



the  
clocktower

---

SAFE & SOUND: EXAMINING LGBT+



# EXAMINING LGBT+

BY ABNER CAMPOS & JORDAN ZY

"It's time we accept everyone with the same love we've been shown."

Safe and Sound is a semester-long look at physical and social issues affecting our campus. Read the other articles online at [clocktower.ucollege.edu/safe-and-sound/introduction](http://clocktower.ucollege.edu/safe-and-sound/introduction).

## A CALL: EXAMINING WHERE THEOLOGY AND HUMANITY CLASH

*Our church's history with LGBT+ issues has been rocky at best*



ABNER CAMPOS

For Christians, theology is the lens by which they understand God. Their understanding of theology is directly related to their interaction with people, culture and how they view themselves. When joining the LGBT+ dialogue (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, the “plus” including all other non-heterosexual identities such as questioning, intersex and asexual), Christians cannot help but bring their theology with them. Actually, we do not only bring it with us to the dialogue, but we cling to it tightly and use it as a sword and a shield, a gun and a bullet-proof vest, ear-plugs and microphone—we use it to prove and defend our point.

Whether one person might be correct and another not, we need to realize that we cannot and most likely will not change the

theology of our brothers and sisters who are a part of this dialogue with us. This conversation requires intentionally remembering that people are people, and words can hurt now matter how accurate or biblical one's theology may be. Communicating is 10 percent truth and 90 percent how one communicates it. As a result of the sensitivity of this conversation, trying to use a different vocabulary is a good start to this discussion. Attached to the website article is a well designed and worded and practical explanation of how to be sensitive and aware with what helpful, thoughtful language looks like. This was created by people connected to Union College, but its use is practical for anyone and everyone.

To clarify, there are two sides that

need to be identified.

“Side A” says that God does not condemn homosexuality or has called a sort of audible for the marital standard, so same-sex relationships and marriage is acceptable in the eyes of God. “Side B” says that God does not condone homosexuality or any kind of lifestyle not in harmony with the biblical standard, but we are called to love the sinner and hate the sin.

Side B has been the dominating belief in Adventist history. In many continents, such as Africa or South America, the complete rejection of the LGBT+ community is dangerously strong. December 2010, a Ugandan newspaper wrote that the Adventist church is in support of the Ugandan Anti-Homosexuality Bill, which includes execution as penalty. If this doesn't help you to understand the intensity that Side B has existed by, it should. Throughout history Side B has been relatively and objectively oppressive. It even came to the point where Parco decided to create a haven where homosexuals could transform into heterosexu-

als—this happened from 1979-1990 and it ended disastrously. While the Adventist Church has done a number of beautiful and kingdom-causing things, we cannot deny that the Church has failed at times; humans make up the substance of our Church, so brokenness makes up a lot of our church.

There is no ideal academic or institutional solution for this. So, our Union College administration may choose different alternatives for acceptance and inclusivity, but whatever they choose can't be and won't be perfect. But just because this is difficult does not mean everyone is called to shrug their shoulders in disbelief. May you be thoughtful with the way you use words, the way you interact, the way you exist. Visit Jordan Leddy's Safe and Sound article to see how Union College is evolving to be more inclusive and safe.

While there is no formula to how an institution should function, there are practical means by which you can all be. Instead of saying “homosexual,” try saying “lesbian” or “gay.” Identifying a

person by their sexual orientation is incomplete; no one's identity is watered down to their sexual orientation. And most of all, be a safe person who is all ears to hear the voices of those who have struggled to voice them. Maybe you can't do something to perfect an institution, but we can be someone who can influence progress.

Anyone who believes that God calls LGBT+ individuals to celibacy must realize that when they defend their side, they will

be holding on to their historical baggage and ignoring the pain that many have experienced from not being heard, an effective way of being silenced. When joining the LGBT+ conversation we need to join knowing that people are hurt, have been hurt or are in the healing process. Our theological specifics are secondary to people who need some love—not some, lots of love. Church and Adventism is a messy place because theology matters, but let us not subtract love from the equation because it is always the solution.

