



**TY GIBSON**  
co-director

## CONSERVATIVE OR LIBERAL?

**“YOUR EARS SHALL** hear a word behind you, saying, ‘This is the way, walk in it,’ whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left” (Isaiah 30:21).

Apparently, God sees in us an inclination to veer off course to the right or to the left. In fact, one of the words for sin in the Bible is “iniquity,” *avon* in the Hebrew, which means *to be bent or inclined*. It is a general characteristic of human beings to polarize into conservative and liberal camps, politically and socially. The fact that the church also experiences this same polarizing segregation to the right or to the left should clue us into the fact that we tend to bring our imbalanced personalities into religion with us.

Ellen White insightfully observed this fact:

“There is in human nature

a tendency to run to extremes and from one extreme to another entirely opposite. Many are fanatics. They are consumed by

**OUR EXTREME LEANINGS TO THE RIGHT OR TO THE LEFT ARE TWO FORMS OF THE SAME MENTAL ILLNESS. . . .**

a fiery zeal which is mistaken for religion, but character is the true test of discipleship. Have they the meekness of Christ? Have they His

humility and sweet benevolence? Is the soul-temple emptied of pride, arrogance, selfishness, and censoriousness? If not, they know

not what manner of spirit they are of. They do not realize that true Christianity consists in bearing much fruit to the glory of God” (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 305-306).

To be a conservative or a liberal is nothing of which to be proud. It’s a manifestation of our bent, unbalanced, sinful human nature.

Liberals tend to be proud of their liberalism, and conservatives tend to be proud of their conservatism. But the truth is, both are manifestations of the sin problem. Our extreme leanings to the right and to the left are two forms of the same mental illness.

Both conservatives and liberals in



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**JEFFREY ROSARIO**  
speaker

# ADDICTED TO SERVICE

As I teach year after year, class after class, seminar after seminar, the thought always haunts me, “What will these people do with the things they’re learning five, or even ten, years from now? Will they simply revert to life as usual? Will they still be pressing forward or will they burn out and throw in the towel?”

One of the greatest joys I get to experience as I travel teaching and preaching is encountering former students from ARISE and other training programs I’ve been a part of. It’s such an encouragement to know that many of these friends are still shining, still making valuable contributions to the church and being a blessing in the world.

I recently traveled to the Netherlands to speak at a young adult conference. Throughout the weekend I got to fellowship with two young ladies, Indirah and Irene. Not only are they old friends and alumni from the ARISE class of 2008, but there’s a sincerity about their commitment to the gospel and their desire to serve the Lord that just inspires me.

After graduating from the ARISE

program about seven years ago, they both felt a calling to immediately get involved in personal ministry and public evangelism. After several months of ministry experience in England, neither of them could shrug off the deep spiritual needs of their home churches in their native country, the Netherlands.

But as I know from personal experience, the selflessness which a life of ministry demands can often test one’s faith; it subjects our pretensions and professions to “the fire” and reveals the true “genuineness” (1 Peter 1:7) of our personal experience with God. Indirah and Irene, as gentle and sweet as they are, have got some serious grit.

One barely out of her teens, the other in her early twenties, they returned to the Netherlands to trail blaze into ministry. With no support from any church institution, either financially or even ideologically, they started interacting with people in the community and giving Bible studies. This kind of ministry, not to mention their lack of formal

seminary training, is unheard of in that region of the world church. Living out of their suitcases, they were left to fend for themselves.

Since they started their work there, they have launched an evangelistic series every year. This had not taken place in their churches since the 1980s! They

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took their learning from ARISE and began training church members in the scriptures and inspiring them to share their faith. Building momentum for several years now, they have seen their local personal ministries department grow from a mere four members to over twenty. This includes members from various backgrounds (medical workers, lawyers, social workers, etc.). Enthusiasm continues to swell as church members, including those newly baptized, share their faith with others.

