

# PRESIDENT'S report

## IN THE WORD — DEUTERONOMY

Deuteronomy is the fifth book of the Bible and the final book in the Torah. Deuteronomy means the second law and is comprised of three sermons.

It's 1400 BC, and 40 years have passed since the Exodus took place. Moses is 120 years old and is about to give the law to a new generation of Israelites 40 years later, just before they enter the Promised Land. First of all, he reminds them of their journey:

1. Israel had been delivered from slavery in Egypt.
2. They spent one year at Mount Sinai and received the Ten Commandments.
3. After accepting the report of the 10 spies, they wandered around in the wilderness for 40 years.
4. Once again, they are on the border of the Promised Land, ready to go in.

Moses gives this new generation of Israelites a pep talk, which, in reality, is the gospel of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy is all about Jesus, and I hope you will encounter Jesus in Deuteronomy like never before.

Let me begin by saying that we live in a world that is out of control; a world that is full of trouble, turmoil, and wars. There are difficulties on all sides and uncertainty all across our planet. Many times, we can become blinded by our circumstances, and we forget Who is really in control.

The good news of Deuteronomy is that there is Someone who is in control. It's not the Republican party. It's not the Democratic party. It's not the President, Congress, Senate, or the Supreme Court. There is only one Person who is in control, who has complete control over all things on planet Earth.

Deuteronomy 9:1-3 says it is the Lord God Almighty, the One who is the Beginning and the End; the Alpha and the Omega; the First and the Last. He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords, the God of the galaxies. So, no matter what your situation is, God is still in control.

I know that sometimes when we walk through the challenges of life, it may be hard to see that God is in control, but we must not forget that God is there, and He has all power in heaven and earth in His hands. If you believe this, then you are on the right path for God to do something special in your life and world.

Like the children of Israel of old, God was about to make a way where there was no way. God was up to something. The question is: Do you believe in this God? It's easy to trust God when things are going well, but do you trust God when things are in Turmoil? Trouble? Temptation?

The truth is that sometimes God allows us to go through something to test us and to allow us to become a testimony. He did that for Moses, the children of Israel, Job, and He does this for you and me.

Yes, there are giants on the other side; a people who are tall and strong and mighty. Their cities are fortified. They are stronger than you, mightier than you. This is the same story of the 10 spies 40 years earlier. You know who they are, but this time there is a reminder that if God is for you, who can be against you?



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DAVID JAMIESON

serve | ONE MORE



**Administration update**

- David Jamieson, president, presented a devotional and announced that he has visited and worshiped with 118 churches and companies in the conference.
- The Serve One More initiative officially launched with Richie Brower serving in a leadership role.
- A church revitalization convention was held earlier in February that was extremely well received.
- An update was given regarding camp meeting at Upper Columbia Academy on June 19-22. An attendance evaluation will occur to decide if camp meeting will continue in its current format.
- Rodney Mills, vice president for administration, shared a conference membership report.
- Final membership numbers for 2023 set a new high of 27,256, including 453 baptisms.
- It was reported that Endicott Church has voted to disband, effective March 31, 2024.
- Due to budget constraints as a result of the Washington salary threshold, it was voted to approve the reduction of one budgeted pastoral staff position for College Place, Yakima 35th Avenue, and Lewiston-Clarkston Valley churches. These positions are currently vacant.

**Financial update**

- Allee Currier, vice president for finance, presented an update on conference finances.
- The 2024 budget was presented. The budget is based on 99% of 2023 tithe, which was \$32,317,997.
- Tithe for 2023 increased by 5.7%. The average tithe increase for North American Division conferences was 7.36%.
- The Washington salary threshold continues to be a concern, with another mandated increase beginning in January. This resulted in a cost of living increase for exempt staff and pastors in the conference.

**Education update**

- Brian Harris, vice president for education, gave an update, featuring Stephanie Gates, principal of Cascade Christian Academy.
- An educator spiritual retreat is planned in April at Camp Wooten for all K-12 teachers and spouses.
- An update was given regarding the symposium that was announced during constituency session. For additional information, see the attached pdf.

**PRESIDENT: IN THE WORD — DEUTERONOMY...**

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It's time for us to go to the other side! But if you have any doubt in your mind: The Lord your God will go ahead of you like a consuming fire. The battle belongs to the Lord. He will consume anything in His path, for fire is the picture of the holiness of God.

