

NEWS • ANALYSIS • OPINION

ADVENTIST TODAY

NOVEMBER • DECEMBER 1994

1844

**Ellen White:
Role Confusion?**

Creationism

Changes at *Adventist Today*

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I hope that you like the new look of *AT*! For the cover, we sought a cleaner design. Inside, we are striving for a more readable, lively format. Colleen Moore Tinker and Richard Tinker are doing the production and design beginning with the present issue.

At the *Adventist Today* quarterly board meeting in September, several significant actions were taken to make our fledgling publication stronger.

I suggested to the board that it is time to divide up the administrative and editorial responsibilities that I have been carrying during our formative 18 months—one can carry multiple responsibilities for only so long.

New board leadership. At the beginning of any effort, enthusiasm and long hours can substitute for formal organization. But as we move to a long-term, sustained publication, there is a need for more deliberate and mature organizational planning. Therefore, the board invited Ervin Taylor, who has served as secretary/treasurer, to immediately take over the role of chair. Taylor accepted the invitation. I will continue to serve as a board member but will concentrate my energies toward the editorial side, with Taylor focusing on the day-to-day administration, magazine promotion, and financial development. Keith Colburn will assume the position of secretary/treasurer.

The board voted development director Dean Kinsey a special stipend for a major push to get *Adventist Today* well funded for the long haul. The development plan involves a push for new subscriptions, the launching of an endowment fund, and a large phonathon.

Editorial staff changes. Delwin Finch, our able managing editor, will be taking a church as solo pastor and has resigned. We wish him well! Cherie Rouse, who has served well as copy editor and assistant editor will assume the role of managing editor. Joining her as assistant editors are Jim Stirling and Cheri Lynn Gregory. Jim has recently served as copy editor and will continue to rescue us from errors great and small. Cheri is a twentysomething mother of two preschoolers who wrote her first book at age 12!

Steve Daily, chaplain at La Sierra University, is joining *AT* as an editorial advisor, and Larry Downing, pastor at the Anaheim Adventist church, is joining us as an editorial consultant. I will assume the title of executive editor. As editor, Ray Cottrell will continue giving overall direction.

We think these changes will make *Adventist Today* a stronger and more mature publication. As we grow, we hope you will send us your comments and suggestions.

Jim Walters



Jim Walters, teaches ethics at Loma Linda University. In his personal time, he helps teach a Sabbath School class. He also hikes and back-packs with his teen-age daughters and plays tennis.

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Annual Council Moves Toward Ordination of Women

by Skye Bartlett and
Barry L. Casey

“The commissioning service has been seen by many to be a half-hearted response to the pressing need for ordination.”

Called by God, yet restricted by stereotypical views held by fellow believers, Adventist women have for a number of years asked the Seventh-day Adventist Church to ordain women as well as men to the gospel ministry. The recent Annual Council meetings took up the question with the full backing and support of key General Conference leaders. As a result of careful planning and some adroit maneuvering, the stage has been set for a decision at the upcoming General Conference session in Utrecht, Holland, in July 1995, that would permit the North American Division to ordain women.

In 1990 the General Conference session in Indianapolis debated the topic of ordaining women, but cast a negative vote. The meetings, however, did introduce a way that women pastors could be recognized by their congregations in a substitute for the ordination service. A “Commissioning Service” for women in ministry in the North American Division was developed which gives the candidate authorization to perform baptisms and marriages, and to receive a financial package, including benefits. These two ministerial functions are equivalent to those performed by an ordained clergyperson, and they provide women and others presently ineligible for ordination some recognition of their ministerial responsibilities.

The 1990 action was perceived as a stopgap

measure by those in support of the ordination of women, while those who viewed it as abandoning the scriptural interpretation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church were pleased that the request for full ordination was denied. Pat Habada, Curriculum Specialist for the Department of Church Ministries at the General Conference and a long-time leader of T.E.A.M., a lay organization working for equality for women in ministry, says, “A person

called by God to enter the ministry should be recognized, regardless of who that person is.” The commissioning service has been seen by many to be a half-hearted response to the pressing need for ordination. Habada notes that “a person called by God to be a minister should be ordained and not commissioned.” Charles Scriven, president of Columbia Union College, has stated that the church must either “die or defy” the present directive regarding the ordination of women.

The increasing support among both administrators and laity for the ordination of women brought the issue last month to the agenda of the 1994 Annual Council Session in Washington. At the behest of Robert Folkenberg, president of the General Conference, and Al McClure, president of the North American Division, a proposal was introduced to vest each division with the ability to determine its criteria for ordination, thus permitting any division to disregard gender as a criterion for qualification.

Elder Philip Follett, vice president of the General Conference, views this as an opportunity for reconsidering ordination in a new context: “This issue ought to be addressed again,” he says, “as it is appropriate in the context of different divisions’ needs.”

One conference president who has been open to ordination of women in the Adventist church believes that Folkenberg and McClure were masterful in shepherding the issue through the North American Division session and then through the Annual Council. When it appeared that the atmosphere on Wednesday, October 5, was not conducive to success, they delayed action until Sunday. With Calvin Rock, one of the vice presidents of the General Conference, presiding at the Sunday session, the pieces began to fall into place. Rock read a statement of his own and then introduced McClure, who gave a masterful speech to fellow division presidents. “We in North American have a problem,” McClure said, “that concerns equality with regard to women in ministry.” Reaching back to the Mohaven Conference, McClure reminded the delegates that in the interim the ordaining of women as local elders had not ruined conferences, unions, and divisions. Stressing



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Barry L. Casey is chair of the Division of Arts and Communication at Columbia Union College, and associate professor of communication, journalism, and philosophy.

that the problem concerned the North American Division, not just a local conference, McClure appealed to fellow division presidents around the world. "You've had problems in your divisions and we helped you," he said. "Now we have a problem and we need your help." Rock then opened the meeting up for speeches in support of, or against, the proposal.

Penny Miller, the chair of Southeastern California Conference's Gender Inclusiveness Commission, and an observer at the Annual Council, noted that in two hours 23 speeches were given by delegates, most of them positive on the measure. "It feels like they're with us on this point," she says. Whether the delegates and division presidents were acting on personal conviction or were finding it politically expedient to get on the bandwagon is debatable. A suggestion by Robert Folkenberg that the session be videotaped was flatly refused and the cameras were removed. Miller was disappointed. "They could have made such a wonderful video," she says, "that could have gone out all over the world. So much that was good was said."

While the vote for support was overwhelmingly positive, no one is discounting the struggle ahead. "We have a tremendous job of education before Utrecht," says Lynn Mallery, president of the Southeastern California Conference and a leader in promoting women's ordination. Nevertheless, the backing of key regions such as the Inter-American Division is cheering to those who supported the measure through to the vote. "I wouldn't have thought these things [were possible] a year ago," says McClure.

Pat Habada was impressed with the way in which the issue was presented and believes that this is the first time since 1973 that the request for ordination has been verbalized in a positive tone. "The North American Division took a giant step forward for womankind in placing this request positively," she says. She asserts, as do many other concerned observers, that women should be affirmed in their service to God through the full rite of ordination. Many believe that when interpreted and applied properly, the Scriptures teach the full partnership of men and women in the church.

The final vote of the Annual Council for 1994 was to channel the matter to the General Conference session in Utrecht. The full recommendation, as passed, reads:

The GC vests in each division the right to authorize the ordination of individuals within its territory in harmony with estab-

lished policies. In addition, where circumstances and practice do not render it inadvisable, a division may authorize the ordination of qualified individuals without regard to gender. (GC L 45)

A major issue to many church administrators and members is maintaining unity throughout the world divisions. Allowing each division the opportunity to determine its own criteria may lead to more diversity. Some ask whether the church can allow for this much variety in adhering to ordination criteria.

Phil Follett recognizes that the time is right for moving ahead with the issue, but is also concerned to preserve church unity. "The church truly needs to settle this issue to move on in a way that will reflect the church's respect for all people, but also preserve the identity and unity of the world church. I personally hope," he says, "that the preservation of church harmony will be considered in making this decision."

Gary Patterson, field secretary of the General Conference, viewed the North American Division

"The North American Division took a giant step forward for womankind in placing this request positively,"

session as showing surprisingly overwhelming support for the ordination of women and stated that the argument against women's ordination on the basis of creating disunity "is blown out of proportion," and such a policy "will create disunity only if people are determined to create disunity."

Ultimately, the criteria included within the ordination process must be assessed, so that the identity and unity of the Adventist church worldwide is maintained. By being indecisive the church is becoming divisive. Whatever the decision made at the General Conference Session, it will affect the good of the church worldwide. But if the ordination of women is approved, Pat Habada speaks for many when she states that "when a woman is ordained I want to be there."

SANCTUARY

In the Year

2000

We as Adventists must be excused if we approach the 150th anniversary of our origins with a certain amount of fear and perplexity. Longevity is not something for us to celebrate. In song and story, we've reminded ourselves that the world is not our home—that Jesus is coming soon, very soon. As a result, the most troubling question facing Adventists today is not whether Adventism can survive. The real question is whether a movement based on the soon return of Jesus has any reason to survive as long as we have. To remember our past reminds us that we live beyond the security of our own charts and timetables. On the other hand, to plan for the future casts doubts on our belief in the soon coming of Jesus. This central dilemma threatens our very identity as "Adventists."

The conservative and liberal boundaries of Adventism are defined by this dilemma. For conservatives, the celebration of 150 years of Adventist heritage recalls the fulfillment of the time prophecies of Daniel and Revelation in the life of the church. Yet a prophetic date 150 years old is hardly present truth. On the other hand, liberals, in their quest for the present truth of Adventism, tend to overlook the relevance of Adventism's past. Without a past, however, we have no criteria for measuring new truth, and our future direction is left to fate, to caprice.

How are we to go beyond this dilemma in our celebration of our past and our anticipation of our

by Glen Greenwalt

"Liberals, in their quest for the present truth of Adventism, tend to overlook the relevance of Adventism's past."



Glen Greenwalt, Walla Walla College theology professor, recently read a paper in Switzerland on sanctuary. He is writing on "Creation as Dance" for the book *Why I Believe in a Creator*, containing contributions from theology, science, and the arts.

future? Adventists have yet to systematically address this question. My own re-visionment was prompted, interestingly, by Harold Bloom's best-selling book *The American Religion*. Bloom holds open the door, if only a crack, for a genuine Adventist contribution to the social and religious world, and he does this by calling Adventism back to its prophetic roots. Bloom is highly critical of the voices within Adventism who, wittingly or not, would turn Adventism into another liberal, mainline-Protestant denomination. According to Bloom, the prophetic vision that gave rise to Adventism will wither and die if it is absorbed into the desert of middle-class morality. Bloom, like Schleiermacher, insists that religion is more than ethics. Bloom predicts that either Adventism will return to Ellen White and recover her vision of a prophetic people, or "it will vanish from among us except as a vast medical legacy."

Ironically, Bloom insists on defining Adventism by the very event that a growing number of Adventists wish quietly to forget, namely, the disappointment of 1844 and the theology constructed to explain it. For Bloom the essence of Adventism must be traced to the experience of disappointment. The pain of disappointment demanded some supernatural evidence of consolation, and there were only Ellen White's visions to provide that. While Ellen White lacked the religion-making imagination of Joseph Smith, something else "stubborn and complex" took its place. You might call it Ellen White's "desperate will-to-health," a "quest for survival" amidst every kind of disappointment, secular or spiritual. It is the exercise of this will, visible still among Adventists around the world, that gives reason for Adventists' continuing existence as a resource of religious vitality in the world. Adventists are people who

found in Ellen White the prophetic resources that sustained them.

On this reading, Adventism is a message for disappointed people. Its theology not only assured the disappointed that God had not abandoned them, it catapulted them to the center of the divine plan. This is the reason why dates and time charts have so captivated the Adventist psyche. As Bloom points out, Adventists, for all of their time charts, are not really interested in dates or even the patterns of chronology, for that matter. Definite numbers are an amazing comfort to millenarians; numbers convey illusions of power and knowledge that shield believers against the capricious turns of fortune. Unlike others, Adventists "know" God's will. Through the visions of Ellen White, we have followed Jesus into the inner sanctum of God's sanctuary, where God's most secret plans have been made known to us.

