

Becoming Vessels of Honour

Can this be the case? Will the God of the Universe dwell in His people? He says clearly that His people must be holy for He is holy. He will not dwell in dirty vessels. 2Timothy 2: 21 admonishes “If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.” How then can we as Seventh Day Adventists achieve this state of being vessels unto honour? We see in 1Timothy 5: 24, “Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going to judgment; and some men they follow after.” God’s answer to our sins is the ministration of Jesus Christ in the most holy place. When we repent of and forsake our sins they go to judgment there and He blots them out so our names can remain in the Lamb’s book of life. We also then become vessels unto honour. If repentance does not take place before the judgment, then our sins remain and our names are removed from the book of life (Great Controversy, 483, par. 1).

Judgment of God’s people

The judgment of the living takes place before Christ’s return; then He comes with His reward for every man according to his work (Rev. 22: 12). In this judgment, will God’s people be judged at the same time as the rest of the world? It is stated that judgment begins in the house of God first (1Peter 4:17), also to whom much is given,

much is required (Luke 12:48). Thus judgment starts and ends with spiritual Israel first. Before judgment on the rest of the world begins, according to the prophetic word, there will be a time of tribulation related to the enforcement of the Sunday Law.

Close of Probation

When the Sunday law is enacted probation would have already closed for God’s people. Why? Because it is God’s true people that will be used of God to give the Loud Cry of Revelation 18: 4 to call people out of Babylon; this call occurs right at the time of or soon after the Sunday Law enforcement. Who else could He use to call people out of Babylon but His true followers who are keeping “the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus”? They would have been raising the strident alarm against spiritual Babylon up to that instance. For these individuals to be so used they would first have to be tried, tested, and proven to have the name and character of the Father in their foreheads. When would this have happened? At the Sunday Law enforcement? After the Sunday Law enforcement? No. There would have been no time for them to form the Father’s character at the Sunday Law enforcement and it would have been too late after the enforcement. Character is not developed in a crisis. It is only revealed through the crisis (Christ Object Lessons, 412, par.1).

[To be continued]

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Religious Liberty Newsletter

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This edition of the Quarterly Newsletter of the Religious Liberty Department seeks to inform our readers via two articles. One addresses local topical affairs that are relevant to the church while the other examines an aspect of our religious faith and its relevance to our salvation.

DISCRIMINATION, HUMAN RIGHTS AND HEALTH



Currently, controversy swirls around issues related to sexual morality, freedom of speech and human rights in Jamaica.

As various social groups take their stance on the matters, a newly formed coalition of churches, Jamaica Churches Action Uniting Society for Emancipation (CAUSE), has planned a mass meeting in Half-Way-Tree on Sunday 29 June, 2014 to protest against “injustices which include

the firing of Professor Brendan Bain and the inappropriate sexual education programme which was taught in six children’s homes”. When considering these emotive issues it is our responsibility to ensure that we are led by facts rather than emotions. This article contributes by presenting some facts concerning the Professor Bain issue, as expressed in a statement made by the Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV and AIDS (PANCAP), the regional authority in this area.

Excerpt from PANCAP’s Statement

“The Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV and AIDS (PANCAP) affirms that Professor Brendan Bain’s testimony in the Orozco v. A.G. Belize (2012) case is not consistent with the stated goals of PANCAP to reduce stigma and eliminate discrimination. In fact,...

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it is in dissonance with PANCAP's ongoing work to remove discriminatory laws and affirm human rights.

Although the Partnership is inclusive and members are free to have their individual views and beliefs, PANCAP is of the view that, on principle, Prof Bain's action was not compatible with his leadership position. In adopting an active position of opposing the decriminalization of anal sex between two consenting male adults in private, Prof. Bain has undermined the public health and human rights goals of PANCAP. This view was communicated to Professor Bain during the Fifteenth Meeting of the Priority Areas Coordinating Committee (PACC), a technical committee of the PANCAP Executive Board, which was held via teleconference on 15 January 2014. Professor Bain subsequently resigned as a member of the PACC on 14 March 2014. PANCAP recognizes Prof. Bain's significant contribution to the HIV response in the Caribbean including treatment and training and to the work of the Partnership and its governance bodies.

Our region is at a critical point where further progress towards an AIDS-free Caribbean is premised on mobilizing a strong and coordinated multi-sectoral effort to remove the legal, social and cultural obstacles that prevent universal access to a wide range of comprehensive and high quality health services. Currently, 11 CARICOM States have laws which criminalize consensual same-sex relationships between adults

in private. The Global Commission on HIV and the Law has found that countries which criminalize same-sex sexual activity have higher HIV prevalence rates among men who have sex with men (MSM) than countries that do not; that criminalizing HIV transmission harms HIV prevention and treatment; and that guaranteeing access to reproductive health services can help reduce HIV risk. Specific to the Caribbean, stigma is named as the main reason for the lack of attention to marginalised groups in the prevention efforts, and their general lack of access to HIV-related services, and stigmatising and discriminatory legal and policy measures are common in the regional legal systems. ... The UNAIDS Modes of Transmission (MOT) modeling tool estimates that 32% of new cases in Jamaica and 33% in Dominican Republic occur among MSM. Recognizing these challenges, the Caribbean Regional Strategic Framework (CRSF) 2014-2018 is premised on the understanding that ending HIV is not possible until the human rights of all people, and particularly those most vulnerable to HIV, are fully realized.

PANCAP is convinced that HIV-related stigma and discrimination which contribute to the persistence of AIDS in our Region can be reduced and/or eliminated through collaborative programmes, partnerships and policies supported by governments, private sectors, faith-based organisations, non-governmental organisations,

youth and our other social, regional and international partners. In this regard, PANCAP views this current situation as an opportunity for the region to engage in a dispassionate, thoughtful and holistic discussion that accommodates differing views and promotes understanding and inclusion.

PANCAP is a Caribbean regional partnership of governments, regional civil society organisations, regional institutions and organisations, bilateral and multilateral agencies and contributing donor partners. Established on 14 February 2001, PANCAP provides a structured and unified approach to the Caribbean's response to the HIV epidemic. In this context, it coordinates the response through the Caribbean Regional Strategic Framework on HIV and AIDS which seeks to mobilize resources for HIV programming, maximize the efficient use of these resources thus, increasing their impact, and build the capacity of partners."

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

Jude 3 admonishes God's people to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. What are the principal elements of this faith?

The Sanctuary

Do Seventh Day Adventists (SDAs)

today have a faith that can be traced back to the fathers of Adventism? Great Controversy (p. 406) states "The scripture which above all others had been both the foundation and the central pillar of the advent faith was the declaration:



'Unto two thousand three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed (Daniel 8: 14)." Thus, the heavenly sanctuary, rightly understood and appropriately applied, represented a distinguishing feature of true seventh day adventism from the beginning. This was the same for physical Israel. The Lord says in Exodus 25:8, "Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them". What about the early Christians? In 2 Cor. 6: 16, Paul stresses that God would dwell in His people individually, "for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them and I will be their God and they shall be my people." Thus, from the time of Israel of old, God has wanted to dwell among His people - He has stated His desire to live in us. We are his sanctuary on earth.