If you are a child of the heavenly King, remember that troubles will come into your life. But there is a Holy God who sits on high, and He is well able. God is about to do something!

It's time for us to stop sitting around. It's time for us to go to the other side. God will go before us as a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

Is there anyone here who is ready to break camp and go to the other side? Are you ready to step into the water and go to the other side? Are you ready to give God praise, to give God glory? No matter what your situation is, God is able.

Notice something incredible about this passage that speaks to the gospel of Deuteronomy and the

grace of God. Just like Leviticus, this is a strange place to find grace! He says, "I love you just because I love you. You are a small nation, a poor nation, a weak nation, but I will go ahead of you because I love you." God's love is the love of grace, not the love of merit. Even though we break God's law, He will not break His word. Rather, He will come and break all of our brokenness.

*"Hear, Israel: You are now about to cross the Jordan to go in and dispossess nations greater and stronger than you, with large cities that have walls up to the sky. The people are strong and tall—Anakites! You know about them and have heard it said: 'Who can stand up against the Anakites?' But be assured today that the Lord your God is the one who goes across ahead of you like a devouring fire. He will destroy them; he will subdue them before you. And you will drive them out and annihilate them quickly, as the Lord has promised you."*

—Deuteronomy 9:1-3

**ACTIVE PASTORAL SEARCHES**

- Abundant Life/Cashmere
- College Place Senior Pastor
- Deer Park/Spokane North View
- Irrigon/Heppner/Hermiston
- Mattawa/Othello/Royal City Spanish
- Post Falls/Spirit Lake
- Spokane South Hill
- Touchet/Umapine/WW Northside





# SYMPOSIUM ON BIBLICAL SEXUALITY

March 31 - April 3, 2024

Camp MiVoden

## What is the Symposium on Biblical Sexuality and why is it happening?

The genesis of this discussion came from listening to our field. In 2019, two years prior to President David Jamieson arriving, the UCC Office of Education conducted a visioning process. During that process, our educators and pastors shared that they were dealing with issues relating to LGBTQ+ and requested tools and training in how to appropriately respond. So began the journey of what it might look like to provide a safe space for gaining clarity on how to uphold the Biblical position on human sexuality as understood by the Seventh-day Adventist Church while expressing the gracious love of Jesus Christ toward all people. Recognizing that this was a pressing need, conference leadership agreed to provide an appropriate time and space for that discussion. We ask you to join us in keeping this time together in your prayers.

## Our purpose

The purpose is to equip and empower our pastors and educators with education, guidance, and approaches that are Biblically grounded, relationship-based, and grace-filled in 100% harmony with the GC and NAD Statement on Human Sexuality (see [news.uccsda.org/GCsexuality](https://news.uccsda.org/GCsexuality)).

### Biblically Grounded

As Seventh-day Adventists, we accept the Bible as our only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. To help set the foundation, Richard Davidson, Old Testament Scholar and author of *Flame of Yahweh*, will lead us through what Scripture says about human sexuality.

### Relationship-based

We will hear the testimony of Michael Carducci from Coming Out Ministries about how a church loved him and the Spirit moved in his life. After setting the foundation, we focus on the practical nature of building relationships.

Bill Henson from PostureShift Ministries will provide practical guidance focusing on faithfully honoring God and radically loving people.

### Grace-filled

Jesus has paid the price for each one of us! This grace is truly amazing. As we look forward to how the rubber will meet the road, we look back to Jesus Christ as a model. As understood through Ellen White's writings, Christ's method alone provides us with just such a model.

## How does this symposium relate to the official position of the Church?

To assist us in the planning, we have developed some guiding principles to ensure that this training is 100% in harmony with the GC and NAD statement on human sexuality.

- We believe in and uphold the traditional Biblical view of heterosexual marriage as a loving relationship between one man and one woman for life, male and female.
- We believe that any sexual activity outside the circle of a heterosexual marriage is defined by scripture as sinful.
- We believe that homosexual activity, like all sinful behavior, needs to be radically repented of and forgiven by the redeeming grace and power of Jesus Christ.
- We believe in Christ's transforming power to live according to Biblical truth as we surrender our will to Him and allow Him to live out His life within us.
- We believe that Scripture calls us to follow the example of Jesus Christ to love, care for, and minister to all individuals, no matter their circumstances or choices.
- We believe that we can radically love and accept people without affirming a particular choice of lifestyle that is not in harmony with Scripture.