Bloom appreciates the fact that disappointed people require attention, even if it is negative. There is no shame in this. It is a law of life. Still, Bloom finds something "dangerously unamiable" in the Adventists' rationale of their disappointment. Although Ellen White was a kind and gentle person, her diction, according to Bloom, was that of "a Maine lawyer's office." Jesus had not returned to rescue his forlorn followers in 1844 as expected, but had rather entered the Holy of Holies up in heaven as the "Great Accountant." Since 1844, Jesus Christ has been at work in the heavenly sanctuary blotting out sin, which, according to Bloom, turns out to mean something very different from forgiving sin. Rather than removing sin from the universe, or even relieving the consequences for those who suffer under sin and evil, Christ is in heaven transferring sin onto the head of Satan, the universal scapegoat. Eventually Christ will descend again to earth, as it was initially hoped he would do on October 22, 1844.

In this disquieting misreading of Adventism, Bloom raises the specter of the dark psychological consequences sanctuary doctrine has had for Adventists, especially their children. A "Satanic scapegoating," Bloom warns, can lead to horrid figurations. Examples are: parents teaching children that failure to keep the seventh-day Sabbath will bring upon them the mark of the beast, or that attendance at a theater leaves one a captive of Satan.

There is, according to Bloom, another path Adventists might yet take, if only they were not engaged in such a maddening literalization of the rituals of Leviticus. If Adventists were to employ their vision of the cleansing of the sanctuary as a

"Bloom raises the specter of the dark psychological consequences sanctuary doctrine has had for Adventists, especially their children."

prophetic witness against our contemporary America, then it would be to some purpose; but they have ceased to see it as a criticism of American life in terms of real injustices and amoralities. AIDS, crack, and homelessness are not cleansed by Christ, despite the Adventists' abiding concern for their own health, and to some degree, for the health of the nation.

The challenge Bloom poses for Adventism to succeed is so daunting, one wonders if he made it in jest. For Adventism not to vanish from among us except as a vast medical legacy it must (a) recover Ellen White's version of the prophetic spirit, (b) move beyond literalization of the rituals of Leviticus, which according to Bloom makes Adventist doctrine the most convoluted of American faiths, (c) provide real resolutions to real injustices and amoralities, and (d) supposedly remain a coherent organized body throughout all of this. Would this be possible?

A Prophetic/Social Vision of Adventism

Long before I read Bloom, I concluded on my own that a revision of Adventism along the lines he suggested is not only possible but is implicit in the texts of Leviticus from which we Adventists have derived our self-understanding. The claim I make in my own re-visioning of the Adventist story is that 1844 represents a prophetic fulfillment of a pattern of presence/defilement/restoration that has existed from the moment God first made a covenant to dwell with his people. On this reading, Adventists need not appeal to cabalistic numerology to demonstrate their place in the divine plan—they can appeal directly to the pages of history. Moreover, this vision brings the prophetic and the social dimensions of Adventism into a united whole.

Presence

Whatever else the sanctuary may have meant to the ancient Hebrews, Leviticus 26:11 says that a sanctuary is a place where God dwells among his people. It is a place of divine presence. It is the tendency of Western theology in general and Adventism in particular to separate heaven and earth. This is not biblical. If human beings are on earth, God is in their midst. If God is in heaven, human beings sit on heavenly thrones (Eph 1, 2; Heb 4:16; Rev 5). That is the biblical logic of sanctuary. Earth and heaven are mirrored. The transcendence of a sanctuary is never of separation and distance, as if the business of the church and God are separate. The work of heaven and the work of the earth are one.

As such, the biblical world, with its celebration

of divine presence, stands in sharp contrast to the secular world, where people find themselves cut off from meaning at every hand. Formerly, people possessed some founding belief, or myth, or story that provided meaning and direction to their lives. Today, however, we live in a world marked by radical fragmentation. Large numbers of people, especially the young, have given up the quest for deep, internal continuity and meaning in their lives.

A re-visioned story of the sanctuary would recall a more feminine perception of God—a God who is not finally lost in abstraction, but One whose transcendence is encountered by our entering through the veil into the depth and profundity of the divine presence in the midst of our very world. As Adventists we have learned the value of sacred time. Now we must learn the value of sacred places. Israel's sanctuary reminds us of the reason why a wilderness needs more than the Sierra Club

Lewis, perhaps more than any other Christian writer, sought to recover the wild in his Narnia series, where he identified Christ with Aslan, a lion not really tame. The wild of which I speak is what one writer has described as a great beauty that goes beyond the predictability of a machine. The wild animal, especially one on the search, alert and free, moves with an agility that chance and law alone cannot describe. To be attuned to the wild is to be in harmony with the Word beneath the waters; it is to hear the Singing that called forth the stars and sets our steps to dancing; it is to respond to the Voice that speaks to us out of the silence. Above all else, then, to know the wild is to be reminded of a sacral power greater than ourselves—a power that pulsates and gives meaning to all of life. Without such recognition, our own reckless use of power threatens not only the spotted owl, or children sighted in the cross-hairs of a sniper's scope, but life itself on this planet.

“It is the tendency of Western theology in general and Adventism in particular to separate heaven and earth. This is not biblical.”

to survive, why a church is always more than a soup kitchen, and why care always entails more than universal medical insurance. Only when the sacred dwells in a place is it really a sanctuary. The unholy alliance of ownership, consumption, and domination that controls secular society is no accident. Humanism pushed to its conclusion results in an anonymous world constructed in the image of our own isolated, harried selves.

Here, the modern city, with its stupefying sameness and its mechanical destruction of all that was once alive and wild, is the ultimate symbol of this progressive desacralization of the world. A church, in the midst of whom God made his dwelling, would become not only a refuge to the oppressed, the hurting, and the disappointed, but it would be a reminder of the Wildness at the center of things.

Now admittedly, any real memory of the wild is almost totally lost in our world today. In the secular world, something of the memory remains in our attempts to preserve remote areas of “wilderness.” In the Christian world, memories of the wild are kept alive almost solely in circles of artists and writers who cross over the borders of orthodoxy. C. S.

Defilement

Secondly, the sanctuary doctrine of Leviticus speaks not only of presence, but also of defilement and judgment. The judgment, however, is not that of indictment, but forced withdrawal. According to Leviticus 26:31 and following verses, God cannot abide in a polluted sanctuary. To be sure God remains as long as he can, but there comes a time when God is forced to abandon his sanctuary and leave it desolate. Not even God can live in a polluted environment forever. Just as surely as toxic waste forced the evacuation of Love Canal, so too murder, idolatry, greed, oppression of the poor, lust, and infidelity forced God to abandon his dwelling in Israel. As the renowned Old Testament scholar, Jacob Milgrom, notes in the April, 1993, issue of *Bible Review*, the primary function of the blood sacrifices of the ancient service was not to cleanse the worshipper but the sanctuary. As Adventists have long taught, sin inevitably defiles God's meeting place with human beings. A sin committed anywhere will generate impurity that penetrates the sanctuary in proportion to its magnitude. Involuntary personal sin reaches the courtyard; involuntary communal sin, the Holy Place; and brazen unrepented offense reaches as far as the innermost Holiest of Places.

How, then, would the old priests see our world today? Milgrom has little doubt of the answer. Certainly, they could easily label the physical pollution of the earth. Oil spills, acid rain, strip mining, ozone depletion, nuclear waste are evident everywhere. But even more to the point, according to Milgrom, they would be aghast at the moral pollution of the earth: the brazen slaughter of thou-

sands in Bosnia, Somalia, Sudan, Timor, Armenia, Angola—millions dying of hunger, while the free world, involuntary moral sinners silently observe the carnage, and with a vague guile and impotence, change the channel. How long before God abandons his earthly sanctuary?

Restoration

Fortunately, for us the explanation of the sanctuary in Leviticus does not end on a note of pessimism (Lev 26:42 and following). The polluting effects of sin are dutifully recorded, but a promise of restoration is also kept alive. God will shamelessly seek out Israel even after she is abandoned by all others and will again dwell with her. At that moment the entire cosmos becomes a dance of celebration. Rivers flow in the wilderness. The vine and the field flourish. Justice is reestablished. And, there is no hurt in all of God's holy mountain for God again tabernacles with his people.

Here the visions of contemporary ecological and political prophets don't hold a candle to the wonder evoked by their ancient mentors. Modern visions are darkly pessimistic. They are not apocalypses of hope. Trees are commodities of commerce, and the death of a child is the factored cost of waging war. Only the divine presence can create a peaceable kingdom. Without a sense of the sacred at the very center of things, modern-day

ecological and political sanctuaries are easy targets for chain saws and political ambitions.

Does Adventism have a right to survive? Certainly, if we are a sanctuary of divine dwelling in the midst of a troubled world. Without question

“Does Adventism have a right to survive?”

this would mean that the church would become a refuge for all God's creatures great and small. A place where the hurting, the marginalized, the disappointed could find safety. A place where people could openly express anger and fear and doubt, and even heresy—otherwise the church will always remain a court of law rather than a place of safety. But for the Divine to dwell in our midst would mean far more than this. It would mean that the church is the place where magic books are opened and young men and young women see visions, and old men and women dream dreams that come alive. It would be a church that frees the imagination and inflames great passions. Only in such a church can the human soul find sanctuary. Only in such a church can the divine dwell.

Sweet in Our Mouths and Bitter in Our Bellies

by Maryan Stirling

We've been a church with a bitter belly for a century and a half now, October, 1844 to October, 1994. Happy anniversary! In all those years, one thing hasn't changed: Daniel's little book that was so sweet when we first tasted it (Rev. 10) is still sweet in our mouth. We talk about the image. We talk about the beasts. It's mouth-sweet. Another thing hasn't changed: That little book still has a

potential for generating bitterness. Bitter conflict. Bitter pain.

Those dear farmers and tradesmen proof-texted themselves into thinking they knew more than had been revealed. It was a flawed method of Bible study that brought the bitter disappointment in 1844. Jesus didn't come. And the method that brought them to the bleak dawn of October 23, 1844, still plagues us.

Let me share a terrible thought: A woman who left Waco, Texas, before the stand-off reflected on why so many of our sisters and brothers died there. Through her tears, she said, "They were all sadly, sadly misguided. I believe we should—we should know how to—we should be taught how to read the Scriptures." (Samples, *Prophets of the Apocalypse*.) Had they been taught, would they have rejected Koresh's proof-texting, and would there have been fewer fiery deaths?

The proof-text method, widely used even today, holds us back from welcoming women and men equally to the gospel ministry. The same method continues to fill our children's

nightmares with judgment-terrors.

The verses in Daniel 8 that set us up for disappointment in 1844 also took us to Glacier View in 1980. At issue was how the sweet/bitter book ought to be understood. Maybe it always will be sweet in our mouth and bitter in the digestive process. If that's true we're going to have to have a lot of grace as we disagree about methods, but love each other anyway.

I get a lot of help from the kindly words of Vilfredo Pareto: "Give me a fruitful error any time, full of seeds, bursting with its own corrections. You can keep your sterile truth for yourself." He's talking, I think, about a grace that lets the errors stand and works around them. Those dear people were so excited about seeing Jesus that they forgot he was already there! He watched the New England skies with them that autumn night. He was there when they "wept till the day dawn." Their little mistake about his coming was a fruitful error. And the fruit still hangs over the wall of our history, full of seeds, full of tolerance and very good to eat!



Maryan Bauer Wilkinson Stirling has contributed to Adventist publications for 50 years (under all of these surnames). She writes now from southern California.

Sanctuary of Hope: A Response to Glen Greenwalt

by Roy Gane

Glen Greenwalt addresses a question in which all Adventists have a vested interest: What happens to our originally apocalyptic movement in view of the fact that deliverance from this world has apparently been delayed for 150 years?

Greenwalt cites Harold Bloom, who perceives the importance of our 1844 theology and our need to preserve the prophetic voice of Ellen White and to extend the sanctuary doctrine from theory to everyday life. However, Bloom's suggestion that we move beyond maddening literalization of Leviticus betrays his failure to understand Seventh-day Adventist sanctuary doctrine.

