

BEYOND  
BELIEFS  
2

part 2:  
peer.  
ministry

*What a solution could look like*



Leanne M. Sigvartsen  
Jan A. Sigvartsen

# An Uncle Arthur Story of Peer Ministry

Leanne M. Sigvartsen

We all know who Uncle Arthur is, but do you know about Vaino Kohtanen and the part he played in Arthur Maxwell's life? You don't? Well, do we have a story for you.

Did you know that as a young man Arthur Maxwell was not interested in Christianity... at all? His brother Spencer Maxwell, an eyewitness to these events, wrote in 1971<sup>1</sup> that when the family accepted the Adventist faith young Arthur would have none of it. In fact, Spencer claims Arthur was so resistant to Christianity that when the minister would call at the family home in England, Arthur would retreat to his room. On one occasion, he actually avoided the minister entirely by hopping out the window and sliding down a drain pipe. Even when his mother relocated the family to Stanborough Park College (the forerunner of Newbold College, England) so other family members could attend, young Arthur would not go near the place. Spencer went on to say that, naturally, this was concerning for their mother; so, as all good Christian mothers do when they haven't a clue as to what to do with their kids – she prayed. And God listened.

It is a long standing tradition with those who live near an Adventist university or college campus to invite students home for Sabbath lunch, and it would seem the Maxwell family were no strangers to this practice. Spencer recounts that one such student they invited home was a young man from Finland named Vaino “Bernhard” Kohtanen. Bernhard was a theology student and was described by those who knew him at the time as “winsome” – a word we don't use much anymore but essentially means funny, engaging and cheerful. He was also very dedicated to God, his faith and his dream to one day return to Finland to be an evangelist. This likeable young man soon became good friends with both Spencer and

---

<sup>1</sup> Maxwell, S. G. (1971). A Brother Remembers. *Australasian Record*, 75(10), 11.

Arthur. According to Spencer, through this friendship it wasn't long before Arthur changed his mind about Stanborough Park College. He not only consented to visit the campus, but decided he also wanted to attend. His mother was overjoyed and scraped together the money for his school fees, and Arthur became roommates with his friend Bernhard. Spencer Maxwell described in his article that the change in Arthur's attitude towards Christianity was "as complete as that of the Apostle Paul. And from that time forward he never looked back."<sup>2</sup>

This is a rather curious little story that not many people have heard because Spencer published his eyewitness account of Arthur's conversion experience in an Australian publication in the 1970's that many Seventh-day Adventists, laity and researchers alike, did not have access to until the online Adventist Archives resource was made publically available. It is a story about how friendships can influence our lives, how peer evangelism from genuine friends may be an extremely effective tool in retaining and attracting youth and young adults to the Seventh-day Adventist faith. The simple act of inviting a student home for lunch can have far reaching consequences. I mean, what if the Maxwell's had never invited Bernhard home for a meal... the stories that so many of us read as children may, quite easily, never have been written. Food for thought – no pun intended.

We all know what happened to Arthur Maxwell, but what of his friend Bernard? What happened to this likeable, cheerful young man? We know quite a bit about him actually. He has a pretty good presence in Adventist Archives online searches. He even has his own Wikipedia page which has pictures of him and his wife. "Bernard," or just Vaino Kohtanen as he was known in Finland, returned to his homeland and, along with two colleagues, was instrumental in the spread of the Adventist faith in Finland and other parts of Scandinavia.<sup>3</sup> His series of evangelistic meetings held in Helsinki in 1914, at age 25, were held in a hall that seated over 800 persons which he was able to "fill to overflowing" over consecutive nights.