*Abner is a sophomore studying Theology.*

## A RESPONSE: HOW UNION COLLEGE IS BECOMING A SAFER PLACE

*Organizations like Beacon are changing attitudes on our campus*

The times are changing in this country, and our small campus in the predominantly conservative Midwest can't ignore it. The church is beginning to realize we have a growing number of believers who identify as lesbian, gay,



**JORDAN ZY**

bisexual, transgender, and any other non-heterosexual identities such as questioning, intersex and asexual (LGBT+). The truth is, this country is becoming more accepting of LGBT+ persons. Same-sex marriage is being

legalized state by state, and sexual identity is becoming a protected minority group. While the Christian church has had a long-standing aversion to non-heterosexual relationships, it cannot ignore they exist as LGBT+ individuals are coming out within the church body. Adventist colleges and universities are not unaffected, and change is coming even to our little Lincoln campus.

Union College's official stance as stated in the student handbook reads: "Union College endorses Biblical principles of morality. We believe Scripture supports virginity until marriage and outlines appropriate, heterosexual relations within the marriage covenant. In keeping with the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of those principles, we expect students to refrain from premarital and extramarital sexual relationships and any same-sex romantic relationships while enrolled at Union College. The college may intervene with students whose behavior is out of harmony with Biblical principles of morality. As a result of a student's misconduct, he/she may be asked to seek counseling,

education, or spend time away from campus with family/faculty/staff."

This is the only allusion to same-sex relationships within the handbook. What is very important to note is the fact that the student body is not forbidden to attend if they are LGBT+. It is through this small ray of hope that we can put things into perspective. Union College is facing new ground and is relatively light-years beyond the ignorance of weeding LGBT+ members out of the church. But while Union College will admit LGBT+ students the same as a heterosexual student, we still have a long way to go.

In the fall of 2014, a small group was formed to support students who identified as LGBT+ and may face the inner struggles of being themselves within a religious culture. Students and alumni came together and created Beacon, a gay-straight alliance for the College View area.

At first, Beacon was simply an email address offering a listening ear to those who would seek it



in anonymity. By the beginning of this year, it had grown into a group with eight leaders and three small group meetings. The largest group meetings are the Ally meetings. An ally is any straight or heterosexual person who opposes discrimination of LGBT+ persons. Beacon's ally leader creates an atmosphere of discussion promoting how College View can be a safer place for our LGBT+ friends.

Another Beacon group deals with public outreach. There have already been a few public events that Beacon had a helping hand in making happen. Most recently there was the memorial for Leelah Alcorn, a 17-year-old transgender girl who committed suicide three months ago. The memorial focused on her desire to ban conversion therapy as well as to remember all other transgendered persons lost to suicide, homicide and homelessness every year.

With the help of others, Beacon leaders helped create a Union College chapel service that hosted a panel to discuss the stories and experiences of LGBT+ individ-

uals and allies within Adventism and the Christian world. Chris Blake interviewed two lesbian and gay alumnus along with two parents of gay children. The discussion didn't try to convince anyone to change their personal beliefs but to show that gay and lesbian people live among us. Many friends and families in our communities have a personal connection to the often faceless conversation about homosexuality within our churches. Chris Blake challenged listeners to refrain from thinking about people who are gay and lesbian as "them" and realize they are part of "us."

Beacon's "Luxe" meetings are exclusively for LGBT+ identifying people in the College View area. It fosters a safe space of support and counsel among peers. "Being this way [LGBT+] really takes a toll on your spiritual life," stated an anonymous Luxe member. "We live in a culture that tells us the Bible forbids homosexuality, and Bible thumpers everywhere throw that in your face. If I weren't already a Christian, I wouldn't be one. When you can't change your attractions even if

you try and the most vocal Christians preach words of hate against LGBT+ people, you only find a place of shame. But when you can sit in a room of people like yourself, knowing you are in a safe space, it's reassuring to know hate isn't all we have to look forward to. The Luxe meetings are about LGBT+ people lifting each other up when our peers, and even our families, have knocked us down. God is love; if he can love the least of these, he can love us too."

That is the direction we need to take at Union College. Maybe you think that the LGBT+ conversation doesn't affect you, that you don't know anyone who struggles with this and never will. But you're wrong. We live in a Christian culture that isn't the all-accepting and all-loving culture Jesus preached, so our lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender peers in the student body are hiding. Maybe you consider yourself an ally, but how do you show that you are a safe person if you hide it?

