

we're calling it "ARISE 2.0." The program is completely based around the biblical narrative, and moves chronologically through it. From *Pre-Creation* to *Creation* to the *Fall* to *Covenant* to *Messiah* to *Church* to *Re-creation*, these seven "chapters" from the narrative are the intentional backdrop of every class. This configuration allows for so many possibilities and improvements. We're so excited, we can hardly contain ourselves.

The program is new, but the goal is the same: to make *disciple-making disciples of Jesus Christ!*

We know that is something we can all get excited about!

And the men of Judah are His pleasant plant.

He looked for justice, but behold, oppression;

For righteousness, but behold, a cry for help" (Isaiah 5:7).

The church may seek to worship God all she wants, but according to the Old Testament prophets, worshiping God without a commitment to social justice is meaningless to Him. In the absence of justice, religious performances merely nauseate God.³ Amos vividly recorded God's intense sentiments, and his words have not lost any sting:

"I hate, I despise your religious festivals; your assemblies are a stench to me.

Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings,

I will not accept them.

Though you bring choice fellowship offerings,

I will have no regard for them.

Away with the noise of your songs!

I will not listen to the music of your harps.

But let justice roll on like a river,

righteousness like a never-failing stream!" (Amos 5:21-24, NIV).

God wants justice and righteousness.

Let that sink in.

It has profound implications for the church of today.

¹ Hans LaRondelle, *Israel of God in Prophecy*, p. 92

² Ibid., quoting H.H. Rowley on Jeremiah 7:23

³ Chris Marshall, *Little Book of Biblical Justice*, p. 30

WE'RE STILL HIRING!

visit www.lightbearers.org for details

Events Schedule

- **October 4-6**
ASI Portugal Convention, Lisbon, Portugal
www.asiportugal.org
Jeffrey Rosario
- **October 6**
Valley View SDA Church, Medford, OR
(541) 773-6097
James Rafferty
- **October 19-20**
Battle Creek Tabernacle, MI
(269) 968-8101
Ty Gibson
- **October 25**
3ABN Today Live
www.3ABN.org • (269) 968-8101
Ty Gibson & David Asscherick
- **November 2-3**
Walla Walla Eastgate Adventist Church, WA
(509) 529-9933
Ty Gibson
- **November 3-4, 10-11 & 17-18**
Springfield SDA Church, OR
(541) 746-8263
David Asscherick
- **November 5-10**
Milo Adventist Academy, Days Creek, OR
(541) 825-3200
James Rafferty
- **January 5-12**
Simi Valley SDA Church, CA
(805) 526-0141
Ty Gibson
- **January 16-19**
Anchors of Truth, 3ABN
www.3ABN.org • (269) 968-8101
Ty Gibson

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Light Bearers is a non-profit ministry based in beautiful Oregon State.

Our purpose is to help proclaim the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ through the spoken and published word.

MISSION UPDATE

The Newsletter of Light Bearers

ARISE 2.0



By David Asscherick

It's hard to believe that we just began our 10th ARISE class! In many ways, it seems like it was only yesterday that I sat down with Nathan Renner on the living room floor of his Bay City, Michigan trailer to hammer out the details of what the course would look like. In the intervening years, the four-month ARISE Cornerstone Program has trained nearly 500 students! All I can say is, *What has God wrought!*

When ARISE was first conceived it was largely a training program for would-be Bible workers. The Michigan Conference was eager to hire Bible workers, and we were eager to train them. Over the years, however, our focus has shifted somewhat. Yes, every year we still have students who go on to be excellent Bible workers, but the program overall has not been geared specifically to that end since those

early years. The watchword then was *Bible workers*. The watchword today is disciples. Here's why ...

Typically, less than 20% of the students in any given ARISE program even have an interest in becoming Bible workers. The other 80+% are interested in two things: getting to know God through His Word and learning how to share Him confidently with others. (Aspiring Bible workers, of course, want the same thing!) Some will do this as nurses, others as teachers, some as tradesmen, and still others as students, salesmen or chefs!

After the first few years it became obvious that if ARISE's primary goal was to train Bible workers, we'd be catering to 20% or less of the class. So the shift began, and has continued to the present. Every year we review and evaluate the program overall and the individual components, classes

and instructors that make it up. I can say confidently that the program has improved every year since we started a decade ago in partnership with the Michigan Conference. It doesn't mean the earlier programs were bad—no way!—but that the programs have kept improving incrementally every year.