Visitors to Finland would marvel at how rapidly the Seventh-day Adventist faith grew, especially among young people. Given the three evangelists in this country at this time were in their mid twenties, as were many of their converts, it would seem they responded to evangelism from their peers. Additionally, church leadership made churches much more than places of worship. Similar to the YMCA,

---

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Hall, H. H. (1914). Land of the Midnight Sun. *Signs of the Times*, 41(7), 13.

where Vaino and his fellow evangelists actually met and accepted the Adventist faith, Finnish churches in the early 1900's were a community center, a sporting facility, and provided an active social calendar outside of services.<sup>4</sup>

Vaino earned his first Finnish Conference position in 1920 at age 29 due to his success in public evangelism. He later served as the President of the Finnish Conference and under his presidency, church numbers increased by 32%.<sup>5 6</sup> His first Conference session as President was attended and reported by none other than his friend Arthur Maxwell who wrote in an article printed in *The Youth Instructor* that when he met up with his "old college chum" in Finland on this occasion that, "We were glad to see each other, I can tell you".<sup>7</sup>

So what can we learn from the story of Arthur and Vaino, because this wouldn't be a good Uncle Arthur story without learning something. Perhaps friendship and being open to people, all people, can potentially have an enormous impact on our lives. Perhaps seeing Christianity in genuine friends is so much more effective than merely hearing about it from people who only "befriend" others for no other purpose than to convert them. Maybe talking to friends rather than being talked at by a preacher is so much more rewarding. Perhaps it is the realization that even major heroes of Adventism like Arthur Maxwell, didn't always start out that way but through supportive friendship was able to set a course for his life and "never look back."

---

<sup>4</sup> Rasmussen, S. (1922) Good News from Scandinavia. *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, 99(4), 26.

<sup>5</sup> Rogers, H. E. (Ed.).(1933). *1933 Yearbook of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* Washington DC: Review and Herald, page 149.

<sup>6</sup> Rogers, H. E. (Ed.).(1938). *1938 Yearbook of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* Washington DC: Review and Herald, page 160.

<sup>7</sup> Maxwell, A. S. (1934). An Editor Abroad. *The Youth Instructor*, 82(17), 9-10,12.

## What a solution could look like

Report prepared by Leanne M. Sigvartsen

*Project Manager, Beyond Beliefs Project, December 2013 (Revised June 2015)*

The findings presented in part one of the report on Peer Ministry, “A need for a different approach,” challenge the traditional model to Millennial young adult ministry and evangelism, and even question the effectiveness of youth pastors. The Beyond Beliefs study is a solution focused study committed to giving Millennial young adults a real voice. And sometimes research obtains some unexpected results. The researchers wrote this report to also provide one possible solution to the real issues that manifested themselves in the Beyond Beliefs – [Part 1: Peer Ministry Report: A need for a different approach.](#)

It must be stressed that the findings reported in part one of this report are preliminary, though almost a third of the undergraduate students at Andrews University participated in the Beyond Beliefs study, further study is recommended before significant financing, programming, and policy change be implemented to accommodate the distinctive plan suggested in this report. This being the case, it is recommended that this model could first be trialed at Andrews University. The Beyond Beliefs study also identified that Andrews University is an excellent place to trial such programs because students do not elect to attend this institution because of any significant conservative or liberal ideology. Rather, the predominant reasons for why they chose Andrews University is because they wanted to attend an Adventist university (63.4%) and this institution offered the best program in their discipline (60.2%). Only 3.3% identified that conservative ideology played a part in their decision to attend Andrews University and, interestingly, another 3.5% stated that liberal ideology placed a part in their decision to attend Andrews University. Students were also asked to identify if they themselves held conservative or liberal ideologies; only 15% said they were liberal and 10% said they were conservative, 43% said they were a bit of both, 16% said they didn’t like these terms, 7% said they were neither, 5% said they didn’t know what these terms even meant, and 4% identified as being something other than these largely American sociopolitical terms. It must also be noted that, among all institutions of higher learning, Andrews University is the second most culturally diverse university in the United States.

## A new Campus Ministries approach

A new campus ministries approach following a model of peer ministry under the direction of a religion academic undertaken by the students studying theology and religion at an undergraduate level may prove efficacious for Millennial young adults. Instead of just a few chaplains, or youth ministers who visit for a day or two and then are gone, students at Seventh-day Adventist universities could have dozens of student chaplains living alongside them from different ethnic, socioeconomic, and geographic backgrounds ministering to the needs of a diverse student body. At Andrews University, for example, where there are approximately 100 religion and theology undergraduate students, and approximately 2,000 undergraduate students – each religion and theology student could minister to 20 of their peers. There are also a large number of female ministry students allowing the future generation of Seventh-day Adventists to become accustomed to female clergy.