Agreeing with Bloom in principle, Greenwalt properly identifies two major themes of the ancient Israelite sanctuary: the presence of God, and God's withdrawal of his presence, which indicates judgment. Furthermore, he points out the contemporary need for God's presence and uses the sanctuary as a metaphor for the church. Through this profound idea, all three—the church, the sanctuary, and God Himself—become more “friendly” to us and to our children. I think Greenwalt would agree that this concept need not diminish our appreciation for the kingly aspects of God, to whom we have limited access until “atonement” is completed and divine-human coexistence can carry on without boundaries necessitated by sin.

Greenwalt writes beautifully, almost poetically. However, his development of the main idea that “1844 represents a prophetic fulfillment of a pattern of presence/defilement/restoration” is hard to follow, unbiblical, and turns Seventh-day Adventist theol-

ogy on its head. If 1844 fulfills such a pattern, to which part of the pattern does the 1844 event belong? Greenwalt does not say it, but the most obvious answer would be “restoration,” because Daniel 8:14, from which we get the date 1844, refers to the restoration of the sanctuary. Greenwalt makes the unbiblical assertion that judgment should be defined only in terms of divine withdrawal (see, however, Lev 23:29-30). Therefore we infer that a restoration in 1844 meant the return of God's presence to his people (the church) after a time of judgment during which his presence had been withdrawn. There is no evidence, of course, that the sanctuary in the context of Daniel 8:14 is the church rather than God's sanctuary in heaven, but if Greenwalt is correct, 1844 would represent not the beginning of a judgment, as taught by the Adventist Church, but the end of a judgment!

The radical nature of Greenwalt's revisionism is confirmed by his theology of atonement, which has Israelite sacrifices throughout the year cleansing the sanctuary rather than persons. The implications of this idea for Christian theology are shocking, suggesting first that Christ's blood does not cleanse *us*, flying in the face of I John 1:9 for example, and suggesting also that as our high priest in the heavenly sanctuary from the time of his ascension onward (for example Heb 4:14-16), Christ was cleansing the sanctuary from the sins of his people. Therefore, there is no need for another cleansing of the sanctuary in a pre-advent judgment beginning in 1844. Again, the effect is to wipe out the historical Adventist understanding of Daniel 8:14. Again, the interpretation is unbiblical.

There is abundant evidence in the Bible for the Adventist view, namely that the sins of God's people are removed in two stages, first from the individuals themselves when their sins are transferred to God's sanctuary, and then from the sanctuary. The most important passages on this subject are Leviticus 4, which specifies sacrifices offered throughout the year for purification from sins, and Leviticus 16, which outlines the yearly rites of the Day of Atonement. In Leviticus 4, persons are cleansed. There is

no indication here that the sanctuary is cleansed at this time. In Leviticus 16, on the other hand, the sanctuary is cleansed from *all* the sins of the entire community which have accumulated in the sanctuary during the year. How did the sins get into the sanctuary? They must have been transferred there as God accepted the sacrifices of the people throughout the year. He gave cleansing by taking defilement to himself, but he did not keep it forever. He had it removed from himself on the Day of Atonement.

Greenwalt's idea of a single-phase atonement is based on a theory of Jacob Milgrom, my teacher and friend, who holds that sins or ritual impurities automatically penetrated the sanctuary from afar, and sacrifices throughout the year purged the sanctuary from these evils. At least one problem with this hypothesis is the fact that sins reached the sanctuary from afar only in some exceptional cases when flagrant violations of divine commands could *not* be atoned for by sacrifices (Lev 20:3, Num 19:13, 20).

The sanctuary doctrine may appear complex, at times to a “maddening” degree, but this is so because it unpacks the rich, multifaceted ministry of Christ for us, which now continues an important phase begun in 1844: the cleansing/vindication of God's sanctuary in heaven (Read Dan 8:14 in light of Job 4:17). This can be understood as the vindication of our salvation just before Christ's Second Coming. We have this hope, not this disappointment!

In the final analysis, Greenwalt's superficial biblical interpretations appear designed to serve a sociological agenda to redefine Adventism. Our religion has important sociological implications, which should be emphasized, but when it comes to *defining* Adventism, the only basis which we have acknowledged is biblical theology. We must continually re-evaluate our theology and its relevance, but Greenwalt's approach creates more problems than it solves.

Glen Greenwalt believes his respondent misunderstands both his beliefs and his intentions. Greenwalt's reaction will appear in the next issue of Adventist Today.

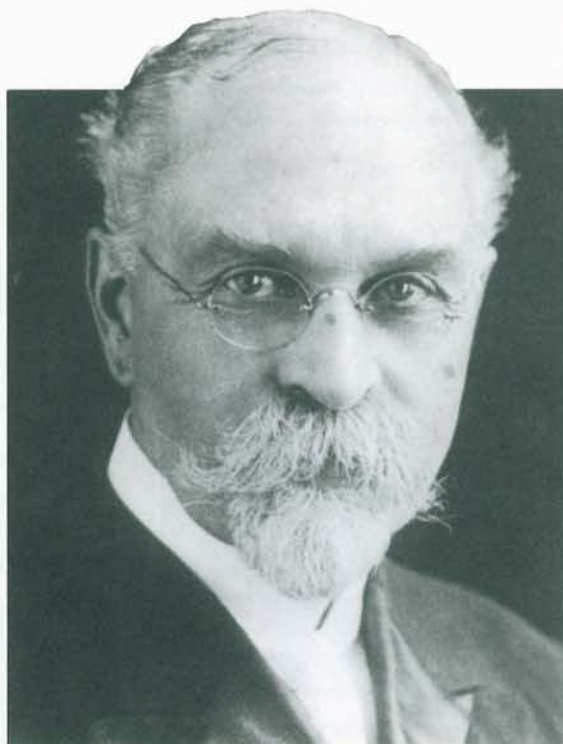


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The 1919 Bible Conference

An Excerpt From the Debate About Ellen White

In 1919, four years after the death of church cofounder Ellen G. White, about 50 Adventist editors, teachers, and church officers gathered to discuss, among other topics, the role that should be given to the writings of the church's prophetess. Below we have published a brief excerpt from this candid discussion, which was lost for some 60 years. For a more complete excerpt, see *Spectrum*, May, 1979. The full text is housed in the department of archives in the General Conference building, Silver Spring, Maryland —editors



Arthur G. Daniells

Arthur G. Daniells, General Conference President: As I said, I have met things that were hard to be understood, but time has helped me to understand them, and I can honestly say this morning that I go along in this movement without any doubts in my mind. When I take positions differing from other men, that is not proof that I am a doubter. I may be a doubter of their views or their interpretation, but that does not make me a doubter of the spirit of prophecy. I may differ with a man about his interpretation of the Bible, but that does not make me a doubter of the Bible. But there are men who just hold me right up as a doubter of the Testimonies because I take the position that the Testimonies are not verbally inspired, and that they have been worked up by the secretaries

"I believe that the strongest proof is found in the fruits of this gift to the church, not in physical and outward demonstrations."

and put in proper grammatical shape....

Now with reference to the evidences: I differ with some of the brethren who have put together proofs or evidences of the genuineness of this gift, in this respect,—I believe that the strongest proof is found in the fruits of this gift to the church, not in physical and outward demonstrations. For instance, I have heard some ministers preach, and have seen it in writing, that Sister White once carried a heavy Bible—I believe they said it weighed forty pounds—upon her outstretched hand, and looking up toward the heavens quoted texts and turned the leaves over and pointed to the texts, with her eyes toward the heavens. I do not know whether that was ever done or not. I am not sure. I did not see it, and I do not know that I ever talked with anybody that did see it. But, brethren, I do not count that sort of thing as a very great proof. I do not think that is the best kind of evidence....

C. L. Taylor, head of the Bible department, Canadian Junior College:We will suppose that a student comes for help on a certain scripture, and wants to know what it means. Is it proper for the teacher to explain that scripture, with perhaps other scriptures illuminating the text, and then bring in the spirit of prophecy also as additional light on the text? Or take still a third

case: Suppose that two brethren, both of them believers in the Testimonies, and of course believers in the Bible primarily, have a difference of opinion on a certain text: Is it right for them in their study of that text to bring in the spirit of prophecy to aid in their understanding of it, or should they leave that out of the question?

Daniells: On that first point, I think this, that we are to get our interpretation from this Book, primarily. I think that the Book explains itself, and I think we can understand the Book, fundamentally, through the Book, without resorting to the Testimonies to prove up on it.

W. E. Howell, editor of the *Christian Educator*: The Spirit of prophecy says the Bible is its own expositor.

Daniells: Yes, but I have heard ministers say that the spirit of prophecy is the interpreter of the Bible. I

pretation through the spirit of prophecy and then take it to them? That is heathenish!...

W. W. Prescott, former editor, *Review and Herald*, then a field secretary of the General Conference who had helped revise *The Great Controversy*: How should we use the writings of the spirit of prophecy as an authority by which to settle historical questions?

Daniells: Well, now, as I understand it, Sister White never claimed to be an authority on history, and never claimed to be a dogmatic teacher on theology. She never outlined a course of theology. She just gave out fragmentary statements, but left the pastors and evangelists and preachers to work out all these problems of scripture and of theology and of history. She never claimed to be an authority on history; and as I have understood it, where the history that related to the interpretation of prophecy was clear and expressive, she wove it into her writings; but I have always understood that, as far as she was concerned, she was ready to correct in revision such statements as she thought should be corrected. I have never gone to her writings, and taken the history that I found in her writings, as the positive statement of history regarding the fulfillment of prophecyI do not know how others may view that, but I have felt that I should deal with history in the same way that I am exhorted to deal with the Bible,—prove it all carefully and thoroughly....

C.A. Shull: Just how shall we use the Testimonies in the class room? What shall be our attitude toward them in the line of history, especially?....Now another question, on the taking of Babylon, Mrs. White, in the spirit of prophecy, mentions that Babylon was taken according to the historian, by the turning aside of the waters. Modern scholarship says it was not taken that way. What should be our attitude in regard to such things?....

Daniells: I think this, brethren, we ought not to let every little statement in history that we find lead us away from the spirit of prophecy....I do not believe that if Sister White were here to speak to you today, she would authorize you to take a historical fact, supposed to be a fact, that she had incorporated in the book, and put it up against an actual thing in history. We talked with her about that when "Great Controversy" was being revised, and I have letters in my file in the vault there where we were warned against using Sister White as a historian. She never claimed to be that. We were warned against setting up statements found in her writings against the various history that there is on a fact. That is where I stand.

“What do those people in China do? Can’t they understand this Book only as we get the interpretation through the spirit of prophecy and then take it to them?Sister White never claimed to be an authority on history...”

heard it preached at the General Conference some years ago, when it was said that the only way we could understand the Bible was through the writings of the spirit of prophecy.

J. N. Anderson, Bible teacher at the Washington Foreign Mission Seminary: And he also said “infallible interpreter.”

C. M. Sorenson, history teacher at Emmanuel Missionary College: That expression has been canceled. That is not our position.

Daniells: It is not our position, and it is not right that the spirit of prophecy is the only safe interpreter of the Bible. That is a false doctrine, a false view. It will not stand. Why, my friends what would all the people have done from John’s day down to the present if there were no way to understand the Bible except through the writings of the spirit of prophecy! It is a terrible position to take! That is false, it is error. It is positively dangerous! What do those people do over in Roumania? We have hundreds of Sabbath-keepers there who have not seen a book on the spirit of prophecy. What do those people in China do? Can’t they understand this Book only as we get the inter-

Ellen White

75 More Years of Role Confusion

“Are we going to allow our conclusions from the Bible to be blocked?” Arthur Daniells, General Conference president, asked the delegates to the 1919 Bible Conference.

Daniells was referring to a basic question about interpreting Ellen White. Was it the role of Ellen White to act as a theological umpire within the Adventist church? Did Ellen White through her writings determine doctrinal positions for Seventh-day Adventists?