This year, though, has been a leap forward. In the year leading up to this program, Ty, James, Jeffrey, Randy, and I, along with other members of the Light Bearers team, sat down at the "drawing board" and took everything off the table. We essentially wiped the slate clean and started from scratch. It was scary, for sure, but we knew we were onto something.

After many meetings over many months and much refining and re-refining, we arrived at a whole new way of doing ARISE. In house

continued on p. 4 ...

CONSIDER THIS . . .

The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God's plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to "the principalities and powers in heavenly places," the final and full display of the love of God. Ephesians 3:10.

Ellen G. White,
The Acts of the Apostles, p. 9

Hanging upon the cross Christ was the gospel. Now we have a message, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." Will not our church members keep their eyes fixed on a crucified and risen Saviour, in whom their hopes of eternal life are centered? This is our message, our argument, our doctrine, our warning to the impenitent, our encouragement for the sorrowing, the hope for every believer. If we can awaken an interest in men's minds that will cause them to fix their eyes on Christ, we may step aside, and ask them only to continue to fix their eyes upon the Lamb of God. They thus receive their lesson.

Ellen G. White,
SDA Bible Commentary
vol. 6, p. 1113

WHEN THE CHURCH FORGETS JUSTICE



By Jeffrey Rosario

When most people think of the word "church," they usually think of Christians, the teachings of Jesus, and the New Testament. But it's interesting that the idea of "church" is actually an Old Testament concept. The word 'church' comes from the Greek *ecclesia*, meaning "called out ones." Abraham was called out by God and told that his descendants would be a blessing to the world (Genesis 12:1-3).

Those descendants are the Jews. They were the original church of the Old Testament. In the book of Acts, Stephen refers to them as "the church in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38, KJV). The New Testament church is simply a continuation of the Old Testament church. So in order to understand the essence of what the church of today is supposed to be like, we need to

understand the original church of the Old Testament.

The record of their experiences has been preserved "as examples" and are "warnings for us" (I Corinthians 10:11, NIV). We learn from their triumphs and failures. There's an aspect of their experience that deserves our attention. It's the subject of social justice. It's interesting to see the role that justice played in their purpose and identity, and the expectations God had on them.

In *The Israel of God in Prophecy*, Dutch theologian Hans LaRondelle highlights the basic reason for God choosing Israel as a prototype in the ancient world. "In short, Israel was chosen to represent the attractive character and saving will of Yahweh to the Gentiles."¹ He continues:

"The purpose of the election is service, and when the service is withheld the election loses its meaning, and therefore fails. . . If she (Israel) ceased to acknowledge Yahweh to be her God, then she declared that she no longer wished to be His people. . . Her high calling to be the Chosen People was not the mark of the Divine indulgence or

favoritism, but a summons to a task exacting and unceasing, and election and task were so closely bound together that she could not have the one without the other."²

Whenever Israel loses a sense of her purpose, the whistle blowers (prophets) emerge with messages of warning to call her out of the two dangers that consistently loom over her: 1) apostasy from God and 2) social injustice. And both of these dangers are related; the latter is the result of the former. Apathy toward others is an unavoidable indicator that we've strayed from the heart of God.

This concept of justice runs like a thread throughout the prophets of Israel with each of them singing the same tune.

Listen to Isaiah's plea: "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rebuke the oppressor; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow" (Isaiah 1:16-17, NKJV).

Listen to Jeremiah's declaration: "Thus says the LORD: Execute judgment and righteousness, and

deliver the plundered out of the hand of the oppressor. Do no wrong and do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, or the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place" (Jeremiah 22:3, NKJV).

Listen to Ezekiel's rebuke: "The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them. In your midst they have oppressed the stranger; in you they have mistreated the fatherless and the widow" (Ezekiel 34:4; 22:7, NKJV).

Listen to Micah's summary: "He has told you, O man, what is good, and what the LORD really wants from you: he wants you to promote justice, to be faithful, and to live obediently before your God" (Micah 6:8, NET).

Social justice is so central to Old Testament theology that God identifies Israel's failure on these very grounds:

"For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel,