective, the young adult listener has to have an established relationship with the expositor. That could be deducted from the fact that only five of the participants were from Triumph, whereas twenty-one were from Refuge. At the time of the implementation, Refuge was only twice as big as Triumph (and three times as big by the time of the defense of the project thesis), so the ratio of participation does not represent the size of the membership. A factor that may have impacted was that the researcher had pastored Refuge considerably more time, so people there were more likely to sign up for the intervention. A recent study by Barna suggests that among committed young Christians, having

³ Michelle Louie et al., "Mentoring Millennials in Surgical Education," *Wolters Kluger Health* 31, no. 4 (2019):279-284. They say, for example, "millennials prefer team-based learning and a flat hierarchy."

⁴ Barna Group, "Doubt & Faith: Top Reasons People Question Christianity," March 1, 2023, <https://www.barna.com/research/doubt-faith/>.

meaningful relationships in their local context was the key factor in developing their own faith. Such relationships could be with parents, other adults, the local church, or a mentor.⁵

This project thesis is not about mentorship, and it has no data other than anecdotal evidence. That said, it appears to the researcher that the individuals who were closer to him prior to the study were more consistent in their participation. That does not mean that if a young adult has a mentor, they will believe what their mentor believes. What it may mean is that if a young adult has a meaningful relationship with an adult, it is more likely that they take their commitment to that mentor seriously. As young adults attend regular meetups with their mentors (in one-on-one settings, small groups, or sermons), it will be up to the mentors to use those opportunities to communicate a biblical worldview. Hence, part of the job of an effective expositor is to develop relationships with his or her congregation.

Fourth, it was observed that young adult Christians want to believe in Scripture. One reason why they are not able to grow in their biblical knowledge is that they do not have the tools to study it for themselves. They may find certain sections hard to understand or apply. They may be shocked by the most sordid stories, especially from the Old Testament. For many participants in the intervention, this was the first time they were able to see the Bible as a unified book. By providing them with a metanarrative that connects the entire canon, they were able to see the big picture. Hopefully, they can use the fixed points of *Heilsgeschichte* to contextualize their own future study. Hence, a curriculum that explains in lay terms how to interpret the Bible

⁵ Barna Group, “Strong Relationships Within Church Add to Resilient Faith in Young Adults,” August 26, 2020, <https://www.barna.com/research/relationships-build-resilient-faith/>.

as a unity should be prepared by an Adventist author. Tools for exegesis, biblical theology, and guidelines for contemporary applications should be part of such volume.⁶

Research Applications

The following are aspects of the project thesis that could be used in other church settings or at the denominational level. The proposals are on all different aspects impacted by the project.

Adventist Theology

In Adventist biblical theology, the Great Controversy is the unifying thread of the "grand story." The accusations of Satan against God and the vindication of His character before the universe are what drive the story from Genesis 3 to Revelation 20. This theme has been attacked by critics.⁷ Sometimes, Adventists themselves have rejected it.⁸ It could be argued that the official exposition of the Great Controversy, published by the GC ministerial department, treats the theme in a shallow way. It does not provide enough academic support, and it does not highlight its potential as the meta-narrative of the overall theological system.⁹

Yet it is the Great Controversy that can be the most effective in communicating Adventist biblical theology, as it is able to encapsulate the system in a coherent story. Adventist scholars have realized that in the last few decades. Recently, the Great Controversy has been redefined

⁶ Historically, SDA publications have focused on systematic theology, apocalyptic literature, and a handful of other biblical themes. The researcher could not find a recent publication on Hermeneutics or biblical theology for laypeople. A recent publication, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, by the Bible Research Institute, is a comprehensive volume but is targeted to scholars and academics.

⁷ "Seventh-day Adventism" retrieved October 5, 2023, <https://www.catholic.com/tract/seventh-day-adventism>.

⁸ Matthew Quartey, "Are Other Worlds Watching Us?" August 17, 2023, <https://spectrummagazine.org/views/2023/are-other-worlds-watching-us-ellen-white-and-earthly-evil>.

⁹ See *Seventh-day Adventist Believe*, 113-120. The chapter is among the shortest in the book, being only eight pages long and having only three references.

and recast in Adventism. Peckham has presented the most compelling vision of it from a philosophical and worldview perspective.¹⁰ Gulley has laid down a case with a strong academic and biblical basis.¹¹ Both draw support from the greater evangelical world, like from Heiser's *The Unseen Realm* or Boyd's *God at War*. Gibson and Asscherick, top apologists in the denomination, use a similar approach in their Arise courses.¹² A decisive characteristic that they all share is that they keep the main idea of the Great Controversy, yet they avoid filling out all the eschatological details, which may be a weakness for today's Adventism.

This biblically-sound recasting of the Great Controversy can turn into the best asset of Adventist theology. As described in Chapter 4, the Great Controversy was one of the most surprising discoveries by the participants. Some of the longest comments on the attestation form came from that pericope (sermon three). Adventist churches may benefit by re-learning the Great Controversy from a biblical perspective, leaving behind the minutia suggested by the pioneers, and leveraging it to communicate the story of the Bible as a whole.

At the scholar level, Adventists have proposed different unifying themes for an Adventist biblical theology. Gerhard F. Hasel proposed a multiplex approach without a monolithic center,¹³ whereas Richard M. Davidson recently proposed the heavenly sanctuary as the controlling theme.¹⁴ Contemporary Adventist scholars have not come to an agreement on what the

¹⁰ See Peckham, *Theodicy of Love*.

¹¹ See Gulley, *Systematic Theology: Prolegomena*, 387-453.

¹² See "Arise 2023 Student Handbook."

¹³ Gerhard F. Hasel, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate, Fourth Edition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 113. His methodology is assessed by Goldsworthy. See Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology*, 101-104.

¹⁴ Richard M. Davidson, *A Song for the Sanctuary: Experiencing God's Presence in Shadow and Reality* (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2022), 6-11. Richardson does give prominence to the Great Controversy, but within his heavenly sanctuary system, 19-46.

metanarrative of Scripture is.¹⁵ While their work is valuable and enriching for understanding Scripture, this project thesis suggests that a compelling approach for the layperson, at an emotional, intellectual, and existential level, is the Great Controversy.

Expository Preaching in Adventism

Expository preaching is effective, as observed in this and other project theses. More importantly, it is the best alternative to teaching the Bible in its original context. Generally speaking, expository preaching has been supported by Adventist academics since H.M.S Richards.¹⁶ However, it has not gained the support of many local pastors or lay leaders. Hence, a strategy should be devised by Adventist Conferences and Unions to adopt expository preaching, including *lectio continua*, in the local congregations. This is even more important in young adult ministries, like university churches. Although it may be tempting to minister to young adults with other mechanisms, including felt-need curriculums, contemporary topics, or reader-response methodologies, this action research project shows that young adults respond positively to expository teaching.

The action research project also suggests that a key advantage of expository preaching is not in the atomic sermon but in the continuous exposition of Scripture that builds up into an all-encompassing worldview. If a single idea is delivered in one sermon, that means that in a three-month series, more than ten ideas will be communicated. If they are part of a series, those ten ideas will be inter-related and strengthen each other. As they settle, these ideas have the potential

¹⁵ See Frank. M. Hasel, “Recent Trends in Methods of Biblical Interpretation,” in *Biblical Hermeneutics: An Adventist Approach*, ed. Frank M. Hasel (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2022), 449-461. Hasel documents different proposals by Adventists and Evangelical scholars in the last few decades.

¹⁶ For example, see Judson Lake, “Expository Sermon Preparation,” October 1, 2005, <https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/expository-sermon-preparation/>.

to transform the entire mindset of the individual. In the long term, that is how the mind is renewed (Rom 12:2), and a biblical worldview is shaped. At the practical level, expository sermons should be developed with the entire series in mind instead of independent units and should focus on communicating a single idea well, trusting that the long-term process will produce more lasting results than any single sermon can.

As observed by the non-Christians who participated in the study, expository preaching may not be as beneficial to them for the obvious reason that they do not hold the Bible to be an authoritative source. Expositors should assume that such an audience is present in any presentation. Hence, they should follow the best practices of sermon preparation, as detailed in Chapter 3. They include assuming biblical illiteracy, appealing to common sources of authority, making application accessible to everyone, and so on. The most important thing, though, is to include a call to repentance and follow Jesus. The Spirit can and does work through the sharing of the good news. It is through the folly of preaching that nonbelievers can be saved (1 Cor 1:21), so expositors should present the gospel in every sermon.

At the local level, the researcher has gone through the basics of expository preaching with the elders of both Refuge and Triumph. Every new leader in both churches is expected to go through the same training and to use expository preaching when appointed to the pulpit.