If you've seen "Safe Space" pink triangles by office doors, then

you are seeing a positive change within our campus. These triangles signify places where a student can be open to talk about anything bothering them without fear of judgment or condemnation. Safe spaces aren't even just for LGBT+ discussion; anyone can approach these safe people with any issue if they need someone to listen.

Our school administration realizes that the student body isn't going to be solely heterosexual, and that students who identify as gay or transgender are facing a large inner turmoil. There is a task force of faculty and staff specifically dedicated to discuss how to best deal with and help the students with same-sex attractions. Why should they? Because LGBT+ youth and young adults are three times more likely to attempt suicide than straight peers. On top of that, each incidence of LGBT+ victimization such as physical or verbal harassment or abuse increases the likelihood of self-harming behavior 2.5 times on average. More facts and resources like this may be found on The Trevor Project's website, a foundation for LGBT+ crisis



intervention and suicide prevention.

Responsibility is in everyone's hands. Responsibility is the school's to safeguard the health and prosperity of their students. Responsibility is the student body's to prevent homophobic action and discrimination of our peers. And responsibility is to the church members to be Christ like, to accept and love all of God's children and leave the judgment up to Him.

How can you be a safe person? Stand up and reveal yourself to your friends. Announce that you are tired of the church body rejecting a person based on "hate the sin" principles. Don't be afraid to like, comment, or share things on your Facebook about it (there are plenty of resources for LGBT+ identifiers and their allies at the Human Rights Campaign website). Don't let discrimination and hate speech slide; instead mention that you disagree with people who make ignorant and homophobic remarks. Speak out for what is right, and don't let your community feel safer to say hate speech of any kind. You can

do this whether or not you agree a same-sex relationship is acceptable in biblical standards. There are many who love their LGBT+ neighbors but expect them to embrace "Side B" (the belief that God calls them to a lifetime of celibacy). The point is, LGBT+ people are in your life, in your friend groups and maybe even in your family—whether you know it or like it. It's time we accept everyone with the same love we've been shown and stop pointing out how much we hate what we perceive as anyone's particular sins. Let's remove the logs from our eyes, let's leave the judgments behind and embrace love as the greatest calling our Union College family has been given.

If you or anyone you know wants needs someone to talk to about LGBT+ issues, Beacon leaders would like to help. Anyone can email them at [findthebeacon@gmail.com](mailto:findthebeacon@gmail.com), and those who contact them will always remain anonymous. If you are going through a crisis or need information can also talk with someone at [thetrevorproject.org](http://thetrevorproject.org) by phone, text or live chat.

*Jordan is a senior studying psychology.*



## KATIE MORRISON

The school year is finally coming to an end and we couldn't be happier. Shorts, swimming and long days without classes are our future and it's wonderful. Unfortunately if you are in a relationship or just met that special someone, the summer might look a little bleak. No cuddle time until August? No late night Taco Bell runs with your boo? How will you survive?

I talked to a few fellow Unionites and they gave some tips on how to make it through the long separation of the summer months!

Dan Carlson and Kristina Hammer have been dating for four years and four months. During that time, they spent an entire year apart while she was away at college in Michigan and he fin-

## STOKING THE FIRE DURING THE SUMMER

*How to maintain a long distance relationship over the summer*

ished high school in Minnesota. I asked them how they managed to tough it out. "It was crazy hard," said Kristina, a senior biomedical science major. "Definitely the hardest thing we've ever gone through as a couple."

Although he wasn't able to go visit her during that year, Dan made the trip multiple times to visit Kristina last summer when she stayed in Lincoln to work for Enrollment Services. "I was basically driving down like every weekend," said Dan, a junior communications major. "I think she made the drive maybe one time."

Putting in the little time to shoot over a text or planning a little weekend trip can make all the difference in a long distance

relationship.

Another couple who have experienced a bit of separation during their relationship is Sean Lawson, a senior business administration student, and Yesi Andrade, a senior psychology major. They started dating in the fall of 2012, and Sean actually just popped the question over Christmas break.

From the day Yesi received the

.....  
**Get out and make some money,  
 so your babe doesn't leave you  
 for someone with "ambition."**  
 .....

first text from Sean ("How did you like that Avengers movie? Awesome right?!"), they have been texting every day since. During the summer, Yesi works as a CNA in Wichita, Kansas, while Sean spends his months in Minnesota. How do they deal?