The issue had and would continue to surface periodically. Some 30 years earlier it had disrupted the 1888 General Conference session. Sixty years after 1919, in 1979, the issue would resurface when Desmond Ford challenged the traditional interpretation of the Investigative Judgment. And 15 years after that, even in our day, the issue seems to create diverse camps within the church. Our struggle with this issue almost seems foretold in Revelation!

It is the purpose of this article to briefly examine those periods in Adventist history. We shall observe how various alignments formed over the question of Ellen White and doctrinal authority.

The Issue in 1888

The year 1888 started somewhat inauspiciously for Adventists. George Butler, president of the General Conference, sent a New Year's letter to all Adventist workers and ministers. Butler declared, “Seventh-day Adventists have never taken a stand upon Bible exegesis which they have been compelled to surrender; but, on the contrary, the lapse of time only strengthens their positions.” Because the church had Ellen White, Butler reasoned, theological positions were divinely confirmed.

by Bert B. Haloviak



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Indeed, Willie White, Ellen White's son, observed that during the 1888 session the antagonists seemed less concerned with the new position on Galatians than with the supposed detrimental effect a change of position would have on the prophetess's influence. Willie, in a letter to P. T. Magan, also observed:

They did not regard the new doctrine itself as of such serious importance, but they believed that the old positions had been sanctioned by the Testimonies, and to make a change would unsettle the confidence of our people everywhere in the Testimonies; and this they regarded as the most serious feature of the whole question.

Although several Ellen White books supported the past position on the law in Galatians 3, she would proclaim that she had no burden on that subject and would urge that such theology be resolved by conclusions reached solely from the Scripture.

The question of Ellen White's doctrinal authority, however, became so divisive in 1888, that the crucial message of justification by faith was not even perceived to be the issue of the time.

The Issue Rediscovered: 1919 Bible Conference

Preliminaries. A theological debate on the meaning of the term “daily” in Daniel 8 provided the backdrop to the Ellen White issues raised at the 1919 Bible Conference. As in 1888, Ellen White had commented on the subject in one of her books, and the “pioneers” rallied to Ellen White's defense, viewing her doctrinal authority as the crucial issue. George Irwin, past president of the General

"Ellen White urged that the question be resolved"

Conference, stated the position these pioneers rallied around:

It is from the standpoint of light that has come through the Spirit of Prophecy that the question will be considered, believing as we do that the Spirit of Prophecy is the only infallible interpreter of Bible principles, since it is Christ through this agency giving the real meaning of his own words.

According to Irwin and the many others in his camp, the Lord, through Ellen White, updated the New Testament, making it relevant to the situation of the times. In 1907 pioneer Stephen Haskell wrote regarding this to W. W. Prescott, General Conference field secretary and major participant at the 1919 Bible Conference:

We ought to understand such expressions [as "daily" and "Babylon"] by the aid of the Spirit of Prophecy. This is the way many expressions in the Old Testament were understood in the days of the early disciples; that is, by the Spirit of Prophecy in the New Testament. For this purpose the spirit of prophecy comes to us. It is from the standpoint of the third angel's message with the spirit of prophecy, all points are to be solved.

Haskell believed that just as the New Testament magnified the Old Testament, so did Ellen White magnify the New Testament. He wrote A. G. Daniells that Ellen White's writings "will settle nearly every point that people question at the present time concerning the message."

General Conference leadership disagreed with that position. Prescott considered that the Bible should be its own interpreter and that appeal should not be made to some other "visible authority" to interpret the Scriptures. Such methodology would lead the church step by step to substitute Ellen White for the Bible. He thus opposed submitting theological questions to Ellen White for her decision. In the 1909 *Review and Herald*, he said he did not consider that it was Mrs White's "province to act as judge in mere matters of historical or Biblical" interpretation.

William Spicer, General Conference secretary, in a 1914 letter to L. R. Conradi, starkly addressed the question that would later come to dominate the 1919 Bible Conference:

It is too bad that the editors of these [Ellen White] manuscripts should try to settle some of these controverted questions....A larger question than the question of the mere detail of a correction or of an erroneous statement is the question as to how we shall treat these matters that have been passed through the hands of the various editors. We have had quite a battle, some of us, for several years, trying to make the brethren see that it was not right to claim any extraordinary authority for matters of this kind. While this is conceded freely enough privately, the difficulty has been, it seems to me, that courage has been lacking to take a straight and consistent position.

The Conference Itself

At the 1919 Bible Conference, Rufus Underwood, president of the Central Union Conference, observed that Ellen White was not to be considered as equal to the canon of the Scripture. He used an experience from the 1870s as confirmation:

He along with George Butler and J. H. Morrison studied tithing from the Biblical standpoint and made a proposal at a General Conference session to adopt it. Such pioneers as Stephen Haskell and J. O. Corliss, however, argued against Underwood's proposal. Their opposition centered upon Ellen White's endorsement of the systematic benevolence plan for financing the ministry that had been adopted in 1859. Because of their argument, Underwood observed, biblical tithing was precluded from the Adventist Church for several years. Eventually, however, Underwood prevailed, and he observed that "the support of the gospel ministry could be clearly sustained from both the Old and New Testaments, and that the source from which we were to gather our instruction for the guidance of the church was primarily the Bible and not the Testimonies."

As in the case of the law in Galatians, the "daily," and in other issues of theology, Ellen White urged that the question be resolved by study of the Scriptures, not her writings.

Although that issue was openly discussed at the 1919 Bible Conference, the heated response of those we have called "pioneers" and their second generation progenitors resulted in the decision that the papers and minutes of the conference would not be made publicly available. Here is how General

d by study of the Scriptures, not her writings.”

Conference president Arthur Daniells expressed it in a statement at the Bible Conference:

I think that our brethren who have exercised so much freedom, and have cut away from their mooring places, ought to consider the trouble that it is going to make....I confess it is going to take more wisdom than we have to pilot our way through without damage to the work....All of us have had good Christian experiences and have led thousands of people into this truth. But now the result of such freedom which has been taken has brought us into a perplexing situation, and now we must have wisdom to go through. I sometimes think it would be just as well to lock this manuscript up in a vault, and have any one who wishes to do so come there for personal study and research.

So the transcript remained in the General Conference vault. When the General Conference Archives was established in 1973, Archivist Don Yost inventoried all the materials housed in the vault. Don Mansell, then a book editor for the Review and Herald, in his work preparing articles for the *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, inquired about the Bible Conference and in 1975 described the discovery of the minutes in this manner:

The materials which Dr Yost found were wrapped in two packets approximately 9"x 12"x 4". He opened these packets and handed the materials to me. As I rapidly scanned the yellowed sheets of transcript and papers, I realized that we had found more than we had hoped to find. Since their discovery, I have examined the materials more closely, and I believe that they contain valuable materials of interest to SDA researchers and historians.

The Issue Made Public: 1979

Copies of the Bible Conference transcript were made available to various White Estate Research Centers, and in 1979 publication of the essential Ellen White portions was undertaken by Spectrum. This refocused the issues discussed in 1919 and this time gave the church at large opportunity to see past generations wrestling with issues that were yet current. Seventh-day Adventist theologians in their annual meeting in 1979 selected the theme, "1919-1979: Sixty Years of SDA Theology."

Yet another episode occurred in 1979 that illustrat-

ed the relevance of the issues discussed by church leaders in 1919. Desmond Ford, charismatic theologian and teacher at Pacific Union College, challenged traditional Adventist teachings on the Investigative Judgment, prominently discussed by Ellen White in her writings. Such retired denominational workers as W. B. Ochs, E. E. Roenfelt, D. A. Ochs, G. M. Mathews and others signed a statement that they sent to the General Conference opposing Ford's position:

Dr Ford [also] claimed that certain translations of Hebrews 9:10 could mean that Christ went to either or both apartments upon His return to heaven. However when the Spirit of Prophecy explains so distinctly that it was not till 1844 that Christ went into the 2nd apartment we accept the Gift of Prophecy for making clear what is not fully explained in the use of the Greek....

If the Gift of Prophecy through Mrs White does not give us insights by which ambiguous points are explained more fully, then the gift is robbed of its value. The Holy Spirit has always been necessary to an understanding of the Scripture....When men and women were under the direct influence of the Holy Spirit they were preserved from delivering error to the people. Only by the Holy Spirit is one able to differentiate clearly between truth and error. The Holy Spirit gave us the Written Word and He now helps us interpret it.

What About Today?

What have we learned from the cyclical replaying of the issues addressed in 1919—indeed, addressed throughout Adventist history? Mrs. White herself consistently refrained from using her writings to resolve theological points of dispute. She always expected to learn more and more.

In 1890 Mrs. White became a student at a Bible school conducted for denominational workers. Here's what she told her fellow students:

"You must go to the scriptures for yourself. You must search them with humble hearts. If you are just full of prejudice and your own preconceived opinions, and if you entertain the idea that there is nothing for you to know, and that you know all that is worth knowing, you will not get any benefit here. But if you come like children, you want to learn all that there is for you. If the God from heaven has sent anything for me, I want it."

A Maturing Church at 150 Years

Is 1994 a year for celebration—or mourning? Celebration because the denomination is 150 years from its origin? Or mourning because our movement has been stalled in this dreary world awaiting a delayed second advent? Church policy and practice would suggest celebration, but traditional Adventist understandings would suggest mourning. Many Adventists speak of the second Advent as “imminent,” but our actions often suggest a thousand years. One hundred and fifty years is a long time to claim the second coming is imminent—without an increasingly educated segment of Adventism becoming a bit dubious.

The year 1994 is an appropriate time for Adventists to reflect on our understanding of scripture and Ellen White’s relation to it. This year is not only the 150th anniversary of the Great Disappointment, but it is the 75th anniversary of the monumental Bible Conference of 1919 and the one-year memorial of the disaster at Waco.

1844. One hundred and fifty years ago some 100,000 folk in New England accepted Baptist-farmer William Miller’s conclusion that Christ would return to earth that year. Perhaps the most noteworthy clergyman following Miller was Joshua Himes of Boston. But afterward it was a group of laypersons who regrouped around the vision that Christ was to appear in a heavenly

sanctuary compartment—not on earth—on October 22, 1844. And these believers, including Ellen and James White, became the nucleus of Seventh-day Adventism.

1919. Seventy-five years later the Adventist church had grown to 175,000, and many believers, like their Millerite forebears, desired simple, supernatural answers to difficult questions. The popular Adventist mind had already begun to make Ellen White and her writings into a paper pope that had more real authority than the Scripture. The 1919 Bible Conference transcripts

“The popular Adventist mind had already begun to make Ellen White and her writings into a paper pope that had more real authority than the Scripture.”

show church leaders, from the General Conference president to college religion professors, grappling with a continuing dilemma: how to relate, to the popular Adventist mind that demands certainty, that which knowledgeable people know about God’s revelation.

1994. Today we Adventists like to feel good about ourselves—and there is ample reason for celebration on our 150th birthday. Adventism has brought a higher quality of present life, and hope of an eternal life, to over 10 mil-

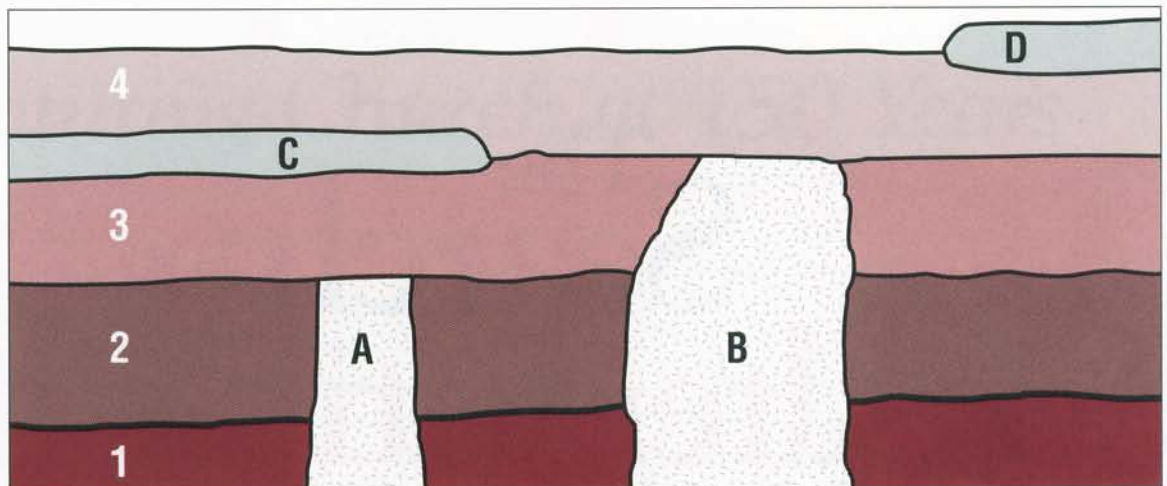
lion members over the years. And through our schools, hospitals and welfare work we have aided scores of millions of people worldwide. Now that’s something to celebrate!