Worldview Studies in Adventism

At the academic level, several Adventist scholars have contributed to the worldview discussion in evangelicalism (see Chapter 2). However, at the lay level, the concept of worldview is rarely used, and few Adventist resources are available to explore the topic. The formation of a biblical worldview is a crucial step in discipleship. As argued by Goheen and Bartholomew, it operates after biblical theology and before systematic theology. It stays right in

the middle of grasping the text and creating definitive doctrinal statements.¹⁷ By nature, it leaves room for disagreement and allows its customization into the disciples' mindset.¹⁸

A recent Adventist work on worldview is *Living with the Mind of Jesus*. It was written for the layperson. It includes the theory of worldview, the grand story, and practical applications for developing one's worldview, as well as the one from one's children. Its main disadvantage, though, is to freely quote Ellen White and other denominational material. By doing so, the authors contest the very essence of a biblical worldview: that should be based on the Bible alone. Such a goal is proposed by the authors themselves: "A biblical worldview is based on the Word of God, the Bible. By believing the Bible is true, we allow it to be the foundation of all we do and say. From this basic building block, everything else can grow."¹⁹ Their premise is weakened by not clearly differentiating levels of authority or inspiration in their sources. This inconsistency can be used by young adults to showcase the dissonance of the Adventist practice. Hence, new resources should be created, using exclusively the Bible to advance arguments.

Young Adult Discipleship in Adventism

Recently, the GC young adult department has created a discipleship program called "InVerse." It consists of quarterly study guides to either go through books of the Bible or explore biblical themes. So far, the following books have been covered in order of publication: Nehemiah, Daniel, Romans, Deuteronomy, Hebrews, James, and Leviticus.²⁰ The guides that focus on books of the Bible give preeminence to the biblical canon. With this strategy, young

¹⁷ See Biblical Worldview in Adventism, above.

¹⁸ See Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 100. N. T. Wright calls "mindset" to the personal appropriation of an official worldview.

¹⁹ Kidder and Campbell, *Living with the Mind of Jesus*, 20.

²⁰ "InVerse Bible Study Guide," retrieved October 4, 2023, <https://www.inversebible.org/inverse-bible-study-guide>.

adults are invited to study the Bible in a systematic way, they are encouraged to develop opinions on their own, and they are free to contribute to a communal reading while allowing them to hold unique views on secondary issues. Such a strategy is more promising than teaching the doctrinal corpus in catechism-like classes, where unanimity of thought is expected. The GC should continue publishing these guides and focus on books of the Bible, with only sporadic biblical themes. A guide to interpreting Scripture, as suggested in the Research Implications section above, should be considered. These guides should be used by Adventist young adults, and pastors should encourage their local ministries to use them.

Church Planting in Adventism

The SDA church in North America is working to plant churches throughout the country. Their goal is to have one Adventist church per 25,000 population.²¹ Resources and flexibility are given to the church planter, which is beneficial in the first stages of the project. However, all Adventist church plants should be encouraged to use expository preaching as their main preaching mechanism. By asking them to preach the Bible in expository form, the freedom that a planter requires is preserved, while at the same time, it is assured that the church plant stays within the realm of Adventist orthodoxy. This practice would allow church plants to grow healthy in the shadow of sound biblical teaching. It would also shape the preaching culture for years to come. At Refuge and Triumph, expository preaching has become the norm. If and when the researcher is called to a different task, the ideals of expository preaching will likely linger around in both churches.

²¹ “Plant: Multiply community-based churches,” retrieved October 5, 2023, <https://www.nadmultiply.org/vision-plant>.

Further Research

The current project was able to provide insights into the local church context and within young adults. Given the positive results in those areas, efforts should be made to expand the research. First, there should be research on receiving expository preaching in-person versus online. As described in the Research Limitations section, having a fill-in-the-blanks handout may be the mechanism to compare those two alternatives.

Second, there should be more investigation on expository preaching in the Adventist context. It seems like preaching is not at the forefront of Adventist research. In the last three years, only two project theses have been published in Adventist expository preaching (this one included). Both were from Liberty University. In the last three years, only three project theses on preaching (not expository) have come out from Andrews University.²² Unless other Adventist professionals investigate expository preaching, the quality of discipleship in the denomination may be impacted.

Third, given that the current project thesis focused on young adults (a blend of millennials and centennials), further research can be focused on a specific generation. The same could be said of racial background. No data on race was gathered in the current project. Broadly speaking, the participants were Hispanic, Asian, White, and Black. Practical insights could be discovered by comparing expository preaching among different generational, racial, or socio-economical groups.²³

Fourth, it would be intriguing to implement expository preaching in established SDA churches and document their progress. Such a study would help to learn the feasibility of moving

²² As published in their public repository: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dmin/>.

²³ Jaques' project thesis was done on a bi-cultural Adventist church. Jacques, "Preaching and Teaching: An Integrative Evaluative Approach to Christian Practices at Fil-Am SDA Church."

towards expository preaching in bulk, or at least in churches that go through a revitalization program. In North America, the SDA church is emphasizing "Revitalization" as a minor replant of stale or decaying churches.²⁴ If expository preaching was added to the plan of revitalizing a church, the results could be documented and analyzed.

Last, although most SDA churches do not use expository preaching on a regular basis, some do. A longitudinal study of a church with expository preaching and one without it would throw light into the long-term results of biblical exposition. Key metrics like discipleship growth, effectiveness in mission, and faithfulness in giving could be measured in both contexts to learn if and how expository preaching affects the health of a local SDA church.

Final Assessment

The researcher grew up in a Seventh-day Adventist church in Mexico. As a teenager, he had a conversion experience. Since then, he has had a thrilling and frustrating relationship with Adventism, seeing both the most faithful examples in some of its members and a cultic practice in others. The researcher moved to the US in his early twenties to work at Microsoft. It was in the US that he found expository preaching outside of his Adventist context. Thanks to expository preaching, he came to embrace the Bible as the rule of faith and practice. He realized that this practice should have been spread out long ago in Adventism. The plain exposition of Scriptures could enlarge the best characteristics of the denomination (its coherent biblical theology) while at the same time minimizing its weakest areas (the way that extra-biblical sources are used, which is in dissonance with official teaching).

²⁴ For example, see Brad Cauley, "A Strategy To Coach Pastors to Revitalize Declining Churches in the Carolina Conference and other Seventh-day Adventist Conferences in the United States" (Doctoral Thesis, Andrews University, 2020). Digital Commons at Andrews University.

The researcher was called to ministry in the Adventist church. He was called to preach the Bible, and that is what he has tried to do ever since. He first planted Refuge as a lay pastor and, years later, was called to full-time ministry to plant Triumph while continuing at Refuge. The current action research project was born from his passion for teaching the Bible as the Word of God. He attempts to pass along the same passion to young adults. Throughout the current project thesis, the Bible was taught from the pulpit as authoritative and infallible, as the way to know Christ, and as the foundation of a Christian worldview. During the implementation, young adults heard and understood the Bible considered its implications for their lives and evaluated their preconceptions based on it. They did not completely transform their worldviews, but modest and measurable progress was documented. Hence, the ultimate purpose of this action research project was met.

At the time of the writing of this chapter, two of the three non-Christians who participated in the intervention continued to study the Bible with the researcher. They show a promising attitude, and they may come to give their life to Christ through baptism. That is due to the power of the Spirit (John 3:8) and the Word of God (Heb 4:12). May the Lord continue to touch the hearts of many more young adults.

APPENDIX A

PERMISSIONS REQUESTS AND APPROVALS

Washington Conference

Feb 1, 2023

Doug Bing
President
Washington Conference of SDAs
[redacted]
[redacted]

Dear Pastor Bing,

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for my degree as a Doctor of Ministry in Expository Preaching and Teaching. The title of my research project is “Impact of the Expository Preaching of Adventist *Heilsgeschichte* in the Worldview of Young Adults at SDA Church Plants.” The purpose of my research is to invite young adults, through expository preaching, to adopt a biblical worldview.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research at Refuge Church & Triumph Church and contact the members to invite them to participate in my research study.

Participants will be asked to complete the attached survey and have online interviews at the beginning and end of the study. Also, they will be required to listen to an eight-week preaching series, and to write their reflections on the sermon. Participants will also be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please provide a signed statement on official letterhead indicating your approval. A permission letter document is attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Martinez
Graduate Student
John W. Rawlings School of Divinity
Liberty University



SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST®
CHURCH

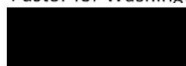
Washington Conference

March 9, 2023

Office of the President


washingtonconference.org

Kenneth Martinez
Pastor for Washington Conference of Seventh-day Adventists



Dear Kenneth Martinez,

After a careful review of your research proposal entitled "Impact of the Expository Preaching of Adventist *Heilsgeschichte* in the Worldview of Young Adults at SDA Church Plants", I have decided to grant you permission to conduct your study at Refuge Church & Triumph Church.

