

## Jesus & Politics Conference at Andrews University

Evangelical Theologians Jim Wallis and Ronald Sider to speak

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Ron Sider (Photo by Ron Sider)

By: Hannah Gallant, University Communication student writer

Renowned evangelical theologians Jim Wallis of Sojourners and Ronald Sider, author of “Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger,” will headline a scholarly conference and community gathering on October 17–19 titled “Jesus & Politics: Christians, Liberty, and Justice Today” at Andrews University. Sponsored by Andrews University, the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary and the Lake Union Conference, the event features experts in church history, theology and human-rights activism. The conference aims to apply biblical teachings to modern issues through careful study, thought and dialogue in order to answer the question, “What might the political impact of Jesus’ followers look like today?”

The conference will begin on Thursday evening, Oct. 17, with a keynote address by Jim Wallis and a breakout session. One of two main keynote speakers for this conference, Wallis grew up in the Baptist faith community and is founder, president and editor-in-chief of Sojourners magazine. He is a New York Times best-selling author on the issues of ethics and social justice.

His new book, “Christ in Crisis: Why We Need to Reclaim Jesus,” which was released this September, asks whether the way of Jesus offers a path forward in the midst of the spiritual and political crises we face.

Also offering a keynote address on Friday evening at the conference will be Ronald Sider, a Mennonite theologian, professor at Palmer Theological Seminary and author of “The Scandal of Evangelical Politics,” recently retitled as “Just Politics: A Guide for Christian Engagement.” Christianity Today listed Sider as being one of the top 100 most influential Christian authors of the 20th century.

Nicholas Miller, professor of church history at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary and co-chair of the conference organizing committee, notes that neither keynote speaker fits neatly into the standard right/left political divide. Like Seventh-day Adventists, Wallis and Sider take both Testaments of the Bible into serious consideration and have roots in the radical reformation and its heritage of separating church and state.

“This same heritage also takes seriously the role of Christian as citizen in holding the state and its leaders accountable on matters of public morality,” Miller says. “This proud heritage is seen in 18th and 19th century efforts to combat slavery and the slave-trade, support the Underground Railway, promote laws preventing the sale and use of alcohol, and to seek protections for women and children from immoral predations and unsafe and dangerous working conditions,” Miller adds.

On Friday and Saturday, the conference will continue with a series of breakout sessions. Topics for these sessions include the following:

- Jesus and the #MeToo Movement
- Jesus Among the Ethicists & Political Scientists
- Jesus Among the Social Justice & Life Activists
- Jesus and the Immigrant
- Jesus Among the Religious Liberty Advocates
- Jesus Among the Denominations—church/state and activism views of Reformed, Lutheran, Adventist, Catholic, Baptist and Mennonites
- Jesus Among the Constitutional Lawyers

The conference will conclude with a Concert Celebration of Faith and Freedom at the Howard Performing Arts Center on Saturday evening at 7:30 p.m. Featuring the Andrews University Wind Symphony, the program will involve an evening of music, readings and poetry celebrating civil and religious liberty. It will also include an award ceremony for student winners of the Liberty and Essay contest.

Additional programming for Andrews University students will encompass several campus events including University Forum on Thursday, vespers on Friday evening and Saturday morning church services at Pioneer Memorial Church and One Place.