However, as denominations go, ours is in its adolescence. Our birth was most difficult. And our childhood had its bumps. Like all adolescents, we want to be liked, but this desire should not keep our maturing church from candidly admitting our shortcomings.

The 1919 Bible Conference participants, personally acquainted with Ellen White and her ministry, since she had just died four years earlier, charted an enlightened view of how God’s revelation of his will has both a divine and a human side. They avoided the easy way out—to make Ellen White and her writings or any revelation wholly divine and thus simply to be taken at face value.

Divine revelation, like the church itself, has its thoroughly human side. This sobering truth is not easy for some in our adolescent denomination to accept. However, there is a joyful side to this admission: each of us is thoroughly human, and yet the God of the universe can as surely dwell in our hearts as he dwells in the words of the prophets! Regardless of when the Second Advent occurs we must not mourn but celebrate, because the Spirit of Ellen White and of all prophecy lives in all God’s children. —James Walters

Four layers of sedimentary rocks (1-4) with two bodies of extrusive lava (C and D) and two bodies of intrusive lava (A and B).



fering times throughout these millions of years. For me, this is totally incompatible with the absolute time frame of the creation week. Therefore, I must examine the data and search for an alternative solution.

The standard time scale is based on radiometric dating, structural relationships and fossils. An example is given by Chester Longwell and colleagues in the book *Physical Geology* (1969). Longwell shows an area with four horizontal layers (see the simplified drawing on this page). Two bodies of igneous (volcanic) rock extend vertically up through some of the layers from below, and two sheets of igneous rock extend part way into the area horizontally above and between the layers. Geologists infer the ages of the layers from the fossils found in them and from their structural relationships, but also depend heavily on the apparent radiometric dates of the igneous bodies. Thus they conclude that the ages of the layers range from 20 million to 30 million years (top layer) to more than 60 million years (bottom layer). The authors point out that dates from other localities and from other igneous rocks are needed to give a clearer idea, and, on page 130, they state,

We do not wish to give the impression, however, that the column is calibrated thoroughly. Some units are bracketed more closely than others, and there are long gaps without reliable dates. In time, however, the gaps will surely be filled in.

In examining the scientific data and the understanding of igneous processes, one can find at least the potential for partially resolving the conflict between the apparent old ages of the volcanic material and a belief in a recent creation. In journals such as *Nature*, *Journal of the Geological Society of London*, *Earth and Planetary Science Letters*, *Geochimica et Cosmochimica Acta*, and others, scientists have reported chemical fractionation and zon-

ing within the magma chambers, from which the igneous material originates. These processes change the characteristics of the igneous rocks in such a manner that the magma flows issuing from the same source at nearly the same time can exhibit widely differing radiometric dates. Also, it is not uncommon for fresh lava to have very great "inherited" ages. It is not unreasonable to question the acceptance of the standard radiometric dates. I must hasten to add that there are other radiometric questions which must be addressed—such as why do the lower layers tend to date older than the upper layers? But, even here, helpful information is available from the study of volcanoes.

My understanding of Scripture attributes death, of human and all other life forms, to the sin of Adam; and so the interpretation cannot be true that death, as recorded in the fossil record, occurred over millions of years. And any hypothesis which implies that death was present before the fall of Adam would in fact render the Creation package null and void. Also, if the Creation package is broken, even the words of Christ ultimately become untrustworthy.

And yet, while searching for alternative solutions, I constantly evaluate my position with respect to the creation week time period, the origins of life, and the destruction of the world by the Flood. I appraise the direction in which my studies are taking. If I find scientific interpretations leading to conclusions antithetical to my world view, I then must reevaluate my thinking. In this whole search, I attempt to ever keep in mind Job 40:8 (NIV), where God asks Job, "Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself?"

In closing, I would like to state that the scriptural world view of creation and salvation presents the most holistic approach that I know. It is my prayer that we will never adopt a position that places human reason as the only arbiter of truth.

Clyde Webster's article was presented at the April panel discussion on Adventist creationism sponsored by Adventist Today.

The Search for Alternative Solutions

An interesting question was proposed to me recently by a non-Adventist friend during a discussion of why I do so much traveling. The question was, "Why bother searching for alternatives when it's obvious that science has the answers for the real world and that the Bible only addresses love and salvation?"—an innocent, sincere question, but one that strikes at the very heart of my beliefs. In answering this question I know that I am presenting my world view and its correlation to my philosophies of science and religion. I also know that my choices concerning the interpretations of evidence (scientific or scriptural) are a result of rather than an argument for my particular world view.

My answer goes something like this: When I first elected to accept Jesus Christ as my Savior I still held on to some evolutionary views. However, during my continuing studies I came to realize that for Jesus to be my Savior I had to also accept him as my Creator. At this point I had to decide how God created and interacts with my world; but where should/could I turn for this information? The logical place was Scripture, not science. In searching the Scriptures for answers I came to three points that, to me, are consistent from Genesis through Revelation:

1. God created life and living systems in six 24-hour days, adding a seventh day as a memorial to his creation, and for rest.
2. The great diversity of life came from the

Clyde L. Webster, Jr.

"I came to realize that for Jesus to be my Savior I had to also accept him as my Creator."



Clyde L. Webster, Jr., is Senior Research Scientist at the Geoscience Research Institute in Loma Linda, California.

Creator's hand, with humankind the ultimate being created "in the image of God..."

3. The total world was destroyed by a flood at some time after Creation.

These three points are addressed not only by the prophets and apostles but by Christ himself. The only major time issue involved is the absolute-ness of the seven-day creation week. Other time issues are either inferred or deduced but are not absolute.

In my study of Scripture I am continually challenged by texts such as Proverbs 3:5,7, which tell me not to trust to my own understanding nor to be wise in my own eyes. In 2 Timothy 2:15 I am admonished to study and rightly divide God's word, while in 1 Thessalonians 5:21 I am also told to prove all things and hold fast that which is good. Finally, I am again reminded in 2 Peter 3:5,6 not to deliberately forget that the world was destroyed by water and in Revelation 14:7 that God is the Creator. So, for me, Scripture does involve more than love and salvation, it establishes my world view. For me, the origin and diversity of life are not open for alternative solutions because I accept God as Creator of all life.

One area which does present a need for alternative solutions is the standard interpretation of the fossil record found within the geologic column. This interpretation implies a time frame of several hundred million years for the existence of life and implies that various life forms existed at widely dif-

Science Faculty Vary in Views on Creationism

by Floyd Petersen

Adventist Today recently asked the Center for Health Research, Loma Linda University, to conduct a survey of the views on life's origins held by members of science faculties at Adventist colleges and universities in North America. The accompanying graph shows their responses.

We mailed 200 questionnaires to teachers identified from the Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook and from telephoning the colleges, and promised to keep answers confidential. The response rate was 60.5 percent, or 121 respondents, considered good for this type of survey. Of those returning a completed survey, 83.5 percent held a doctoral degree; 35.5 percent said their area

of specialization was the life sciences, 37.2 percent the physical sciences, and 9.1 percent some other area.

Of those giving their age, the mean was 50.2 years, with the youngest being 31 and the oldest 79. Of the 112 who reported their gender, 8 percent were female and 92 percent were male.

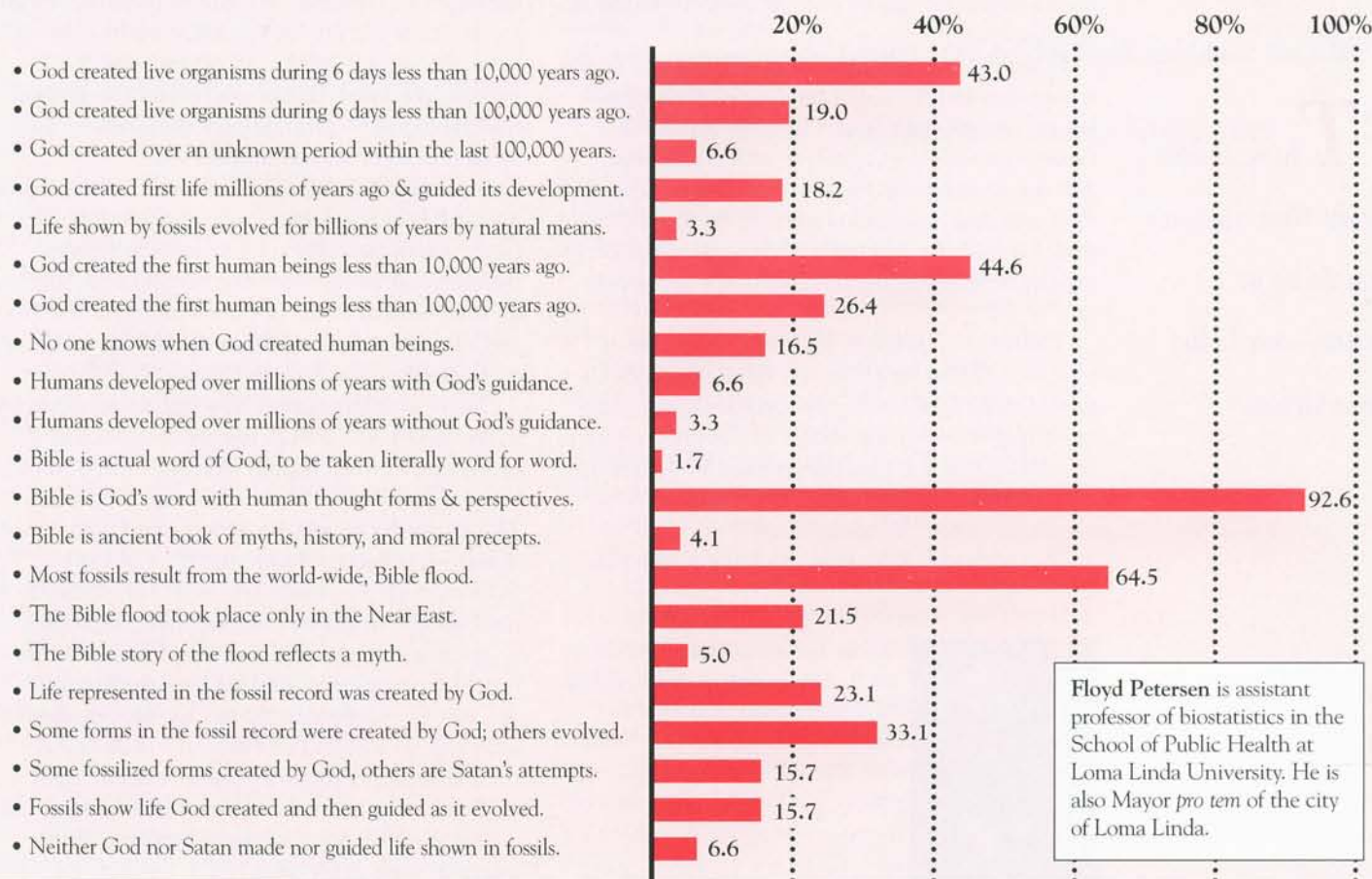
It was interesting to note that younger respondents—under 50—tended to be more conservative than older ones. Those who had not attended Adventist schools and also did not have Adventist parents appeared, overall, to be slightly more traditional than others. Some attendance at Adventist schools, as a factor by itself, did not seem to make much difference, nor did having an Adventist parent, as a single factor.