Sincerely,



Douglas L. Bing
President

Washington Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Feb 1, 2023

[Refuge/Triumph] Church Elders
[Refuge/Triumph address]

Dear body of elders,

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for my degree as a Doctor of Ministry in Expository Preaching and Teaching. The title of my research project is “Impact of the Expository Preaching of Adventist *Heilsgeschichte* in the Worldview of Young Adults at SDA Church Plants.” The purpose of my research is to invite young adults, through expository preaching, to adopt a biblical worldview.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research at our church and contact the members to invite them to participate in my research study. Participants will be asked to complete the attached survey, and have online interviews with me, at the beginning and the end of the study. Participants will also be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please provide a signed statement on official letterhead indicating your approval. A permission letter document is attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Martinez
Graduate Student
John W. Rawlings School of Divinity
Liberty University

Feb 1, 2023

Kenneth Martinez
Pastor of Washington Conference of SDAs



Dear Kenneth Martinez,

After a careful review of your research proposal entitled "Impact of the Expository Preaching of Adventist *Heilsgeschichte* in the Worldview of Young Adults at SDA Church Plants", we have decided to grant you permission to conduct your study at Refuge Church & Triumph Church.

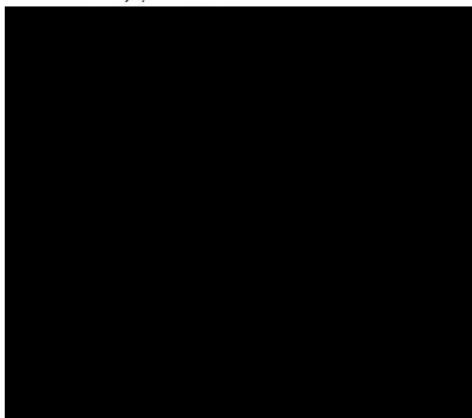
Check the following boxes, as applicable:

☒ We grant permission for Kenneth Martinez to contact young adults (18-40) from our church and invite them to participate in his research study.

☒ We are requesting a copy of the results upon study completion and/or publication.]

Sincerely,

Refuge Church Elders



Feb 1, 2023

Kenneth Martinez
Pastor of Washington Conference of SDAs



Dear Kenneth Martinez,

After a careful review of your research proposal entitled "Impact of the Expository Preaching of Adventist *Heilsgeschichte* in the Worldview of Young Adults at SDA Church Plants", we have decided to grant you permission to conduct your study at Refuge Church & Triumph Church.

Check the following boxes, as applicable:

- ☒ We grant permission for Kenneth Martinez to contact young adults (18-40) from our church and invite them to participate in his research study.
- ☒ We are requesting a copy of the results upon study completion and/or publication.]

Sincerely,

Triumph Church Elders



APPENDIX B

RECRUITMENT FLYER

1. FLYER

[The following flyer will be printed and distributed for a couple of weeks in both Refuge and Triumph]

HELP WANTED

Research Participants Needed for Action Research Study:

Effects of Expository Preaching on One's Worldview

Are you between 18-40 years old? Would you like to increase your biblical understanding of the world? If you answered yes to both questions, Pastor Kenneth needs your help on his research project!

This project will allow you to examine your worldview (your presuppositions and propositions of reality) and learn the biblical conception of reality. This project will help Christians in their spiritual life and as people who would like to learn more about Christianity. The research will be 8 weeks long. Participation in the project means:

1. Tasks on a weekly basis:
 - a) Listening to the sermon the day it was preached, in-person or online.
 - b) Filling out a sermon outline and turning it in (for half the research).
 - c) Answering a brief survey on Saturday night.
2. Tasks at the beginning and end of the program (twice in total):
 - a) Filling out a worldview survey.
 - b) 30-minute online interview (for a voluntary subset).

The study will be conducted at the church location (for the weekly sermon) and online, for the subset that would like to be interviewed before and after the study (item 2.b above). Pastor Kenneth Martinez, a Doctoral candidate at Liberty University, is conducting this study. Please contact him at [redacted] for more information

2. VERBAL

[The following script will be used 1:1 during potluck at both Refuge Church and Triumph Church]

Hello brother/sister,

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a degree as Doctor in Ministry on Expository Preaching. The purpose of my research is to evaluate the effect of expository preaching in the worldview of young adults, and if you meet my participant criteria and are interested, I would like to invite you to join my study.

Participants must be between 18-40 years old. Participants, if willing, will be asked to do the following, before and after the intervention:

- Filling out a worldview survey (30 minutes long).
- Have an online interview (you may skip this if desired).

Also, for the 8-week series that is coming up, you will be asked to:

- Listening to the sermon the day is preached, in-person or online (35-45 minutes long).
- Filling out a sermon outline and turning it in (during the sermon).
- Answering a brief survey on Saturday nights (10 minutes long).

Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

Would you [like to participate?

[Yes] Great, could I get your email address so I can send you the link to the survey? Also, can we set up a time for an interview?/etc.].

[No] I understand. Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM

Title of the Project: Impact of the Expository Preaching of Adventist *Heilsgeschichte* in the Worldview of Young Adults at SDA Church Plants.

Principal Investigator: Kenneth Martinez, Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University.

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be between 18-40 years old. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to attempt to communicate a worldview through expository preaching and the metanarrative of Scripture.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

The study is eight weeks long. If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. Tasks on a weekly basis:
 - a) Listening to the sermon the day it was preached, in-person or online.
 - b) Filling out a sermon outline and turning it in (for half the research).
 - c) Answering a brief survey on Saturday night.
2. Tasks at the beginning and end of the program (twice in total):
 - a) Filling out a worldview survey.
 - b) 30-minute online interview (for a voluntary subset).

For 1.b, the sermon outline will be delivered to half of the participants in the first 4 weeks, and to the other half in the last 4 weeks. The outline will be sent to you Saturday morning, by text or email, and you will be expected to fill it out as the sermon is preached. Regardless of if you receive the outline, you will still be expected to fill out the survey all Saturday nights (1.c).

For 2.b, the max number of interviews will be 12 people. If more people agree to be part of the online interview, only the first 12 will be scheduled.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study include articulating and embracing a biblical worldview, which in turn will help them understand their daily life from a biblical perspective, as well as maturing their faith.

Benefits to society include the possibility of becoming the steppingstone for a biblically-based, educated-minded, comprehensive approach to defend and share Adventism in metamodern contexts.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Interviews will be conducted online, and the researcher will be in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. After five years, all electronic records will be deleted, and all hardcopy records will be shredded.
- Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for five years and then deleted. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

Is the researcher in a position of authority over participants, or does the researcher have a financial conflict of interest?

The researcher serves as Senior Pastor at Refuge Church & Triumph Church. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate or not participate in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Refuge/Triumph Church. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Kenneth Martinez. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at [redacted]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Jeff Johnsen, at [redacted].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, [redacted]; our phone number is [redacted], and our email address is [redacted].

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to schedule an online interview before and after the study, and to video-record me on it.

E-mail

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

APPENDIX D**WEEKLY SURVEY EXAMPLE****"The Story" Checkup, Week 1**

1. Name *

Enter your answer

2. How did you watch the sermon? *

☐ In person☐ Online

3. Summarize the sermon in one, or a few, sentences. *

Enter your answer

4. According to the sermon, what does knowing God can do in your life?

Enter your answer

5. According to the sermon, what is the best way to get to understand God?

Enter your answer

6. According to the sermon, why should we trust the Bible?

Enter your answer

7. How does today's sermon inform your own worldview?

Enter your answer

8. Do you agree or disagree with today's sermon? Explain *

Enter your answer

APPENDIX E
WORLDVIEW SURVEY

The following are screenshots from the survey in Microsoft Forms. Here is the actual instrument:
<https://forms.office.com/r/z6JdUb5YqJ>

Worldview Survey

Please answer these questions honestly, as you truly believe. Your results will be confidential and will have no repercussion with the standing at Refuge or Triumph Church.

...

Knowledge

1. What is the basis of truth?

- ☐ God, through the Bible.
- ☐ God, through personal experience.
- ☐ Science.
- ☐ Societal agreement.
- ☐ There is no truth.

2. Which statement comes closer to your view about the Bible?

- ☐ The inspired Word of God, to guide the life of Christians today.
- ☐ An inspired book, but culturally conditioned, and with scientific or historical errors.
- ☐ A valuable text that has helped society, but neither divine nor inspired.
- ☐ A book of fables and myths that have little, if any, basis in reality.
- ☐ I don't know.

3. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
The Bible has useful information to live a wholesome life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Bible should be the starting point to make sense of the world.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Bible is the highest form of authority in my life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Bible is to be taken literally, unless a symbol is used, or a figurative meaning is required by the context.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ellen White is an inspired messenger for the Adventist church.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Next

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Reality

4. I believe God is

- ☐ The all-powerful, all-knowing, all-good, all-righteous Creator of the universe who rules the world today.
- ☐ A higher power that may exist, but nobody really knows for certain.
- ☐ A state of higher consciousness - an ideal that humanity can reach.
- ☐ There is no god or gods.

