



**JAMES RAFFERTY**  
co-director

## HOW JESUS WAS LIKE US

### RECENTLY WE PUBLISHED A

small book on the humanity of Jesus Christ entitled, *How Jesus Was Like Us*. This book was written to both identify how Jesus Christ in His humanity is like us and how He is different. Here is a brief summary:

Jesus came face to face with the root of our problem. The Savior of man came to the very spot where sin had taken the place of self-sacrificing love. The greatest battle we have to fight is against selfishness. Jesus fought that battle every day (Matthew 16:24; 1 Corinthians 15:31). The will of Christ was just like yours and mine. He did not naturally want the cross. His will shrunk from God's will for Him as decidedly as yours and mine does (Matthew 26:39, 42, 44). In this way Jesus was just like us, but He was far more than us. Unlike you and me, Jesus always denied His own will and chose to do His Father's will. He denied Himself and revealed the other centered love of God. Jesus was always obedient to God, He was sinless, holy and

undefiled by sin. And being so, He recoiled from the sins that attract us. Hating sin and loving God, He crucified the natural self-will.

The humanity that Jesus took possessed the root of the sin problem—self-will. And taking that humanity, Jesus overcame the self-centered human will in our behalf, crushing our selfishness by ever submitting His human will to God. In this sense all were crucified in Christ because Christ took upon Himself the “self-will” of all mankind.

*“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Romans 8:3).*

As a man, Christ trusted God's will for His life no matter how crucifying it was to His human nature. This trustful surrender of Christ's humanity to God restored

in fallen human nature the full image of God (because this was the very nature Christ took upon Himself). In Christ, fallen human nature stood victorious over selfishness. Christ's victory, gifted to us through faith, is the essence of our salvation. This victory over the

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flesh of “self-will” is a gift given to all who will receive it by faith.

Our Savior longs for every person to receive and know the forgotten joy of this salvation from self. Take hold of the fact that Christ loves you more than Himself. Let this love infuse every fiber of your being and you will know the true joy of other-centered living.

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DAVID ASSCHERICK  
co-director

# AN OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME

**IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE,** really. It happened to me, and I'm still trying to grasp it, to take it in. What happened?

Well, I just preached to representatives from more than 110 countries during two globally-significant, Seventh-day Adventist Youth Congresses. It is unlikely that I will ever have a similar opportunity during my ministry. What a privilege and an honor this has been!

The first Congress was held in Pretoria, South Africa from July

8-13, the second in Novi Sad, Serbia from July 30 to August 3. The theme for the South African Congress, which is held just once every five years, always in a different

country, was *Jesus in the City*. It is put on by the General Conference Youth

Department. The theme in Novi Sad, at the Pan-European Youth Congress, was *The Power of One*, an unambiguous reference to Jesus Christ. Somewhere around 8000 Seventh-day Adventist young people attended these two Congresses! Talk about an opportunity to impact the church and the world globally!

In South Africa, my theme for the evening meetings addressed a re-envisioning and reconstruction of the Adventist message with "God is love" (1 John 4:8) at the

very center. This should not be, of course, revolutionary, but, sadly, for many in our church it is. I started with the non-negotiable truth that "God is love" and sought to build

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our doctrinal and missional identity from there.

One of the many evidences I cited was Ellen White's opening

## A MESSAGE OF LOVE

"Those who wait for the Bridegroom's coming are to say to the people, 'Behold your God.' The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them."

Ellen White  
*Christ's Object Lessons*,  
pp. 415-416

## ONE MESSAGE

"One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up every other—Christ our righteousness."

Ellen White  
*The Review and Herald*,  
December 23, 1890

## THE GOSPEL

"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 Savior, 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."