In each area, some respondents omitted

an answer or indicated they had no opinion. As to area of academic specialization, 18.2 percent declined to answer; 7.4 percent did not indicate their gender. As to origins of non-human life, 9.9 percent had no opinion. On origins of human life, only 2.5 percent had no opinion. Only 1.7 percent indicated no opinion about the nature of the Bible, and as to views about the flood and the fossil record, 5 percent had no opinion.

The results of our survey show fairly close agreement on the nature of the Bible, but significant variation in views on the other topics. Perhaps the biblical account of so momentous an event as creation is purposefully brief, allowing us the freedom to struggle over a universal reality. We might all be surprised when someday we hear the details explained by The One who was there.

Adventist Today heard from 121 science faculty members in Adventist colleges and universities. The graph below shows the percent who selected each item as closest to their views.



Floyd Petersen is assistant professor of biostatistics in the School of Public Health at Loma Linda University. He is also Mayor *pro tem* of the city of Loma Linda.

Before Adam

Ervin Taylor

The

dialogue currently under way in the Seventh-day Adventist Church concerning the Genesis creation narrative has understandably focused on the geologic time scale since it presents such a contrast: the “about 6,000 years” of Ellen White versus the billions of years of the geological record and hundreds of millions of years of the fossil record based on various isotopic geochronological techniques.

“There is one point that appears not to be at issue—our belief in a Creator.”

However, it is not just the geological and fossil record that are at issue. The facts of the archaeological record—principally those of prehistoric times—are totally at variance with traditional Adventist understandings concerning the age of the earth and humankind upon it. In this discussion, I would like to briefly address the question of human “origins” from an archaeological perspective.

There is one point that appears not to be at issue—our belief in a Creator. All in our community of faith would probably agree with the statement that the ultimate source of the universe and life within it is the God represented in the biblical narratives. For our church the problem is, What exactly is meant by “creationism”?

In traditional Adventist thinking, a belief in

creationism has typically involved accepting the view that the beginning was not more than 6,000 to 10,000 years ago. As other authors in *Adventist Today* have already noted, there is overwhelming evidence, collected over the past two centuries in a wide spectrum of scientific disciplines, showing that the time frame for the fossil record should be measured in hundreds of millions of years. Within the last century, impressive evidence has also been collected suggesting that the time frame for human-like fossils (hominids)—and the artifacts they fabricated—extends back hundreds of thousands and even several million years.

Complementing these geologic and archaeological data, biblical scholarship over the last 100 years has revealed how the ancient biblical writers thought and wrote about the past and has suggested that, read in terms of their times, world views, and intentions, these writers should not be quoted to support a claim for short ages.

There is ample reason why our church founders in the mid-19th century may once have had a problem with such a time frame measured in millions of years rather than a few thousand years. There was the concern expressed by Ellen White—probably echoing the fears of early Adventist church members—that the viability of the Sabbath might be compromised. However, it seems to me that competent theological and historical scholarship published over the last two decades by Adventist scholars has effectively dealt with this theological problem. If I understand their statements correctly, these scholars argue that the integrity and validity of the Sabbath concept does not require a literal, fundamentalist interpretation of Genesis.



Ervin Taylor is professor and chair of the Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Riverside. He is a specialist in radio-carbon dating.

As to the statements of Ellen White, it appears that the problem is solved once one moves beyond a fundamentalist understanding of the prophetic voice. Once we understand that even “inspired” people can be wrong, many apparent problems—such as the age of the earth—can be resolved, and we as a church can move on to more important things.

In a way, Genesis does present literal, historical truth. The ancient Hebrew writers describe the first humans as practicing agriculture—growing domesticated plants for food—and possessing domesticated animals. Adam was given a garden to till and keep, and Abel tended sheep. From what we now know archaeologically, the biblical time frame for plant and animal domestication is in the right ballpark. Plant domestication did go back only a few thousand—perhaps as much as 6,000 to 7,000 years—before the time the original core of the Genesis narrative was first written down. And one of the earliest places in the world where plants were domesticated was in the Near East. Scholars who work in the Near East now have a reasonably good handle on exactly how long it took. It is to be measured in units of thousands—not tens of thousands—of years. Those who wrote down and edited the oral traditions recorded in the Genesis narratives got the timing about right on this, and they got the right place.

The Biblical writers also thought of cities as existing from the time of Adam or at least within a few generations of his time. Cain’s son Enoch built a city. Cities go back only a few thousand years from the time of the earliest texts that became part of the Genesis narrative, and it is in the Near East where they indeed first appeared.

A significant part of the data for this chronology comes from the application of a dating method that can be applied to samples of organic (carbon-containing) materials. In the case of the Near East agriculture, these samples were excavated by archaeologists from the sites where humans first domesticated plants and animals. The method is radiocarbon (^{14}C) dating, a technique which uses the decay of ^{14}C as a “clock” to assign age to organic materials in the age range of about 300 to 40,000/50,000 years on a routine basis and up to 75,000 years using special equipment. I mention the ^{14}C method in this context because I have been told that the introduction of radiocarbon dating in the late 1940s was one of the main things that prompted the General Conference to start the Geoscience Research Institute (GRI). As I understand it, one of the responsibilities of the GRI is to attempt to gather information that refutes the mass of existing scientific data con-

cerning the vast age of the fossil and archaeological record. I find this approach to scientific research very reminiscent of tobacco interests which seek to discredit evidence that the use of tobacco causes lung cancer.

I fear that if church leaders insist on adopting a literal, fundamentalist biblical interpretation in this matter, they will demonstrate that they are turning their backs on “present truth.” It does not have to be that way. There are other perspectives which would allow us to take both the biblical and scientific data seriously. The Genesis narratives assume that humans from the beginning had agriculture, they domesticated animals, and they lived in cities. At the time it was written down, this was a fully justifiable conclusion—there was no contrary evidence.

However, archaeological scholarship of more than 200 years in the Near East and elsewhere has documented that before cities, before agriculture, and before domesticated animals, there was a very long period when humans were typically nomadic hunters and gatherers. Just as ancient Hebrew writers generally assumed that the earth was fixed in space, they also assumed that people had always lived as they did in “biblical times.” The writers of Genesis reflected the best information they had. Why should we expect more of them than that?

How are we to deal with this apparent problem? Might I suggest that the Hebrew writers of Genesis assumed that the first people were farmers and soon lived in cities; they also assumed that the first people communicated with language. Genesis says that the earliest human pair had a conversation with God, and later with a serpent. Then they did some very unfortunate things. On the other hand, the Hebrew account says they expected to become like God, knowing good and evil.

The idea that people have always been sapient—that is intelligent, talking as we do (in some language) was not just a tentative belief to a Hebrew—anything else was simply inconceivable. No ancient Hebrew writer would have had any inkling or hint of any other reality. To them we

“T*he approach of the Geoscience Research Institute to scientific research is very reminiscent of tobacco interests which seek to discredit evidence that the use of tobacco causes lung cancer.”*

were and always had been what is now labeled *Homo sapiens*. Language has helped shape our unique brand of intelligence, and from the beginning, as the Bible narrative views it, made possible an active exchange between a Creator and self-conscious creatures made in his image.

What about this thing called language?

Anthropological and archaeological interest in the origins of language has always been intense. One view that continues to have wide support is that human language is relatively recent—within the last 100,000 to 150,000 years. It may be that language systems are associated with only our species—anatomically modern *Homo sapiens*. Some also argue that the critical impact of language on human behavior becomes apparent in the archaeological record—in the form of elaborate tools, art, and the burial of the dead—only during the last 50,000 years.

The point is that while earlier hominid forms had certainly existed, the Genesis narrative and the remainder of the Judeo-Christian corpus deal with topics and issues that have meaning and significance only to beings that have consciousness

or “mind.” As far as we can tell, the only beings on earth that exhibit this characteristic are *Homo sapiens*. It can be argued that non-sapient hominids, such as the various forms of the Australopithecines, who lived several million years ago, had no language as we know it and therefore had no capacity to deal with topics of ultimate significance. It was only with the emergence of *Homo sapiens* that God was finally able to

discuss the issues of “freedom,” “truth” and “love” with creatures that could now “think God’s thoughts after him.”

Might I suggest that the current dialogue in our denomination concerning the age of the earth and the fossil record, reflects the increasing degree of pluralism Adventists now manifest in their interpretation of the Bible. How we interpret the Bible is the primary issue; related to this is also the problem of how the church is to deal with the views of Ellen White on this and related topics.

The main reason for the pain and discomfort that we as a church community are experiencing as we work through this problem is that some church administrators, with training in areas other than theology and science, tend to ignore the views of our best-trained scholars and scientists. Instead they uncritically accept and promulgate fundamentalist interpretations as if these were settled doctrine. To resolve our current question of what appropriately constitutes an Adventist creationism, our church’s dialogue on this topic should be focused on theological, not scientific, issues. The main question is whether the Adventist church wants to move away from a fundamentalist approach for interpreting the Bible.

At some point, I am confident that our problem will be resolved, just as the church resolved the problem of the “shut door,” “the daily,” and the “king of the north.” However, while the question is being discussed, the most critical issue is not who will “win” or “lose” in this debate. It will be how church authorities and college boards and presidents treat those employed by the church who hold views that do not coincide with our current traditional understandings of this topic, as a recent poll of our college and university science faculties has indicated (page 19). These traditional understandings are in the process of changing, and thoughtful people should be allowed the freedom to explore the truth.

“These traditional understandings are in the process of changing, and thoughtful people should be allowed the freedom to explore the truth.”

Ervin Taylor presented this paper at the April panel discussion on Adventist creationism sponsored by Adventist Today.

In future issues of *Adventist Today*

- Evangelists and Russians weigh evangelism in Russia
- Report details Adventist decline in tithe-giving
- Former Adventists look back
- Adventists explain current views and practices regarding jewelry

Administration Seeks Greater Control

At last month's Annual Council of Adventist church leaders a housewife from Ohio, Susan Sickler delivered the only speech that drew applause. Sickler admitted that perhaps she appeared confused, along with other members of the church's Commission on World Church Organization—a group appointed to study the effectiveness of church governance. The reason for their confusion was that there were discrepancies between the specific recommendations which the commission had voted and the official commission report that was now presented to the Annual Council. In fact, the commission members had never seen the report in the form presented to the council delegates. The report gave significant details on how church authority should further be centralized; these were new to commission members.

"The devil is in the details," said Sickler. "I can see one thing that could unite the North American Division: The same headline will be run in *Our Firm Foundation* and in *Spectrum*—'Welcome to Babylon!'"

This speech not only took the assembled world delegates by storm, but former General Conference president Neal Wilson rose and said that the current General Conference president, Robert Folkenberg, should hear it. Accordingly, General Conference secretary Ralph Thompson fetched Folkenberg, and Sickler repeated her remarks.

Commission members later learned that in mid-August, the report in its revised form had been sent to those commission members who are also members of the General Conference Executive Committee and who would attend Annual Council, but not to the other commission members present at Annual Council, including Sickler.

Church governance thus dominated discussion at Annual Council, which met for the week beginning October 3 at the Adventist headquarters building in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Three years ago General Conference president Robert Folkenberg set up and chaired this international commission to study governance. They had four meetings, the last in March, 1994.

A Call for "Linkage"

The commission's work proceeded smoothly until the Gettysburg session last spring. At that session, certain church leaders stressed the need for close "linkage"

between levels of church organization, and for upper levels of the denomination to have greater formal and informal control. Minutes of the final week-long session of the commission dealing with these sensitive matters were never given to commission members. Most importantly, the final commission report—containing explicit recommendations on linkage—was not even seen by the entire commission until it was distributed to the Annual Council.

The document called for "landmark changes in church management," according to the *Adventist Review*. Folkenberg did not reveal how and why it came into final form without discussion and a vote from the commission.

The Annual Council voted down one key "linkage" advocated in the commission report: that the ministerial credentials of the local conference officers be authorized by the union conference. If passed, this recommendation would have made local church leaders more formally beholden to higher leaders, and less accountable to either the conference delegates that voted them into office and/or to the local conference executive committees.