5. Why is there suffering in the world if God is all good and all powerful?

- ☐ Because of human being's selfish, evil decisions.
- ☐ Because God is testing us.
- ☐ Because God is trying to achieve a greater good.
- ☐ Because of the war between Christ and Satan, which grants the devil some power.

6. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
It is possible to have a personal relationship with God through Christ.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
God loves me no matter what.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
God has a specific plan for my life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
God has expectations from me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Humanity + Ethics

7. What is a human being?

- ☐ A highly evolved, complex animal.
- ☐ A physical body + a divine breath of life.
- ☐ A physical body + an immaterial soul.
- ☐ Other

8. People are

- ☐ Basically good.
- ☐ Basically bad.

9. What is the main cause of society's problems?

- ☐ Sin is the cause of problems in society.
- ☐ Rich people taking advantage of the working class.
- ☐ Conflict between groups that insist they alone possess the truth.
- ☐ Other

10. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
What is morally right or wrong depends on what an individual believes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Christian is called to a different standard from a non-Christian.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Life in a church community is better than life without it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Seventh-day Adventist church is the closest to biblical truth.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Origins + Destiny

11. What do you believe about the origin of the world?

- ☐ God created the *universe* and the world in the recent past (less than 10k year ago). He created the world out of nothing, in 7 literal days, with human beings as we know them today.
- ☐ God created the *universe* at some point in the distant past (millions of years ago). He created, or recreated, the *earth* in the recent past (less than 10k year ago), by direct intervention, with human beings as we know them today.
- ☐ God created the universe and the world in the distant past, and used evolution to create the world as we know it today.
- ☐ The universe and the world came to existence in the distant past, and evolved through random processes of evolution, with no intelligent force overseeing it.
- ☐ Other

12. What happens when people die?

- ☐ They either go to heaven or hell, depending on their behavior.
- ☐ They cease to exist forever.
- ☐ They cease to exist until Christ comes back.
- ☐ They continue a cycle of reincarnation until they merge with the universe.
- ☐ They will all go to heaven, because God loves all people.
- ☐ Other

13. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
History is moving towards God's plans, one way or another.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Christ is coming again in the near future.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Adventist church is generally correct about what will happen in the last days.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The New Heavens and New Earth motivates me to do my work well here and now.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Hope

14. I believe that Jesus:

- ☐ Is the promised Messiah.
- ☐ Was a product of his own culture.
- ☐ Committed sin.
- ☐ Was a good man who helped humanity become better.
- ☐ Is God in the flesh.

15. What is the purpose of life?

- ☐ Knowing and loving God through Christ.
- ☐ Reaching our full potential.
- ☐ Whatever a person chooses as a purpose.
- ☐ There is no purpose.
- ☐ I don't know.

16. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
Jesus died in my place.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jesus rose from the dead with a physical body.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Because of my personal commitment to Christ, I am assured of my salvation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jesus is the only way to God.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jesus is the best way to God.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Summary

17. How has your worldview changed in the last eight weeks?

Enter your answer

18. How have your habits / behaviors changed in the last eight weeks?

Enter your answer

Statistical Data

19. Name *

Enter your answer

20. Church *

☐ Refuge

☐ Triumph

21. Sex *

☐ Male

☐ Female

22. Age *

Enter your answer

23. Years of being a Christian *

Enter your answer

24. Adventist Education you were part of *

☐ Elementary

☐ High school

☐ University

☐ Graduate or post-graduate

25. Comments

Enter your answer

APPENDIX F

ONLINE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Up to twelve participants in the intervention will be interviewed online, before and after the series. The interviews will be semi-structured, having a set of open-ended questions, and allowing the conversation to continue, based on the participant's response.

The questions will be same in both interviews:

1. Tell me the story of the world and your place on it.
2. What role does your religion play in your life?
3. How does your Adventism play in your Christian identity?
4. How is your relationship with God?
5. How is your interaction with the Bible?
6. How certain of your beliefs you are?
7. In what areas does your faith and your environment have conflict?
8. What is your biggest challenge as a Christian?
9. What are your personal core values?
10. What motivates you to become a better person?

APPENDIX G

Text diagram and lexical studies of sermon one.

Functions	vs	Diagram
Speech	34	[So] Peter <u>opened</u> his mouth [and] <u>said</u> :
Emphasis		"Truly I <u>understand</u> that
Assertion		God <u>shows</u> no <u>partiality</u> ,
Contrast	35	[but] in every nation
Basis		anyone who <u>fears</u> him
[List]		[and] <u>does</u> what is right
Result		is acceptable to him.
Event	36	As for the word that he <u>sent</u> to Israel, <u>preaching good news</u> of peace through Jesus Christ
Parenth.		(he is <u>Lord</u> of all),
Assertion	37	you yourselves know what happened
Place		throughout all Judea,
Place		beginning from Galilee
Sequence		[after] the baptism that John proclaimed:
Explanation	38	how God <u>anointed</u> Jesus of Nazareth
Manner		with the Holy Spirit [and] with power.
Event		He [Jesus] <u>went</u> about <u>doing</u> good
Cause		[and] <u>healing</u> all who were oppressed by the devil,
Assertion		[for] God was with him.
Place	39	[And] we are <u>witnesses</u> of all that he did
Place		[both] in the country of the Jews
Assertion		[and] in Jerusalem.
Manner		They <u>put</u> him to death
Contrast		[by] hanging him on a tree,
Sequence	40	[but] God <u>raised</u> him on the third day
Contrast		[and] made him <u>to appear</u> ,
		[not] to all the people
	41	[but] to us
Credential		who had been <u>chosen</u> by God as witnesses,
Assertion		who <u>ate</u> [and] <u>drank</u> with him
Sequence		[after] he <u>rose</u> from the dead.
Command	42	[And] he <u>commanded</u> us <u>to preach</u> to the people
Command		[and] <u>to testify</u> that
Assertion		he is the one <u>appointed</u> by God
Assertion		to be judge of the living and the dead.
Pronouncement		To him all the prophets <u>bear</u> witness
Cause		that everyone who <u>believes</u> in him
Result	43	<u>receives</u> <u>forgiveness</u> of sins through his name."
		Acts 10:34-43

Partiality.

- Composed word

Preaching Good News.

- Evangelizo → proclaim good news.

Lord.

- Kurios.
- Used for YHWH in the Septuagint

Raised.

- Egeiro → Raise up

Forgiveness.

- Aphesis → letting go, dismissal
- Also translated as
- Release
- Set free



APPENDIX H

Sermon one

MCDILL WORKSHEET: ORAL PRESENTATION TEMPLATE

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure sermon ideas are clear and well worded Plan with the dynamics of oral communication Design the presentation to follow the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design the presentation to engage the audience Balance development for the whole man Plan for the audience and the occasion
<p>This exercise involves planning the design of your sermon for an oral presentation. This form follows the motivated sequence outline combined with the traditional introduction-body-conclusion format.</p>	
<p>Introduction</p>	<p>Attention</p> <p>I was diagnosed with diabetes when I was 25 or so. It was 8-9 years ago. Everything was going well in my life until that diagnosis. It was a kick in the butt. You know diabetes right, high sugar in the blood. Now I know that is a very common problem in the US, but then I thought it was a death sentence.</p> <p>We took this picture 2-3 days after the diagnosis. We went to Canada to celebrate Addi finishing nursing school. I look happy, but I was terrified in the inside. For this first time in my life, <u>I didn't feel in control.</u></p> <p>I was determined, though. They said that diabetes could be controlled with exercise and diet. They said that I need to reduce my carb intake. Sure, no problem. Until I looked for carb-free food. Do you know what has carbs? Everything! Fruits they're supposed to be good! Veggies, grains, potatoes, rice, tortillas, milk.</p> <p>The disease affected my mind more than my body, as this usually goes. I got anxiety. I imagined the doctors were hiding information. I went to doctor Google -you know you're not supposed to do that!- I read the consequences of diabetes: they cut your limbs, blindness, heart problems, and premature death. I was like...</p> <p>I read this: if your blood pressure goes above x number, your liver is failing, and you need immediate medical attention, or you'll die in hours. Ok, I just need to not have high blood pressure. One day I was sitting in my office, and looked at my clock. I saw number x next to a heart. Btw, they are different things, but I didn't realize that. I saw the number going up, that is what happens when you get stressed. My heart was pumping so fast, my breadth became shallow, my mind got cloudy. <u>I thought I was going to die that day.</u> I drove myself to the hospital, but they said everything was fine with my body. I had my first panic attack.</p> <p>Have you ever been a situation that seems bigger than yourself? All of your life you've been in control, but you can't control this thing. What do you do then?</p> <p>There are lots of mental and physical problems in the US. According to the latest</p>