"We usually just break up over the summer and get back together when school starts," Yesi joked. "No, actually we text all the time. You really need to communicate and be on the same page."

"If I know what she's doing all

day long, I feel a lot better," Sean admitted. "We don't seem so far apart." The couple also named work as a great distraction. Sean worked at a few internships, and Yesi put in long hours in the nursing home, which helped the time go faster. It makes it harder if you're being a lazy bum, doing nothing, just sitting around and missing your significant other. Get out and make some money, so your babe doesn't leave you for someone with "ambition."

The final couple that knows the difficulty of long distance is Tyler Morrison and Morgan Huffman. Morgan has been in Zimbabwe working at an orphanage for the last eight months while Tyler worked at Sunnysdale Academy last semester completing his student teaching. They started dating a year and a half ago and it's put some pressure on the relationship being apart for so long. They really love each other!

The majority of their problems have been related to miscommunication. "Texting can get confusing when that's your only source of communication," Tyler said. "You also have to make

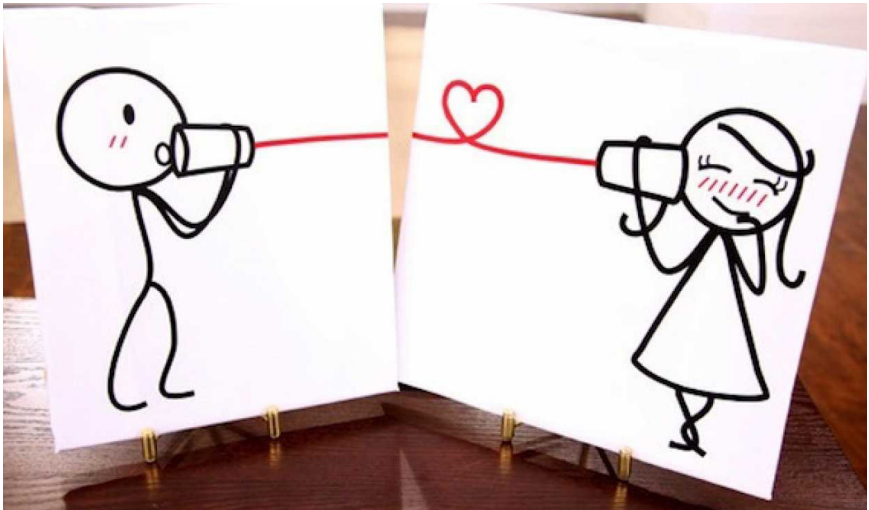
sure the other person is a priority. We've made it a point to be intentional so neither of us feel neglected."

A strong foundation is key. Tyler mentioned that if they didn't have that strong foundation and weren't confident in what they have, all the miscommunications that can shake a long distance relationship could ruin them.

"Before Morgan left, I got some

advice from a friend of mine," he said. "He told me, 'Make sure you both know that what you have is awesome. Know that you aren't looking for anything else. That way, if things get hard, you can fall back on that knowledge even when you don't feel it.' We had that conversation before she left and having that confidence can give your relationship some extra strength."

*Katie is a junior studying business administration.*



APRIL & MAY						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
19 Preview Days 8:00am National ACT	20	21 10:30am ASB Convocation 11:30am-1:00pm ASC 11:30am-1:30pm Div of Human Development Picnic Lunch	22 Div of Human Development Picnic Lunch Junior Portfolio Revisions Due 2:30-4:00pm LEAD Committee	23 10:30-11:30am General Assembly	24 Div of Business/ Computer Science Senior Recognition Dinner 8:00pm Vespers: Fine Arts Concert Sunset: 8:15pm	25 CVC: Power Pac 8:00pm Vespers: Fine Arts Concert Sunset: 8:15pm
26 4:15pm Union Scholars Poster Presentations 5:30pm Union Scholars Oral Presentations Library Hours 1:00-11:00pm	27 3:30-5:00pm Academic Council Library Hours 8:30am-11:00pm	28 10:30am Chapel:SM/TF Dedication 7:00pm Student Recital Library Hours 8:30am-11:00pm	29 Library Hours 8:30am-11:00pm	30 Dead Days(Last Day in Class) 10:30-11:30am Division Meeting 10:30am HHP Awareness Meeting Library Hours 8:30am-11:00pm	1 Dead Days(Last Day in Class) Div. of Science/ Math Senior Meal Library Hours 8:30am-1:00pm 8:00pm Vespers:UFC Sunset: 8:23pm	2 8:00pm V2 ASB Yearlook Sunset:8:24pm



THUMBS UP | THUMBS DOWN



Thumbs up to Saxx underwear  
- Kyle Berg



Thumbs up to getting back to you  
later about this - Tim LeBard



Thumbs down to torn ACL's  
- Meredith Nichols



Thumbs up to Steven Universe  
- Grace Escobar

# WE CAN'T HEAR YOU.

Yeah, we're going to need you to speak up.