Centralized "Problem-Solving"

Another recommendation made to strengthen centralized control would effectively give the relevant "higher organization" power to dissolve or merge a lower organizational unit if a problem were perceived. This recommendation was referred for later discussion at the spring administrative meeting of the General Conference—a meeting that includes fewer local conference presidents and hence a higher proportion of General Conference personnel. At present, many local conference constitutions allow union conference leaders to call for a constituency meeting of the local conference if a problem is perceived. However, the commission report states that the Union Conference "shall" consult with the relevant Division of the General Conference if a serious problem arises with a local conference that may warrant disbandment.

Admittedly, a church of such economic, educational, racial and cultural diversity as contemporary Adventism needs well thought out ways to keep the denomination together—as well as to protect and foster individual members, congregations and local conferences. We need to rethink the organization laid down in 1901, when the denomination had only some 60,000 members world wide, but the delegates to last month's Annual Council had second thoughts about attempts to slip the denomination into a more hierarchical mode.

In the rousing discussion, Herman Bauman, Arizona conference president, said that the commission report was spelling "linkage" with the letters C-O-N-T-R-O-L.

"The devil is in the details," said Sickler. "I can see one thing that could unite the North American Division: The same headline will be run in *Our Firm Foundation* and in *Spectrum*: 'Welcome to Babylon!'"

Continued on page 26

ADVENTIST CREATIONISM

I have noted the controversy following the Creation/Evolution panel with great interest, and not a little sadness.

It seems plain that in the context of the Adventist church at large, "historicity of Scripture and the Genesis account of creation" mean a six-day fiat creation a relatively few thousand years ago. Given this, the G.C. president's report was precipitous and ill-advised, but addressed to SDAs, it was hardly an unfair characterization of Dr. Hammill's (as well as Ed Hare's and Ervin Taylor's) view of creation as I understand it. It troubles me that your editorial in the recent *Adventist Today* presents Elder Hammill's position in such a way as to obfuscate rather than clarify the issue.

The statement that all panelists "believe there is full and complete harmony between the Bible and confirmed data of the natural world when both are rightly understood" is so broad as to cover everyone from Duane Gish to Howard van Till, to say nothing of Robert H. Pierson and Richard Hammill. How does this statement convey any useful information to your readers? In the SDA subculture it is a formulation I have most often heard used by traditionalists to express faith in a literal reading of Genesis, with the expectation that proper understanding of the empirical data would be forthcoming. Using it in another sense, even one that may be appropriate in a different venue, does not seem helpful in resolving a misunderstanding (or dispute) among Adventists.

Every view of creation contains factors which are difficult to explain, whether from the spiritual or the scientific side. It seems to me that we would all be better served by straight talk about our own views, and open discussion of both kinds of problems, rather than by listing awards and accomplishments, or by lawyers' arguments about the rights of the accused, or by careful language conveying misleading impressions.

Plainly, I was really disappointed in your editorial. I have held you in high regard for a long time, at least since your reporting on Glacier View, but now I'm feeling something very close to a sense of betrayal. Can you help me with this?

Earl Aagaard
Angwin, California

The six-member panel of scholars plus the moderator, which assembled to discuss creationism at Loma Linda on April 2, gave a masterful presentation, from beginning to end! I was there. And each speaker reaffirmed his continued belief in the biblical concept of creationism.

How then, after the panel's compelling discussion lasting four hours, could anyone there assume that an attack had been made on the historicity of Scripture, especially after having heard this excit-

ing declaration: that science today is more and more affirming God as Creator?

Phyllis Williams-Vineyard
Anaheim, California

The recent uproar about the creation panel pushed me to write you (*AT* editor). I came to PUC in 1950, having arrived from Europe only in January of that year. One of my first exposures was to the Daniel and Revelation class you taught. Only years later did I realize that during the same time you had memorized Daniel and Revelation in their respective languages in order to understand better the meaning of the text. This and your absolute loyalty to the Adventist church, in spite of theological disagreements, made me respect your teaching as well as your ministry.

More about loyalty. The people I am going to mention have made my own loyalty to the Adventist church important to me. Peter Hare was a classmate of mine. One of the reasons he went into physical chemistry was the Carbon-14 issue that was prominent in the 50s. He wanted to prove that the C-14 dating was wrong. It did not turn out that way. But Pete, as we called him, remained loyal to the church.

My wife's uncle, Dr. Murdoch, was visiting us in the 70s. He told us that some of the church's dogmas were not stressed at the seminary any more. When asked why nothing had happened in the church, he said that it takes time to turn the Queen Mary. But Uncle Billy, as we called him, remained absolutely loyal to the church.

We became acquainted with Des Ford after he moved to Auburn. There is hardly an Adventist that lives a better Christian life and who has remained loyal to the church.

It was our privilege to get acquainted with Smuts Van Rooyen. We have heard him preach in the Riverside church and again in the Carmichael church. His loyalty impresses us. I recall Dr. Heppenstall at one of the Forum meetings in Angwin state that he really did not believe that Christ was going around in heaven lighting the candles, and heard a lady gasp, "But Dr. Heppenstall, how can you say that?"

If we were to put all of these people in one room there would be quite a discussion and probably considerable disagreement. But all of them would be loyal to their faith.

The issue of loyalty should have made all of the frivolous arguments raised about the intent of the meeting in Loma Linda superfluous. From the list of the participants it seems clear that all of them are loyal Adventists. When one begins to think that we have developed a sufficient amount of tolerance and, more than that, have developed a security in our faith, this happens. Don't lose faith in the members of the church. Many of us support you.

L. Arno Lejnieks
Sacramento, California

Your fall issue boldly fronted the dilemma in "Adventist Creationism." I found it both rewarding and disturbing.

To increase the reward and diminish the disturbance, I suggest that we consider the following facts which until recently at least have been axioms for most Seventh-day Adventists. (1) Satan fervently wants us to believe in evolution rather than celestial creation. (2) Fallen Lucifer employs, in order to deceive, any and all power permitted him by God. (3) If permitted, he (the devil) will obfuscate, indeed rearrange, the "geologic column," the decay of uranium, the O_2 isotope record in ocean sediments, and all the rest. (4) God hasn't promised to remove all doubt for all persons, always.

The Bible is the beginning of all science. It leaves little place for serious doubt concerning the origin of our global environment.

Raymond O. West
Belfair, Washington

I enjoyed your series on creationism, after listening to the tapes. I think the letter of Alvin J. Ratzlaff on page 22 sums it up quite well. Unless we approach truth with humility, admitting that we, as individuals, and as a church, may be in error, our "studies" take on the character of the prayer in Luke 18:9-12.

Arlin W. Baldwin
Coarsegold, California

The essays on creation in the Sept/Oct'94 issue were excellent, but why have SDA scholars been virtually silent on the subject for most of the 20th century? Such discussions have rarely been welcomed on SDA campuses. Those who dared suggest an "open theology," in which the Creator was BIGGER than Genesis, were regarded with utmost suspicion.

Two essay authors, however, made comments which revealed that a degree of traditional SDA "cerebral stenosis" persists. One author implied that since the other writers of Old Testament books did not expand upon the subject of creation we can assume that it must not be very important and need not concern us. The other author stated that abandoning a literal Genesis creation would weaken faith in the Bible and God. Neither comment makes sense to anyone who has studied history, science, and the Bible, and managed to keep an open mind while doing so.

The question of origins is THE fundamental question asked by all humankind. Each of us wants to know the answers to: "Who am I?" "Where did I come from?" "Why am I here?" Genesis is not a scientific account and only hints at the answers to these questions. Genesis is unique among biblical books in that the authorship is unproven, it was written millennia after the event, and is based upon a collection of ancient Mesopotamian myths and legends.

It is illogical that a believer's faith would be shaken when scientific discoveries suggest flaws in Sumerian mythology! Each new discovery on the creation of the universe and life should result in an expanded faith and wonder at God's creative masterpiece--not less! Let's have more on this topic.

Vernon P. Wagner
Huntington Beach, California

HOLMES' ICEBERG

Since Holmes "approves the arrangement" of the digest of his book (Tip Of An Iceberg-Sept/Oct 1994) it seems fair to criticize both the book and his position from that arrangement. Dr. Holmes plants his feet firmly in mush as he equates belief in male ordination only with "commitment to biblical authority" and proper "interpretation of Scripture." The matter is at so grave a "crossroads" that it may contribute to eventual schism!

Sadly, planned or unplanned, the book comes out all too typically as yet another narrow, chauvinistic, legalistic defense of one element of the status quo in the SDA church. Those who do not share Holmes' viewpoint are, by definition, rejecters of the Bible as the Word of God. We must see and interpret it Holmes' way, reach his conclusions, or we are obviously wrong. To clinch the matter, leaving us on the outside looking in, he notes that he represents the "majority view." So the book then is also about who has, and who will get, power and status--via the "majority." That is a very troublesome focus for any church founded on the "Rock Christ Jesus," rather than on "the majority."

History is littered with the wreckage of churches and other groups that followed a "majority view" even when it was wrong. In this instance, Adventists everywhere are called to conformity with what is just a third world cultural custom, not to unity with each other in the central Person and thrust of Scripture.

Holmes seems, in all this, a good representative of the ATS (Adventist Theological Society) he has led. ATS has blessed us in the past with its clear descriptive identification of "real Adventists," and by implication the non-real. In context, I feel the chill of a different kind of "iceberg" that mashes dissent, squashes local/regional ways of doing, all on the basis of dubious and personal biblical "interpretations."

The church has always had a "pluralism" of views, thank God. Some are markedly more penetrating than this one. Perspectives ranging from rank legalism to purist "faith alone" have survived together, with tension to be sure, as have even more sharply divisive viewpoints for over 100 years. Different views of inspiration, or the nature

of Christ, have been around as long. And the church cannot tolerate a portion of its educated, thinking body that wants to see appropriately talented women utilized and recognized equally with men? It's a doctrinal/biblical authority issue? Come on. Let's grow up!

Frank R. Lemon
Beaumont, California

Re: the synopsis of Holmes' book. Most who write on the issue of ordaining women tend to treat a different issue--whether women should serve as elders or pastors. Already, throughout the world and in every congregation women serve in ordainable posts, though they are seldom ordained. These are our female deacons, usually termed "deaconesses" and treated separately from the male deacons.

The Greek term diakonos (deacon) is a neuter term and is used for deacons of either or both genders. I reference the interested reader the commentaries on Romans 16:1 by L. Morris (1988, pp. 528-529), F.E. Bruce (TNTC 6, 1963, p. 270), and for those who do not mind the historical-critical method, J. Fitzmeyer (AB 33, 1993, p. 729).

Under the ostensible issue of whether women should serve as elders or pastors is the more important issue of whether women are spiritually significant enough to be ordained as deaconesses. In this issue we see just how far our church departs from Biblical authority. As Holmes focuses on the office rather than on ordination itself, he is the one who treats the tip of the iceberg.

Jim Miller
Madison, Wisconsin

GREGORY'S GOOD NEWS, BAD NEWS

We received your attractive magazine (September-October issue) and were aghast to read the account on page 23 where the writer in effect extols the modern psychiatric method of convincing young adults that somehow they were sexually molested in infancy but had simply forgotten it and the psychiatrists manage to dig up their hidden memory and now they understand all about what troubles them. It was not their own fault at all. Just something that maybe a dirty old man did to her when she was age 5.

Early in the article she describes how at age 16 she was into a half hour's "steamy" relationship with another boy in her car and if we can believe her words they must have gone "all the way" into fornication, if we understand her prose.

In any event what was wrong with her is made clear in her article that she had a deep feeling of guilt after her steamy episode. She was old enough to understand right from wrong at age 16.

A true conversion could have cured her emotional ills, instead of finding an elusive lost memo-

ry that would place the blame for her actions at age 16. Really, should ADVENTIST TODAY give credence to the modern psychiatric theories wherein mental probers find excuses for adult sins in a supposed forgotten molestation in infancy? Professional men are more and more coming to look upon the current craze of blaming infancy events for adult or teen-age sin. Where in the Bible or the Testimonies do we find support for such reasonings? Christ is the only answer to problems like her's.