A formal professional skills and experience development program where theology and religion students are responsible for campus ministries under the mentorship of the Religion department, may be a strategy that may ensure graduates of such programs are significantly more job ready upon graduation, thus minimizing additional costs in training and mentoring them by conferences upon their entry into the ministry. It may also allow young adults to be positively influenced by peers (like Vaino Kohtanen and Arthur Maxwell) and perhaps break down some of the skepticism mainstream students may hold towards the rigor of ministerial education.

Diverting funding from a traditional campus ministry model into an academic department may also allow academics in this department to develop more interactive classes concentrating on faith issues, similar to RELT225 Doctrines of Adventist Faith, and integrate faith into learning, while still meeting accreditation requirements. Alternatively, diverted funds could be used to pay honorariums to student chaplains as a token of the appreciation their school has for their service.

This type of formal development program also has a number of other advantages:

- Theology and religion graduates are job ready and will have extensive formal and documented experience working with educated young adults – a demographic group that will be with them throughout their career as a minister.
- It is significantly more cost effective than the traditional campus ministry model that relies heavily on guest speakers, their travel costs, costly event programming, and chaplain/support staff wages.
- Allows theology and religion students to have significant real world exposure to ministry to determine if this discipline/career is really for them which may decrease high attrition rates among clergy.
- Allow theology and religion students to develop ministry specialties such as pastoral counseling, preaching, small groups, event planning, etc. prior to concluding their degree.
- Demonstrates that Adventist universities are proactive and serious about producing quality theology and religion graduates and are not merely ministry degree mills.

- Allows theology and religion students the opportunity to undertake needs analyses on their “parishioners” to identify needs and develop online resources to meet those needs for both their class work and for use by ministers globally, who may find them useful.
- Fulfil urgent needs within the Religion department for pastoral practicum opportunities, which for universities that have a ministry graduate program like Andrews University, is virtually impossible in small, rural communities where Adventist universities are often located.
- Real world experience may make graduates highly employable, particularly female graduates who often struggle to obtain positions without experience. Students may like to establish a “mock” conference each year to gain experience in working within the organizational model that they will work under upon entering ministry with the Seventh-day Adventist church.
- Affirms and empowers a young adult as an “adult” and builds their confidence in their skills as a minister while under the supervision of academics who want to see them succeed.
- Minimizes didactic and paternalistic attitudes towards young adults which is apparent in current young adult ministry models.
- Young adults report they are influenced much more by other young adults than they are by youth pastors.

Thus, it is proposed that, rather than the recruitment of campus chaplains to run campus ministries and funding costly and seemingly inefficacious programming, Adventist universities may wish to instead fund a faculty position within their Religion department that could specifically supervise and mentor theology and religion students who in turn will run the campus ministries program. This faculty member could also assist already busy faculty members in coordinating and reporting ministerial practicum components that are required in upwards of 20 classes offered by the Religion department.

Following is a model of this program and its proposed function. Attached please find a position description which articulates the skills, experience, and qualifications of an appropriate faculty member to coordinate this professional skills and experience development program for Adventist universities. Both take into consideration the findings of the *Beyond Beliefs 2* study outlines in the “Peer Ministry: Part 1 – A need for a Different Approach” report.



# University Logo

## POSITION DESCRIPTION

**Job Title:** Faculty Member - Ministerial Professional Development Program

**Purpose:** Oversee a Campus Ministry program that is organized and executed by all theology and religion majors. Consult with and provide mentorship for these student chaplains/ministers ensuring the efficacy and relevancy of their involvement in Campus Ministries meets their pastoral practicum requirements and develops measurable ministerial skills to ensure job readiness and employability upon graduation. Liaise with the faculty of the Religion Department to ensure pastoral practicum components of classes are fulfilled and have identifiable competency based learning outcomes. Teach classes within the Religion Department relevant to duties. Publish findings from needs analysis and efficacy of peer ministry.