*SDA Bible Commentary*,  
Volume 6, p. 1113

and closing lines in her five-volume Conflict of the Ages series. *Patriarchs and Prophets* opens with this arresting line:

*“God is love.” His nature, His law, is love. It ever has been; it ever will be. “The high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity,” whose “ways are*

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*everlasting,” changeth not. With Him “is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” Every manifestation of creative power is an expression of infinite love. The sovereignty of God involves fullness of blessing to all created beings.*

And *The Great Controversy*, the very book responsible for bringing me, a former purple-haired punk rocker, to faith closes with this poetic, almost rapturous, sentence:

*The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.*

Ellen White understood the absolute centrality of God’s character and nature. Without this

foundational understanding, the long conflict between good and evil, Christ and Satan, makes little sense. The biblical message, and thus the Adventist message, must start and end on this absolutely central theme.

After six presentations, I felt confident that the Lord had used

me to bring His love, goodness, and glory to the forefront of the thinking of the thousands of attendees. The translators (there were more than ten!) did a marvelous and spirit-filled job. I am humbly indebted to them and their spirit-given skills.

God was glorified. Jesus was uplifted. And lives, of course, were changed. Because that’s what happens when Christ is preached.

The Pan-European Youth Congress, in Novi Sad, was arranged differently. Each speaker was assigned both a topic and a day. The topics were: The Power of Jesus to Make Us One, The Power of Jesus to Make Us New, The Power of Jesus to Make Us Grow, and The Power of Jesus to Make Us Strong. I was assigned the third day: The Power of Jesus to Make Us Grow. Additionally, I delivered five workshop sessions on two topics: The Missional Lifestyle and Our Prophetic Identity.

Once again, I sought to lift Jesus and His saving and growing power higher and still higher. Unlike South Africa, I had an onstage translator. I was nervous about this, but my translator, Bozidar, did an

absolutely fantastic job! We made an odd-looking couple, with me at 5’ 8 and him at 6’ 8! I joked to the attendees that I was passing up the opportunity of a lifetime to preach on David and Goliath! Only we couldn’t figure out who would be David and who would be Goliath! Too funny.

Like South Africa, the Spirit filled each of the presenters, and Jesus was glorified! There is no doubt that when I look back on my ministry many years from now—whether in heaven or on earth—I will regard these two opportunities, each within a couple weeks of the other, as one of the highlights of my life.

I am so thankful to the Father and His Son, Jesus, for the life they have given me. All I want to do is give everything I can back to Them.

Don’t you feel the very same?

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## COME SEE US!

### SEPTEMBER 7

Glide Seventh-day Adventist Church  
Glide, OR  
541.496.3956 / [glide.adventistnw.org](http://glide.adventistnw.org)  
James Rafferty

### SEPTEMBER 12

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

### SEPTEMBER 13-14

Metropolitan SDA Church  
Hyattsville, MD  
301.853.2224 / [www.metrodda.org](http://www.metrodda.org)  
David Asscherick

### SEPTEMBER 20-22

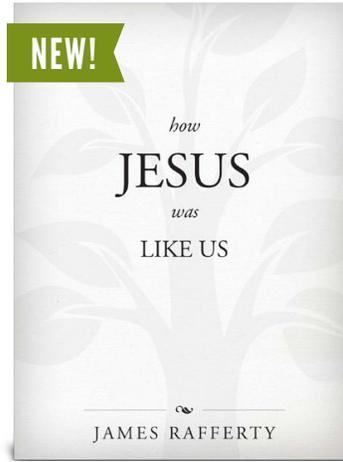
North California Conference Youth Rally  
Sacramento, CA  
925.685.4300 / [ncc.adventist.org](http://ncc.adventist.org)  
Ty Gibson

### SEPTEMBER 26-28

3ABN Fall Homecoming  
618.627.4651 / [www.3abn.org](http://www.3abn.org)  
David Asscherick

### OCTOBER 19

Fall Creek Seventh-day Adventist Church  
Fall Creek, OR  
541.937.3526  
James Rafferty



## *How Jesus Was Like Us*

Without question, the human nature of Christ is one of the hot buttons in theological dialogue among Seventh-day Adventists. What this debate needs is not more debate, but the power of simplicity.

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### INTERESTED?

Send your resumé to [steph@lightbearers.org](mailto:steph@lightbearers.org).

  
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