Lloyd Rosenwold
Hope, Idaho

In the September/October, 1994, Adventist Today, Cheri Lynn Gregory tells the story of how suppressed memories of sexual abuse occurring at the age of five ostensibly caused her to suffer eating disorders and other behavior problems in her teens and early adult life. As a retired Child Protective Services worker who has investigated many cases of child abuse over the years, I agree that sexual abuse of children undoubtedly occurs, and that it can cause many problems later in life.

It may very well be the case that Ms. Gregory has found the true causes of her difficulties, through competent therapy, and I do not presume to judge her case. But as the title of her article puts the matter, there is "Bad News, Good News" about this subject of suppressed memories, child abuse, and testimony of children.

Your readers need to be aware there is a downside on this subject, and a growing national backlash. This is detailed in a current article by Martin Gardner entitled "The Tragedies of False Memories" in the fall, 1994, issue of The Skeptical Inquirer, published by the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal. Gardner cites numerous recent books and articles on this subject, with case studies, and says "Books on both sides of the bitter controversy are proliferating." He refers readers interested in up-to-date information to the False Memory Syndrome Foundation, 3401 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, which publishes a newsletter. Interested readers of Adventist Today are advised to carefully investigate both sides of this subject before entering therapy or advocating it.

Arlin W. Baldwin
Coarsegold, California

Letters to the Editor

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Administration Seeks Greater Control

Continued from page 23

Another conference leader was overheard to say, "This is purely a power grab."

One General Conference staffer, in a private comment, stated that "What the Catholic Church took 300 years to achieve, we are doing in 150."

Keeping Unity

The Folkenberg administration is clearly looking for top-down ways to keep unity in the church. Folkenberg is said to be particularly concerned that persons such as Desmond Ford are still church members. Ford is the theologian of Glacier View fame who runs his own independent ministry.

In discussion, the example of John Osborne, director and speaker for Prophecy Countdown, in Mount Dora, Florida, was cited. Despite the fact that Osborne is under church discipline, his church membership has been adroitly moved about by sympathetic churches—from Florida to the Troy, Montana church, now disbanded, to the Village Church in Angwin, California.

Accordingly, the commission asked three individuals each to write a paper that might marshal support for hierarchical control of local church membership. However, Paul Gordon of the White Estate, Bert Haloviak of the General Conference Archives, and Raoul Dederen of Andrews University independently and from different perspectives, agreed that the Adventist and Protestant traditions oppose such controls.

Irony Move in Adventism

The commission report is ironic in several ways. The commission was first billed as a mechanism for empowering the local church units and decentralizing authority. Further, when autocratic control is waning in governments around the world, it is noteworthy that a church that long prided itself on "representative" church governance would now make moves to weaken democracy in a system whose higher administrators are many levels removed from individual church-member votes. Ted Wilson, president of the Division that encompasses Russia, is reported to have said at one of the commission meetings that he would have difficulty selling some of the contemplated recommendations in a country that had just come out of communism.

The telecommunications revolution taking place worldwide appears to fly in the face of centralized church control. The new CompuServe network set up by the General Conference, with 900 members and open to all, is necessarily open discussion of Adventist business. "Today, organizations are scrapping hierarchical control because it doesn't work in an information

age," states Sickler. "And for our computer-loving, information-highway, baby-boomer President Folkenberg to push for such control is the height of incongruity. It doesn't compute."

Certain elements of the commission report were welcomed and overwhelmingly approved. The General Conference Executive Committee membership will be reduced to about 240 and will better represent the world field. Because of expense, the General Conference Session delegate attendance will be capped at either 2000 or 2,650. These actions, along with other commission proposals, are recommendations for consideration by the General Conference session in Utrecht next summer.

Membership and Publishing

Although the commission report dominated several days of discussion and set nerves on edge, other matters were discussed and reported:

- In 1993 world church membership rose 5.57 percent for a total of 7,962,210 members, but per capita financial support declined by 2.8 percent, or \$4.76 per member, for a total "loss" of \$35,693,588. On June 30, 1994, the church membership stood at 8,173,663, a preliminary estimate.

- The publishing work of the church will be substantially opened for competition among its different publishing houses. In North America no longer will Pacific Press be somewhat restricted to marketing in the western states and Review and Herald to the eastern states. Further, interdivision competition was blessed. The church's publishing houses will "have access to other territories outside their divisions to market their products." For example, Inter-American Division publishing houses may now compete with Pacific Press, the long-standing publisher of Spanish books for North America.

- The 1995 General Conference budget was approved, totalling \$129.8 million, down nearly \$7 million, due to decreased giving by members.

- For financial reasons, study is being given to moving the Adventist Media Center from Newbury Park, California. Five finalist sites are being considered: Berrien Springs, Michigan; Boise, Idaho; Chattanooga, Tennessee; Keene, Texas; and Lincoln, Nebraska.

Throughout the Annual Council many references were made to the church's challenges and also to the Lord's blessings. Sickler made perhaps the most memorable speech on the council floor, but her comments expressed sympathy and faith in addition to criticism of hierarchical control. She expressed sympathy for "those trying to lead a maturing church in this chaotic world."

"It is a hard job, but remember that what holds us together is the Holy Spirit," she told the delegates. "We are not a Fortune 500 company where the CEO bosses the employees. We choose to stay together, and the Holy Spirit keeps us together."

"Another conference leader was overheard to say, 'This is purely a power grab.'"

To prepare this story, the editors consulted official Annual Council documents as well as a diverse group of persons who attended, including the staff of General Conference president, Robert Folkenberg.

THANKS DOING

When I was a small child growing up in California, Thanksgiving was a huge, multifamily event involving days of shopping and cooking, and advanced planning to rival the invasion of a small Caribbean nation. Until I was old enough to handle sharp knives and a deep fat frier, my job was to arrange the centerpieces for the long adult table and the smaller (and much-dreaded) children's table.

I enjoyed this job and took the responsibility very seriously. It meant going outside on crisp Thanksgiving mornings to gather crimson and gold leaves from the sugar maple trees in our yard, clipping bunches of red-orange berries from our pyracantha bushes, and cutting long tendrils of grapevine from the vineyards near our house. I would arrange these, along with yellow chrysanthemums and whole walnuts, around tall milk-glass candlesticks. It was lovely.

And so were the smells that drifted from the kitchen where women labored apron-to-apron while the men watched football and drank apple cider. There were savory entrees, three vegetables, two salads, rich gravies, warm breads, and heavy desserts. I loved the celebration of Thanksgiving, but I learned early that if you were female, it meant an awful lot of work.

Which is why I often had to struggle with very unspiritual feelings when, just before the meal began, some man would have us all bow our heads while he thanked God for the meal we were about to enjoy. I used to stand there with my eyes clamped shut thinking, "Well, really! I didn't see God's oven mitts hanging by the gas range!"

It was, perhaps, an uncharitable sentiment, but it illustrates what a slippery thing this emotion of gratitude can be. No other emotion is theoretically more selfless, yet wherever you stand in relation to it — giving it or expecting it — none is more likely to foster feelings of resentment. Gratitude can embitter you if you are in someone's debt for too long. And a generous impulse turns sour if you don't receive the thanks you believe you deserve.

I've been thinking a lot lately about gratitude — what it means and how to keep it free from creeping embitterment. Perhaps this is because, for me, a lifelong pessimist, gratitude has taken promi-

Bonnie L. Casey

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nence in my spiritual armament. And I guess that needs some explaining.

When you think about it, what in the world do optimists have to feel grateful for? If things turn out swell, it's only what they expected all along. In their roseate world view, good things are just bound to happen in the natural order of the cosmos. On the other hand, good things don't even have to happen to make a pessimist grateful. If calamities simply do not occur, a pessimist heaves a great sigh of relief and breathes a prayer of thanksgiving to God and all the angels.

Which is how I've earned my credentials as a spokesperson on gratitude. A lifetime of bleak expectations and heartfelt sighs of relief have led me to conclude that there is a very good reason why we celebrate Thanksgiving (active) instead of Thanksfeeling (passive). As a feeling, gratitude has a short shelf-life. It either dissipates or changes into something less attractive.

Gratitude only works if it becomes a way of being or doing, not merely feeling. I'm not advocating a passive attitude wherein you thank God for whatever happens, whether good or evil. I mean behaving as though you were grateful for all that you have and are, even if you don't necessarily feel like it. It can take the form of doing something as simple as recounting all the small things in your life that make you happy, and remembering that things could always be much, much worse. Seeing yourself relative to a very large universe of human suffering and achievement lessens the tendency to think that your pain is the worst anyone has been asked to bear, and softens the internal clamor that comes from constantly seeking your fair share of life's goodies. It fosters contentment.

Living gratefully implies a level of spiritual maturity that I reach only fitfully. The circle of friends with whom I celebrate Thanksgiving has a tradition of beginning our meal by taking turns telling what we are thankful for. Years ago I went through a time so seemingly bereft of hope that all I could think of to say when it was my turn was, "I'm grateful for indoor plumbing." Every year since then, I've been grateful for the opportunity to improve on that answer.

LLU Explores B.S. Program

Loma Linda University's Board of Trustees voted on October 17 to "empower the university to develop academic offerings to support and undergird the health professional and research-based biomedical programs." This action was taken in light of a recent decision of the Annual Council of the Adventist church to cut back its subsidy to Loma Linda—about 10 million dollars annually—by more than \$400,000, funds earmarked for the school's graduate biology program. The board, not desiring to dissolve its graduate biology program, looked to possible development of a biology-oriented bachelor's program as a way of retaining its graduate biology faculty, although other options were also considered. It also stipulated that the university should seek the advice and consent of other Adventist institutions of higher learning that might be affected.

All Adventist colleges could be significantly affected if LLU developed a B.S. program in medical science. Students who desire to pursue a specialized post-graduate health care program at Loma Linda, like medical school, might perceive that their chances of gaining admittance would be enhanced by getting their B.S. at the same school. The two other Adventist institutions of higher learning in California—Pacific Union College and La Sierra University—would be potentially affected most. PUC recently has run a very catchy full-page ad in denominational periodicals that proclaims itself nationally recognized,

somewhere near Princeton University on a list of schools having the largest percentage of graduates who go on to medical school (the great majority of such PUC graduates attend LLU).

La Sierra's new president, Lawrence Geraty, says that before he came last year from Atlantic Union College he sought and received assurances from LLU's president, B. Lyn Behrens, that LLU would not be initiating a B.S. program in the foreseeable future. As a result of intense discussions since the board action, it now appears that the administration will look for other options than the four-year broad-based biology curriculum.

Relations between LSU and LLU have been somewhat tense since the divorce between the two campuses in 1990 (formerly both were part of LLU). The fall opening of LLU's graduate psychology program that employs some of LSU's former faculty further agitated rela-

tions. LSU had planned a large capital campaign for funding a new science complex that now would be in jeopardy if indeed LLU should have pursued the proposed undergraduate degree program.

Swiss/Canadian Cultists

News accounts of the recent deaths of some 50 members of the Solar Temple in Switzerland and Canada drew parallels between this group and Jim Jones' followers in British Guyana as well as David Koresh's followers in Waco, Texas. All three groups held fatal apocalyptic visions. Their origins were diverse, the Solar Temple cult finding its roots in ancient mysticism and New Age practices. No one had an Adventist background among those who perished in the recent Solar Temple group.

Grat-i-tude n. An appreciative awareness and thankfulness, as for kindness shown or a gift received.

As *Adventist Today* finishes its second full year of publication, there is much to thank God for and many people to whom we want to express our gratitude. Many of you have shown kindness. You have written letters to the editor. We appreciate both positive and negative feedback in those letters. You have helped advertise *Adventist Today* by sharing it with your friends, resulting in some new subscribers. You have written articles and opinions which we have published.

And many of you have given gifts to help us expand this ministry. While we express a special gratitude for advisory council members because of their substantial, ongoing gifts, we are very thankful for a new and even larger donor base. To those of you who responded to our phonathon letters and phone calls, we express here a very heartfelt "Thank you." We are very grateful for your pledges and gifts.

If for some reason, you were not asked to become a donor and you would like to be one, we apologize. But it isn't too late. Our gratitude for unsolicited gifts knows almost no bounds!

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