**Reporting:** This position reports to the Chair, Religion Department.

## DUTIES

### *Professional Development Program*

- Maintain a thorough knowledge of competency based learning protocols and undertake formal vocational needs and skills analysis for student ministers. Apply outcomes of this analysis to a professional development program for theology and religion students.
- Develop a professional development program for ministry students in consultation with the faculty of the Religion Department to meet their pastoral practicum needs.
- Consult with church leadership nationally and internationally to identify professional development requirements they would like to see incorporated into the ministerial professional development program.
- Consult with all theology and religion majors to identify strengths and ministry interests. Work collaboratively with students to match them with Campus Ministry programs and initiatives suited to their ministerial strengths and interests. Mentor a student operated planning committee and needs analysis research committee.
- Maintain a thorough knowledge of peer-reviewed research pertaining to Millennial young adults, especially Seventh-day Adventist young adults. Provide advice and guidance to theology and religion students with relation to this research to improve efficacy of peer ministry programs.

### ***Research and Development***

- Assist students in developing needs analysis tools to research spiritual and sociocultural needs of the student body.
- Maintain a thorough knowledge of research on human subjects, Institutional Review Board procedures, and legal requirements of the United States Federal Office of Human Research Protections. Strictly undertake all needs analysis on the student body in accordance with these guidelines. Ensure students undertaking research have appropriate training and certification.
- Publish findings from needs analysis and overall efficacy of the ministerial professional development program in both mainstream and peer-reviewed publications.
- Develop and modify the ministerial professional development program as research findings recommend.

### ***Teaching***

- Teach classes within the Religion and Biblical Languages department relevant to area of expertise.
- Maintain a publication record in academic peer-reviewed literature.

## QUALIFICATIONS AND SELECTION CRITERIA

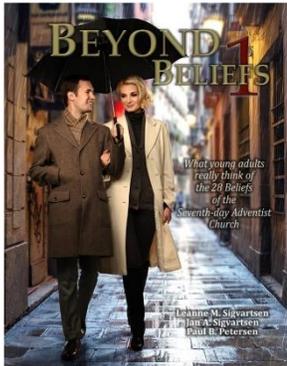
1. Earned PhD qualifications in Religion, or near completion of the same. Strong biblical exegesis and empirical biblical research skills.
2. A thorough knowledge of peer-reviewed research pertaining to ministry to Millennial young adults, especially Seventh-day Adventist young adults. Preference will be given to incumbents who have published empirical research relating to ministry to Millennial young adults.
3. A thorough understanding of competency based learning protocols and the application of the same within an undergraduate professional development program.
4. Experience in teaching university students, both male and female, who are pursuing ministry as a career.
5. Strong negotiation and consultation skills. The ability to work with and inspire ministerial students, both male and female who will be undertaking comprehensive Campus Ministry duties. Ability to work collaboratively with academics and leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist church worldwide.
6. Experience in working with educated young adults in a partnership that empowers rather than dominates.
7. Ministerial experience is required. The incumbent will be working with a number of female ministerial students, thus, out of professional respect for male academics that have declined ordination as a mark of solidarity with female clergy, and females academics who have not attained ordination/commissioning, this position does not require ordination or commissioning.
8. The ability to work non-discriminately and appropriately with female ministerial students. Demonstrated knowledge of equal employment opportunity protocols.
9. Advanced computer literacy required. Strong knowledge of Moodle and programs used on the university campus also required.

# BEYOND BELIEFS REPORTS

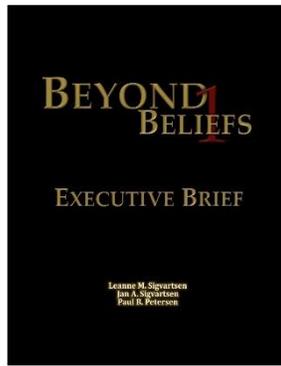
Available from the following - Click icon/link to redirect