	CDC stats, <u>21% of adults received mental health care. That's 1 in 5.</u>
	Need Human beings are in desperate need of peace and security.
	Bridging Sentences We are starting a new series, "THE STORY." It's all about how you perceive the world. And what I am gonna argue is that you need this story, the story of the Bible, the story of God, to find peace in your life.
	Subject: Peace Modifier: Through knowing God.
	Textual Idea: Peter shows Cornelius that there is forgiveness in the Jewish God, through Christ.
	Sermon Idea: Knowing God brings peace and security.
	Interrogative: How do I know God, to obtain peace and security?
	Transition: You know God through Christ, by Scripture-engaging.
Body	Satisfaction
	Division 1 Statement Knowing God allows you to understand your place on earth.
	Explanation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Come with me to the first sermon preached to Gentiles. • ¹ At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, ² a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God. Acts 10:1-2 • We won't be able to read the whole story. An angel appears to Cornelius. At the same time God sends a vision to Peter, to convince him he should hang out with Gentiles. • Cornelius sends some people to bring Peter, and because Peter had his dream literally just then, he accepts and goes. • He comes to the house of this successful, rich, respected Gentile. • So, Peter is in front of a Gentiles audience for the first time ever. Who are Gentiles, btw? You and I, people without Jewish blood. • Peter is in front of Cornelius and his entire household. What is he going to talk about? • ³⁴ So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows

	<p>no partiality,³⁵ but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. Acts 10:34-35</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>He talks about God.</u> • What Cornelius needs in his life <u>is God.</u> • Cornelius was a successful man. He was a centurion, meaning he oversaw up to 100 soldiers. In theory, in practice was always around 80. • To get there he had to prove himself, in war or in politics. He had to climb up to get here. He was respected, he had political connections, and he lived in a nice town, the Mercer Island of old: Caesarea where Pilate also had his residence. • He made it. He's one of the few people in antiquity that had made it. He got everything he could desire: <u>money, family, respect, fame, power.</u> He made it. • But he needed something more. • Despite him having everything, there was something missing, and he tried to find it on the God of Israel. • <u>People need of God. Doesn't matter how successful they are, they need of God.</u> • A good job can give you a lot of things: good money. Great health insurance. Flexibility. • But there are a few things it can't give you: a purpose for life. • Security when you get diabetes at age 25. Me working at Microsoft didn't help for me to feel I've lost control. • That's why you still have religious people in a city as educated and affluent as Seattle. Because <u>everyone needs God.</u> • The philosopher <u>Alvin Plantinga</u> says we don't even need to argue for the existence of God. In humans, <u>there's an intrinsic intuition that God does exist.</u> • God is needed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In crises, to find comfort. ○ In joys, to have someone to thank. ○ When you lose someone, when you welcome someone. ○ And just to make sense of life. •
	<p>Illustration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neil deGrasse was interviewed by Steve Harvey. • Neil deGrasse said: <u>God is the answer to unanswerable questions. GOD IN THE GAPS.</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Where did cosmic dust come from? ○ Where did the laws of physics come from? • The audience was silent. • I agreed. Here's the thing: God is not the answer to unanswered questions. <u>God is the answer when other questions have been answered, and you feel the same.</u>
	<p>Argumentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>To make sense of the world, you need God.</u> • Peter proposes God to Cornelius and his household. • The God he presents, though, is not the tiny, capricious gods of the Romans. • Peter will present the one true God. The universal God. <u>The God that shows no partiality.</u> • The one true God is big enough to accept everyone who seeks him. • In this country, Christianity has got a bad rap. Red Christians

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ God ○ Bible ○ Commandment. ● God accepts worship from every nation, from every people. ● Cornelius didn't have all the details. But he feared God and tried his best. He was acceptable to God. ● All around the world there are different people worshipping God their way. They are accepted by God. ● <u>Everyone needs God.</u>
	<p>Application</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Depending on your <u>worldview</u>, it's how you'll process all these events in your life. ● <u>Worldview</u> is a fancy word that means <u>the way you understand the world</u>. Your starting point to make sense of everything else. ● A worldview answers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ WHO ARE YOU? ○ Where do I come from, where am I going? ○ What is true and false ○ What's good and wrong? ○ Why is there evil and suffering? ○ What, really, is the universe ● <u>It's the OPERATING SYSTEM.</u> ● A bank collapsed, and everyone is freaking out. ● Depending on your glasses, you are going to be disinterested, or overwhelmed. ● You receive a diagnosis. Your loved one receives a diagnosis. ● Depending on your glasses, is how well you will manage and process it. ● And just for life. You're a new adult. What do you do after you got a job? Depending on your glasses, you will have or not a sense of mission and purpose. ● [Draw circle] ● All the universe is here. ● You could have NO WORLDVIEW ● Start with SCIENCE ● Or YOU ● Or with GOD. ● My argument here is simple. ● To interpret the world, to have a guide, to have peace, purpose, meaning, security, you need to start with God. ● <u>Start with the God that shows no partiality.</u> ● If you're cynical, I know what you're asking? "Which God? There are hundreds of them." ● Glad you asked
	Transition (Div 1 to Div 2)
	<p>Division 2 Statement</p> <p>Knowing Christ allows you to understand God.</p>

	<p>Explanation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone is accepted by God. • But he wants to reveal his true nature. • <u>You can fear God in many religions. You can love God in Christ.</u> • Peter explains: • ³⁶ As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), ³⁷ you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹ And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰ but God raised him on the third day Acts 10:36-40 • To understand God, you need to know Jesus of Nazareth. • Jesus who was a carpenter, and a prophet, 2k years ago. • Jesus who preached and caused a stir, <u>according to extra-biblical sources.</u> • Jesus who performed mighty works, we call them miracles, as even his enemies agreed, but pointed to the devil as the author. • There are many conceptions of God. • You can understand God through many religions. • Interestingly, most of them see Jesus in a positive light. • Many Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhist, see Jesus as someone uniquely qualified to be a guide to God. • Even people that don't like Christianity, broadly speaking, they use Christ to criticize Christians. • Jesus is your best shot to understand God. • ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known. John 1:18 • Through Christ, you understand that <u>God is love.</u> • From all the images of God you have out there, the most compelling, and the most real, is the one Christ has to offer.
	<p>Argumentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Here are three ways Jesus reveals God is love. • <u>1. God is love, because he came to earth.</u> • Jesus walked among us, he ate our food, he bore our illness. He caught the flu. He walked in a place called Judea, and Galilee, and Jerusalem. • But here's the thing: Jesus was not merely a prophet. • "He is Lord of all" • Lord is the title Jewish people gave to God; <u>Adonai.</u> • Jesus was not a subordinate, Jesus was God himself, coming to experience the pain his creatures must experience as well. • <u>2. God is love, because he seeks your wellbeing</u> • In Jesus' ministry you see the three members of the Trinity. Father, Son, Spirit. • The Trinity is too complex so I cannot really go into detail. • But here's an amazing reality. Only if God had someone to love, he can truly be love. • Can you imagine an eternity past when God was literally by himself? He had