A new vision is catching on in



the Netherlands. What began as a mere mustard seed is now getting attention on a wider scale. Indirah and Irene are on the verge of a new and exciting initiative. The Netherlands Union Conference has approached them about pioneering a new church plant together with a team of like-minded members and their local church board. These ladies are seeing the fruit of their labor through the work of the Holy Spirit.

On the last day of my meetings at the young adult conference, I was approached by a young man, Benvindo da Luz. He exudes sincerity and earnestness in a very refreshing way. He smiled and said, “You were a teacher to my teachers.” He went on telling me about his spiritual journey and how two young ladies brought him to the gospel. As a 28-year-old atheist, he stumbled on some videos online that arrested his attention. After learning which church was behind the videos, he Googled for the

nearest Adventist church. During his visit one Sabbath, he asked a church member if there was anyone who could study the Bible with him. Expecting to be introduced to some older, seasoned Bible teacher, he was surprised to meet Indirah and Irene. “How could they know anything?” he told me as he laughed, relishing in the memories. “They’re so young.” Once he began studying with them he was blown away. He couldn’t understand how they knew so much. Benvindo was eventually baptized, attended an evangelistic school himself, and has since brought nearly his entire family to the gospel. He is currently in the planning process of a new ministry initiative in the Netherlands. I get the sense that he’ll end up finding many others like himself to introduce to the gospel.

I attended that conference to tell those young people about my story. But it was the stories that I encountered there that actually

infused my own story with even greater meaning. God reminded me that the greatest joy we can experience is knowing that our labors are not in vain and that those who we minister to will eventually spread their gospel germs and infect others with the beauty of Jesus. This is what keeps me going. It is also what kept the apostle Paul. Excited and encouraged from the experience of others, he wrote to the Corinthians about certain disciples who “have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints” (1 Corinthians 16:15). I met some of those at that conference. Indirah and Irene, though smart, sincere, and disciplined, have yet a more valuable qualification. The love of Jesus has “addicted” them to a life of genuine service for others. May their addiction continue to spread throughout the churches in the Netherlands!

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## COME SEE US!

### APRIL 30-MAY 3

ASI Northwest Spring Convention  
<http://asinw.netasi.org/>  
Jeffrey Rosario

### MAY 14

3ABN Today LIVE  
[www.3abn.org](http://www.3abn.org) / 618.627.4651  
Ty Gibson

### MAY 23

College Heights Adventist Church  
Lacombe, Alberta, Canada  
<http://chsda.ca> / 403.782.6131  
Ty Gibson

### MAY 30

Cascade Adventist Church  
Bend, OR  
[www.cascadesda.org](http://www.cascadesda.org) / 541.749.9005  
James Rafferty

### MAY 30

Milo Adventist Academy Graduation  
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[www.miloacademy.net](http://www.miloacademy.net) / 541.825.3200  
Ty Gibson

### JUNE 23-27

Light Bearers Convocation  
Jasper, OR  
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Ty Gibson, James Rafferty, David Asscherick, Jeffrey Rosario, Risë Rafferty, Matt Parra & Fred Bischoff

  
LIGHT BEARERS

## ... CONSERVATIVE OR LIBERAL? *(continued from page 1)*

the church should find it deeply troubling that conservatives and liberals, Pharisees and Sadducees, united to crucify Christ.

It doesn't matter how different conservatives and liberals appear to be on the surface, because they tend to have one defining characteristic in common: they hate each other, or at least they dislike, discredit, disavow, and politically dismember one another. On both sides there is pride of opinion, arrogance of attitude and, most glaringly, a spirit of censor against the other side. So

the differences are only skin-deep, while at heart they are moved by one and the same spirit—the spirit of self-serving enmity that crucified Jesus.

Bottom line: there is no virtue in being a conservative, and there is no virtue in being a liberal. The only virtue at all is in Christ, and our only real safety is to live His love toward those with whom we find ourselves at odds, especially toward those with whom we find ourselves at odds.

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