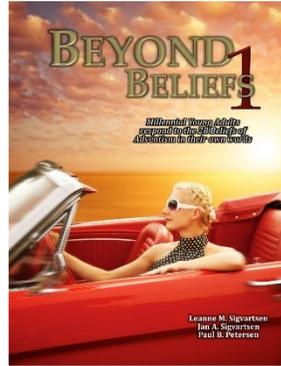
[www.Beyond-Beliefs.com](http://www.Beyond-Beliefs.com)



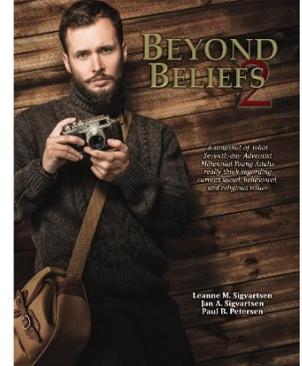
Available Now



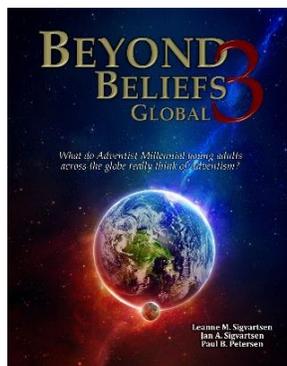
Available Now



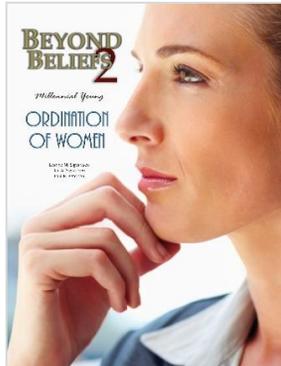
Coming Soon



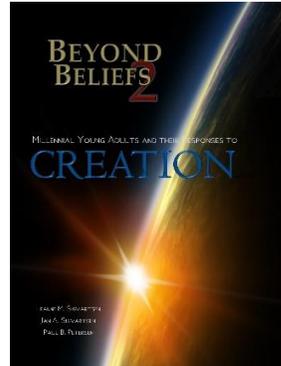
Coming Soon



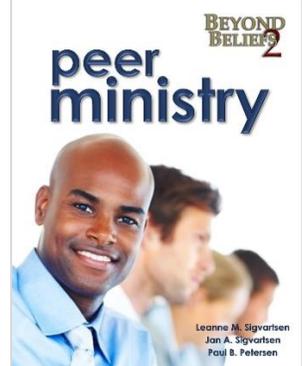
Coming Soon



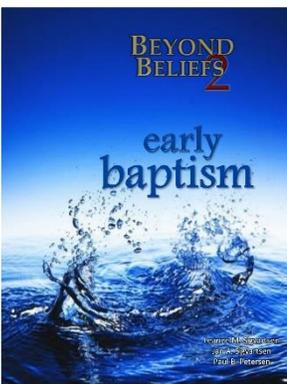
Available Now



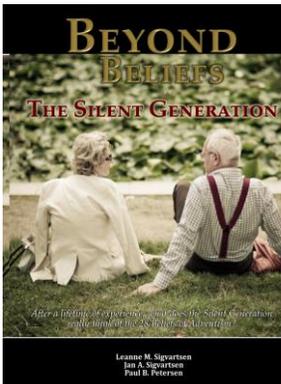
Available Now



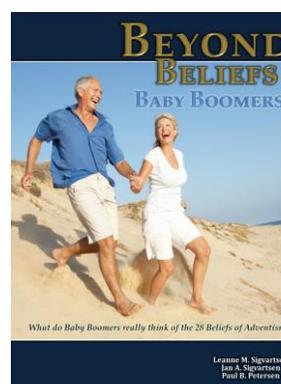
Available Now



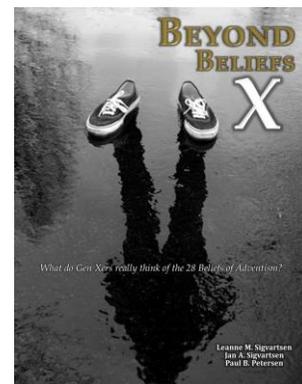
Available Now



Coming Soon



Coming Soon



Coming Soon

# [www.Beyond-Beliefs.com](http://www.Beyond-Beliefs.com)