	<p>not experienced love.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • But that's not what happened. He has forever been a Trinity. • And that's why he can be love. • <u>3. God is love, because he dies for you.</u> • If Jesus is Lord of all, meaning if he is God, what it means is that we killed God! • He sacrificed himself! • We see God's love in Christ, and the pinnacle, the peak, the climax, is the cross.
	<p>Illustration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRUCIFORM God • [Draw the cross.] •
	<p>Application</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRUCIFORM God (Gorman) • What if we don't live in a cold, random universe, but in a warm, loving one? • What if, every morning, when you wake up, you don't think you have to prove your worth, but you believe that there's a God that knows your name, values you as his most treasured possession, and watches you closely. • What if you were to believe you are never alone, because you're always in the mind of this CRUCIFORM God. • What if you were to believe that despite your failures, your mistakes, your shortcoming, God, GOD HIMSELF chose to be sacrificed for you. • Wouldn't that be a great place to start living? • You don't know all the answer in the universe, but you believe there is a God in control, and he personally, individually, passionately, immensely, loves you.
	<p>Transition (Div 2 to Div 3)</p>
	<p>Division 3 Statement</p> <p>Your Bible allows you to know Jesus, and understand God.</p>
	<p>Explanation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • But Jesus is gone, how can we know about him anymore? • He left some people behind! • ⁴⁰ but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, ⁴¹ not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." <p>Acts 10:40-43</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He left behind witnesses! Not a few but quite several. • At some point up to 500 saw this risen Jesus. • Peter, who is preaching, didn't read this in school. He saw him. • He saw his master being tortured and put to death. He knew where they buried him. A few days later, he saw the same guy chilling and eating a MacFish.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may think the Bible is a book of allegories, fables, myths, that come with a good lesson. • No, the authors of the Bible claim otherwise. They claim they are sharing the story because Jesus commanded them to; because they saw what happened • we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. 2 Peter 1:18 • 1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—... 3 that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you 1 John 1:1-3 • 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. 8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me 1 Corinthians 15:7-8 • The apostles wrote what they saw, and put it on the NT. • <u>The apostles tell us the story of Jesus. The prophets the meaning of it.</u> • <u>So, to know Jesus, you need apostles & prophets. Meaning, the Bible.</u> • [Draw picture]
	<p>Argumentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So we come to the really practical stuff. Believing in the Bible is the starting point to make sense of the world. • You need faith to be a Christian. Not a whole lot. Not more faith than believing we're not in the matrix. • You do need faith. Where you need the most faith, though, is simply <u>to believe that you can trust the Bible.</u> • If you can make that step of faith, everything falls in place. • If you believe you can trust the Bible. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You can know Jesus. ○ You can understand God. ○ You can make sense of the world. • But everything starts with believing in Scripture. • What do you get when you come to come Jesus through Scripture? • First, you get <u>forgiveness.</u> • I don't need to be forgiven; I am fine! • What about freedom? It's within the semantic range in Greek, <u>Aphesis.</u> • How about peace? Do you need peace? • How about healing? Do you need healing? • How about good news! Do you need good news? • How about the assurance that there is a loving God in heaven who wants to have a relationship with you! • "I don't know if that's true." Right, philosophically speaking, it's hard to be certain about pretty much anything. • How would you know if is true or not, unless you give it a chance? • Try it!
	<p>Illustration</p>
	<p>Application</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Here's my challenge. Engage your Bible. This is how the sermon becomes very practical. • <u>1. Get a Bible</u>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have gifts for you. • You can take it, as long as you promise you'll read. We have 20 pretty Bibles in the back. • <u>2. Read the Bible daily.</u> • If you don't know where to start, we will release study guides for the next 8 weeks, so you can engage with them. • <u>3. Come to Friday Bible studies.</u> • Bible studies are always funnier with someone else. Try to make it. We'll go over these materials together. • As the band sings, go pick up your Bible.
	Transition (Div 3 to Conclusion)
Conclusion	<p>Visualization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Image] • <u>After my panic attack</u>, I still got anxiety for several weeks. • I would wake up in the middle of the night, and I couldn't go to sleep. • This is what I did. I picked up my Bible. This one, I think, and I would just read it. • It would appease me. • Because, remember...
	<p>Reiteration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make sense of the world, you need God. • To understand God, you need Jesus. • To know Jesus, you need the Bible. • If we shorten it, • To make sense of the world, you start with the Bible. • If you want a solid foundation, if you want to start with God in your life, give the Bible a chance. • CTA
	Amen

APPENDIX I

Feedback by John Brunt, PhD.

Sermon One

Hi Kenneth,

Thank you for the privilege of experiencing your excellent sermon this past Sabbath. I have divided my responses into two sections, content and delivery. Each of these will be divided into commendations and suggestions.

Content

Commendations

This was an excellent expository sermon. I appreciated the way you moved through your passage in a thoughtful manner, included the relevant parts of the passage, and related them to your overall theme of world views. You certainly did justice to the passage and covered it well. Your use of underlining the significant phrases in the text on your slides helped the hearers move through the passage easily and aided understanding.

Your vulnerability in sharing the initial story of your diabetes diagnosis was very effective. The congregation could identify with your story in a way that embraced their stories and their needs. It was also very effective to return to the initial story at your conclusion. In fact, as you were asking the members to go get a Bible, I thought you were ending, and I was saying to myself, “No Kenneth. Don’t end yet. God back to your initial story and show how what you said relates to that story.” Then you did exactly what I was hoping for. Well done.

Your illustrations were vivid and well-placed. These included your use of the glasses to talk about the lenses we look through with our world views, the story of your son, and even the brief references that bring the text to today, such as “it was the Mercer Island of the day.”

Your use of humor was also effective. I loved expressions like “who put the carbs in milk?” for example.

I appreciated your clarity. At the end of the sermon, we knew what you had said.

Thank you for the short but meaningful critique of the wrong kind of American nationalism.

Suggestions

I would like to have heard a little more background on your first point—God shows no partiality. Peter’s experience at the beginning of the chapter shows how counter-cultural that was

in his day (and unfortunately still is in our day). You might have emphasized that background a little more.

Delivery

Commendations

I love your engaging, note-free delivery. You captivated the attention of the congregation with your enthusiasm. We get the idea that you are well-prepared, know what you are going to say, and care about what you are saying. You have a very effective delivery style. You also speak at a speed that doesn't give anyone a chance to be bored.

Suggestions

My suggestion actually involves your strength, which I wouldn't want to see you lose. That is your enthusiastic, quick-paced delivery. But sometimes it gets a bit too fast. There were a few times when you were going so fast you missed parts of words. I think you should keep the fast pace but develop more variation. You could add emphasis with a pregnant pause here and there, especially when you want a very important point to sink in.

Repetition is good, but I felt you had a bit too much of it. The sermon was 43 minutes, and I think you could have tightened it up, chosen words carefully, and said all that you said in 30 minutes.

Again, it was a very effective sermon and I look forward to hearing at least one more in this series.

John

Sermon Six

Hi Kenneth,

Thank you for another excellent expository sermon. I loved the way you followed the text. Even though it was a long passage of 13 verses you did an excellent job, on the one hand of including all the various elements of the passage, and on the other hand of zeroing in on the overall message and heart of the passage -building up the body of Christ. Your sermon truly did what an expository sermon should do. It made sense of the various elements of the passage, reached the heart of Paul's message, made it relevant for today, and called on the congregation to act on it.

There were other specific features that I appreciated. I liked the way you focused on the gospel and made it clear that we are saved by grace and not by our actions. I also appreciated the way you showed the significance of the *therefore* at the beginning of the passage as it relates to the first three chapters of Ephesians that preceded your passage. Your use of the concept of church as family was very effective.

The way you brought home the concept of the body of Christ as family with specific examples was powerful and moving. The background that you gave on the idea of God giving gifts was quite helpful. All in all, an excellent expository sermon.

As for delivery, this sermon was tighter than the last one, and about 7 or 8 minutes shorter. This is good. There are still moments when you speak a bit too fast. I wouldn't want to dampen your enthusiasm, which is one your best gifts, but I would like to see you slow down a little in places with an effective pause.

There is one technical issue in the original language of the passage that you should be aware of, but I think it is too technical to include in a sermon. Therefore I'm glad you didn't talk about it. In 4:11, where the five gifts are mentioned, there is scholarly debate about whether there are really four or five gifts mentioned. The first three gifts, apostles, prophets, and evangelists are all introduced with an article. But there is only one article for pastors and teachers. This leads some to believe that Paul intended them as one gift. Thus some translate "apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor/teachers." It is a small point, and I wouldn't bring it into the sermon, but it is possible that some hearer might have seen something about it and ask a question. So the preacher should be aware of it.

Again, thank you for an excellent expository sermon. I have been blessed each time I have worshiped with Refuge.

Kenneth, is there anything else I need to do. Do you want me to communicate with your teachers directly, or will you take care of that?

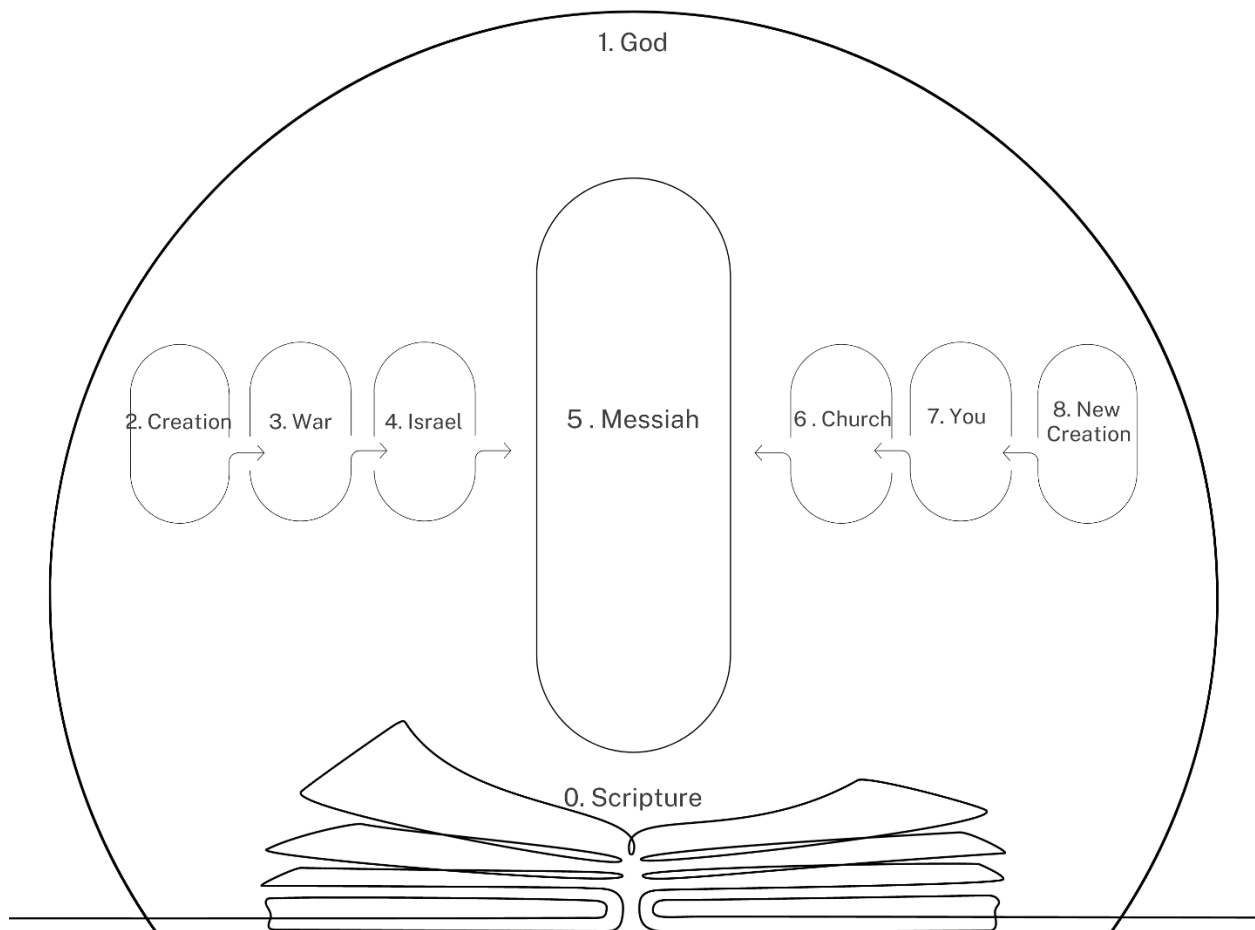
John

APPENDIX J

Devotional readings for Week One

THE STORY:

How the History of the Universe Impacts Yours

1. GOD: What is Real?

By Kenneth Martinez

How to Use This Guide

Congrats on making Bible study a priority! This is a simple study guide to be used in companion with the series “THE STORY.” There are five devotional readings on this and each other guide. This is how I suggest you use them:

1. Pick a time and place to read the daily devotional. It should take you as little as 10 minutes (and as much as you would like).
2. Read it from Sunday - Thursday. That way, you'll have a couple of days to catch up if you fall behind.
3. Make sure you start and end with prayer.
4. If you have extra time, meditate and further study the passage of the day.
5. Write down your answers, and any other thoughts you may have had while studying.
6. Try joining the in-person Bible study, where the study guide will be discussed.
7. Pro tip: pick a partner to study together. You can sync up once a week, or as often as you'd agree on, and remind/encourage each other.

Special thanks to Refuge & Triumph church for using this material and Thamy Moura for creating the art.

Day 1 – A Biblical Worldview

¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:1-2¹

I never liked wearing sunglasses. Everything looks so dark. I feel I am being robbed of all the action. But I do like using 3-D glasses in the movie theater. The movie looks so real, and it has given me a couple of scare jumps. Also, the last time I visited the eye doctor, she told me I needed glasses. I would have refuted her, but since I did not have glasses, I was not sure if I was talking to her or to a coat rack.

It is funny how a pair of glasses can completely change your view. Glasses are the perfect metaphor for *worldview*. What is a worldview? Though the word is relatively new, the concept is as old as humanity itself. Worldview is the “individual’s collection of beliefs about life and the world.”² Your worldview affects how you see everything else. Everyone has one, regardless of if they are aware of it or not. Your worldview is influenced by your culture, your family, your education, your life experiences, and of course, your faith. Different authors include different components in a worldview. Kidder and Campbell argue that a worldview has answers for Metaphysics: what is ultimate reality? Epistemology, how do we acquire truth? Anthropology:

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Bible references are from the ESV.

² S. Joseph Kidder and Katelyn Campbell Weakley, *Living with the Mind of Jesus: How Beliefs Shape Your Worldview* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2022), chap. 1, Kindle.

Who and why am I here? Ethics: How should I live? Evil: How did things get so bad? And Afterlife: Is there anything after we die?³

If you are Christian, you are to have a *biblical worldview*. A biblical worldview is more than just having opinions that can be backed up by the Bible, or a list of doctrines that you can agree on. A biblical worldview is a comprehensive view of life that is rooted in Scripture. “Our belief system is meant to be rooted in Christ and the Bible.”⁴ As Paul says in the text for today: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.” A Christian can be saved, and still conform to the world. Therefore, she or he needs to intentionally start a process of mind renewal: the adoption of a biblical worldview.

A good place to start forming a biblical worldview is with Epistemology (what is true): accepting Scripture as the source of knowledge. As noted in the past sermon, the Bible was given through apostles (the New Testament) and prophets (Old Testament). They were real people living real lives. Yet God superintended their writing process to assure that the final product, the Bible, was a trustworthy guide for his people. The Bible is “breathed out by God” 2 Timothy 3:16, so it is divinely inspired, reliable, and trustworthy. The word of God is “living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit” Hebrews 4:12, so it has the power to transform us. The Bible was given by God as his supreme revelation, and his people will seek to interpret the world based on that book.

Questions:

1. What is the difference between believing biblical ideas, and having a biblical worldview?
2. What is the biblical answer to the basic components of a worldview?

³ Kidder and Weakley, *Living with the Mind of Jesus*, chap 1, Kindle.

⁴ Ibid, chap. 2, Kindle.

Day 2 – Developing a Biblical Worldview

³ *For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh.* ⁴ *For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.* ⁵ *We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,* ⁶ *being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.* 2 Corinthians 10:3-6

A few years ago, the highest virtue was tolerance. Everybody was entitled to their own opinion. Christians were accepted in society, as long as they kept their beliefs to themselves. That is not the case anymore. The pendulum has swung to the other extreme, and now there are absolute truths that everyone must agree on, regardless of their background or faith. In this new reality, Christians are expected to conform to the spirit of the age even in their private opinions.

From a biblical perspective, this is not acceptable. Christians are to use Scripture to evaluate society, not the other way around. As the image on page 1 shows, true knowledge starts in, and submits to, the Bible. The Christian is to process every piece of information through the biblical glasses. Paul talks about evaluating “and tak[ing] every thought captive to obey Christ.” Every single thought is to submit to Christ. Every opinion, idea, and assumption is to flow from the Bible. How do we do that?

There are many proposed methods. Here I am offering the one from Phillips et al.⁵ They offer two simple steps:

⁵ W. Gary Phillips, William E. Brown, and John Stonestreet, *Making Sense of Your World: A Biblical Worldview* (Salem, WI: Sheffield Publishing Company, 2008), 106-108.

- a) Comprehend the biblical worldview.
- b) Apply the biblical worldview consistently.

First, to think biblically, you are to plunge yourself into Scripture. “The most important single factor in the formation of a Christian worldview is our immersion in the Scriptures.”⁶ A sermon a week is not enough. If you truly want to develop a biblical worldview, you first need to absorb the biblical stories, patterns, and ideas. You do that through constantly reading, listening, meditating, and studying the Bible. Here’s a practical tip: take the Bible passage of the day from these devotionals, and dwell on it the whole day. Read it out loud, pray over it, try to memorize it, take notes on it, and make sure you truly understand it. A good starting point is 30 minutes a day in the Bible (all together or in chunks, whichever works for you). If you already do that, you can always try to go higher.

Second, the biblical worldview is experiential. You will not fully comprehend it until you practice it. As soon as you encounter an inconsistency between your behavior and the Bible, you are to modify the former to conform to the latter. This will be painful at times, but there is no substitute for it. A lot of Christians never grow because they know a lot, but practice little.

Questions:

1. Try to process these ideas from a biblical perspective:
 - a. God is found in all religions.
 - b. All good people go to heaven.
 - c. God helps those that help themselves.
2. Are you satisfied with your level of engagement with the Bible? How can you improve?

⁶ Phillips, Brown, and Stonestreet, *Making Sense of Your World*, 106-108.

Day 3 – A Christocentric Reading of Scripture

¹² *Since we have such a hope, we are very bold,* ¹³ *not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end.* ¹⁴ *But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away.* ¹⁵ *Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts.* ¹⁶ *But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed.* ¹⁷ *Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.* ¹⁸ *And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. 2*
Corinthians 3:12-18

Barth Ehrman went to seminary to become a pastor. Instead, he left being an agnostic. He is now an atheist.⁷ He knows more about the Bible than the average Christian, yet he does not believe. How could this be?