Like us, hate us or anywhere in between, we'd love to hear why. Have a story you'd like to pitch? We'd love to craft it. Did you just make a big breakfast? Tell us why your mother's German waffle recipe is better than Paula Deen's.

Basically, write us.

Voice your opinions by emailing [cltower@gmail.com](mailto:cltower@gmail.com) and add to the conversation by connecting with us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/ClocktowerASB](http://www.facebook.com/ClocktowerASB) and online at <http://clocktower.ucollege.edu>.



Editor-in-Chief  
Assistant Editor

Steven Foster  
Natalie Bruzon

Copy Editor  
Copy Editor  
Copy Editor  
Layout Editor  
Online Content Editor  
Social Media Editor  
Photographer  
Photographer  
Sponsor

Vernée Norman  
Elena Cornwell  
Alexis Carnduff  
Zack Posthumus  
Brittany Houchins  
Natalie Bruzon  
Megan Bolton  
Melisa Inkelaar  
Michael Steingas

Culture Reporter  
Culture Reporter  
Humans of Union College  
Lincoln Reporter  
On Campus Reporter  
Opinion Reporter  
Religion Reporter  
Senate Reporter  
Special Interest Reporter  
Technology Reporter  
Wellness Reporter  
World Reporter

Katie Morrison  
Stefani Leeper  
Roderick Stickle  
Debbie Pinto  
Emy Wood  
Jordan Zy  
Abner Campos  
Naomi Prasad  
Nigel Sumerlin  
Christian Dye  
Kyle Berg  
Kevin Niederman

The Clocktower encourages reader feedback and strives to maintain accuracy. If you have comments, email us at [cltower@gmail.com](mailto:cltower@gmail.com).

The Clocktower is published weekly during the school year by the Associated Student Body of Union College, 3800 S. 48th St., Lincoln, NE 68506.

The opinions expressed are the opinions of the writers and are not to be construed as the opinion of the editors, Associated Student Body, Union College or the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

For more content, follow us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/ClocktowerASB](http://www.facebook.com/ClocktowerASB) or visit us at <http://clocktower.ucollege.edu>.





**“Can you tell me about your best day ever?”**

“Last Spring Break, me and my friends went to California. And basically we just spend an entire day just sitting on the beach. And just happened to be like people coming by and serving us food. Like, we had to pay for it but like, this lady had mangoes so we didn’t have to get up. Then this dude brought like, soda pop, and we didn’t have to get up for that. So we literally just laid there all day long, and did nothing, and laid on the beach. And that was probably the happiest day ever.”

*- Zachary Luke, Biomedical Science: PreMedical Studies, Sophomore*

Thank you for being supportive of Safe & Sound.  
Read them all online at <http://clocktower.ucollege.edu>.



**"Sporting on the Sabbath"**  
by Stefani Leeper

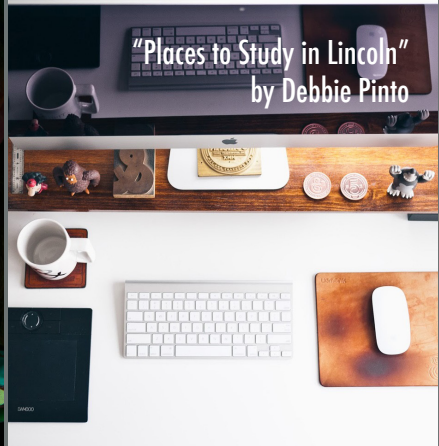
Next week we'll be releasing our farewell issue, so be on the look out!



**"The Mesnards Prepare For New Adventures"** by Emy Wood



**"How to Get Rid of a Virus"**  
by Christian Dye



**"Places to Study in Lincoln"**  
by Debbie Pinto