Reading Scripture, people can lose their way as Ehrman did. They can be confused by some challenging stories, and they can reject God. Or they can err in the opposite direction. By trying to learn and obey everything the Bible teaches, they can miss the whole point. They may even have a biblical worldview —a coherent set of presuppositions that are consistent with Scripture— and still have no idea what the Bible is all about.

⁷ Randy Alcorn, “A Case Study: Bart Ehrman, a ‘Christian’ Who Lost His Faith,” retrieved April 15, 2020, from <https://www.epm.org/resources/2020/Apr/15/case-study-bart-ehrman/>

Take Paul, for example. He knew the Bible more than anyone else. He probably had memorized the first five books of the Bible —the Torah. But he had missed the point, until Christ opened his eyes. In today's passage, he explains that is impossible to understand Scripture just by reading it like any other book. "To this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed." To really grasp the Bible, you need to turn to Christ. Only when reading Scripture through Christ is when it makes sense.

On the way to Emmaus, the risen Christ opened the eyes of a couple of disciples, and let them see that the Bible is all about him: "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." Luke 24:27. The story of the Bible is the story of Jesus. From Creation to New Creation, the story points to Christ. Later that day he did the same for all disciples: "⁴⁴ Then he said to them, 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.' ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures" Luke 24:44-45.

We'll embark on studying the history of salvation: Creation, War, Israel, Messiah, Church, You, and New Creation (diagram on page 1). It is crucial that you remember that all those stages point to Christ. Only then we can truly understand the Bible. Only then we can have a biblical worldview.

Questions:

1. How can you see Christ in the creation of the world?
2. How do you see Christ in the Old Testament Law?
3. How do you see Christ in the successes and failures of Israel?

Day 4 – Ultimate Reality

⁴ *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. Deuteronomy 6:4-5*

I was talking with a guest after service. I asked her what she thought about the message. She said she liked it and explained why. I don’t remember most of her answer, though. I could not pass her introductory statement. “I believe we are all gods and goddesses,” she said. It was an instructive conversation, helping me to realize where people may be when listening to a sermon. Whatever she may have meant by that, it was obvious that we were not using the same definition of “god.” What is the classical definition of God? A transcendent, all-powerful, all-knowing, all-good, immortal, supernatural intelligence. If we are all gods, we are petty gods.

The Bible says there is only one God. Moses, when re-educating the Israelites after hundreds of years of oppression and idolatry, stated: “The LORD our God, the LORD is one.” There is only one true God. There are no competing divinities in the universe; there is only one God, and he is in total control. By the way, if you see LORD all in caps, is because Bible translators hide the actual name of God, following an ancient Jewish custom. In the original language, it reads YHWH, often translated as Jehovah or Yahweh. YHWH is the personal name of the one true God, too sacred to be used in common conversations.⁸ Hence, we usually read LORD. This God is too complex to even be described. He describes himself in circular terms: “I AM WHO I AM” Exodus 3:14. Only his person can fully describe who he is.

⁸ That is the meaning of the second commandment.

Through the Bible, God is presented as a God of love and justice. In his own self-description, he says: “⁶The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, ⁷ keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.” Exodus 34:6-7. This description is echoed throughout the rest of the Old Testament.⁹ According to the Bible, ultimate reality is not an impersonal power, a force, or a principle, but a loving and righteous God. Behind the universe, behind physical laws, behind everything else, there is a person. A loving, righteous, person. “The biblical worldview of ultimate reality is that it is not an *it* but a *he*.”¹⁰ According to the Bible, this God speaks, hears, responds, sees, provides, knows, plans, wills, chooses, acts, loves passionately, and even grieves, suffers, and relents.¹¹

As transient, insignificant creatures, we cannot possibly try to fully understand this God. But we can love him. That is what Moses commands the Israelites: “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”

Questions:

1. How would you describe God in ten words? In three words? In one word?
2. What is the characteristic of God that you admire the most? And the most challenging?
3. How can you love God today?

⁹ See Numbers 14:8, Joel 2:13, Jonah 4:2, Nahum 1:3, Nehemiah 9:17, Psalms 86:5; 103:8; 145:8, etc.

¹⁰ Roger E. Olson, *On the Essentials of Christian Thought: Seeing Reality Through the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017), 63.

¹¹ For an excellent discussion of the attributes of God, see John C. Peckham, *Divine Attributes: Knowing the Covenantal God of Scriptures* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2021).

Day 5 – The Trinity

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; ¹⁷ and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” Matthew 3:13-17

How can God be one and three? The doctrine of the Trinity is one of the hardest concepts to understand. Even though the word is not in the Bible, is what theologians have used to try to understand the biblical testimony that there is one God (Deuteronomy 6:4-5), that the Father is God (Isaiah 45:22), that Jesus is God (Titus 2:13), that the Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4), and they are different from each other (Matthew 3:13-17). The Trinity was already hinted at in the OT. For example, the word for God in Hebrew, *Elohim*, reflects plural, even though he is always referred to in the singular. In the NT, the concept is fully fledged.

Because abstract concepts can be complicated, we can start with the passage for today. Jesus came to be baptized by John the Baptist. He originally refused, speaking about the sinlessness and inherent superiority of the Son of God (Heb 1:3). Eventually, John agreed and baptized Jesus. Once he came out from the water, the Spirit of God, who is God (2 Cor 3:17), rested on him. Finally, the Father spoke from his throne in heaven. If you struggle to make sense

of the Trinity, you can start with Jesus. In Jesus, you see the triune God. “When you proclaim Jesus, the Spirit-anointed Son of the Father, you proclaim the triune God.”¹²

Although the doctrine of the Trinity is not easy to grasp, it has overwhelmingly joyful implications. If you think about it, God can only love if is more than one in personhood. After all, what did he have to love before he created humans, the world, or angels? Unless he has a multiplicity of personhoods within himself, he could not have experienced love without a creation. His “default” nature, the most intrinsic part of who he is, could not be love, because in eternity past he had no one to love.

But that is not the case. Before God was a Creator, he was already a Father. Jesus prays: “Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world” John 17:24. Before the world was created, the Father was already loving his Son! At the core, God is a Father loving his Son through the Spirit. That is why we know that God is love (1 John 4:8). That is why you can be confident that he loves you.

Questions:

1. Do you feel closer to one of the members of the Trinity? Do you think that’s common?
2. What are the roles and responsibilities of each person of the Trinity?
3. Can you pray to each member of the Trinity, or should you pray only to one of them?

¹² Michael Reeves, *Delighting in the Trinity: An Introduction to the Christian Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 38.

Resources

S. Joseph Kidder and Katelyn Campbell Weakley, *Living with the Mind of Jesus: How Beliefs Shape Your Worldview* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2022).

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John C. Peckham, *Divine Attributes: Knowing the Covenantal God of Scriptures* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2021).

Roger E. Olson, *On the Essentials of Christian Thought: Seeing Reality Through the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017).

APPENDIX K

NEW CREATION: Where Are We Going?

Kenneth Martinez / General

THE STORY / New Creation / Revelation 21:1–5

The hope of the Christian is not _____.

The hope is _____.

The Antecedents of New Creation

Genesis 1:31 ESV

And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Isaiah 65:17 ESV

¹⁷ “For behold, I create new heavens
and a new earth,

Matthew 6:9–10 ESV

⁹ Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. ¹⁰ Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

The Basics of New Creation

Revelation 21:1–4 ESV

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away

every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

The Consequences of New Creation

1 Corinthians 15:51–58 ESV

⁵¹ Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,
⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³
 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality...

⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Resurrection assures _____.

Revelation 21:5 ESV

⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

God is not making _____.

God is making _____.

New Creation is where you’ll discover _____.

Revelation 22:17 ESV

The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

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IRB APPROVAL LETTER

[External] IRB-FY22-23-1011 - Initial: Non-Human Subjects Research

opening L sup-term courses... 30 min ago
7:00 AM Liberty University

do-not-reply@cayuse.com

To: ○ Johnsen, Jeff W (School of Divinity Instruction); ○ Martinez, Kenneth Geraldo

Fe 2/10/2023 1:03 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL: Do not click any links or open attachments unless you know the sender and trust the content.]

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

February 10, 2023

Kenneth Martinez
Jeff Johnsen

Re: IRB Application - IRB-FY22-23-1011 Impact of the Expository Preaching of Adventist Heilsgeschichte in the Worldview of Young Adults at SDA Church Plants

Dear Kenneth Martinez and Jeff Johnsen,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds that your study does not meet the definition of human subjects research. This means you may begin your project with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your IRB application.

Decision: No Human Subjects Research

Explanation: Your project is not considered human subjects research because it will consist of quality improvement activities, which are not "designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge" according to 45 CFR 46.102(l).

Please note that this decision only applies to your current application. Any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued non-human subjects research status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

Also, although you are welcome to use our recruitment and consent templates, you are not required to do so. **If you choose to use our documents, please replace the word *research* with the word *project* throughout both documents.**

If you have any questions about this determination or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your application's status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

Reply

Reply all

Forward