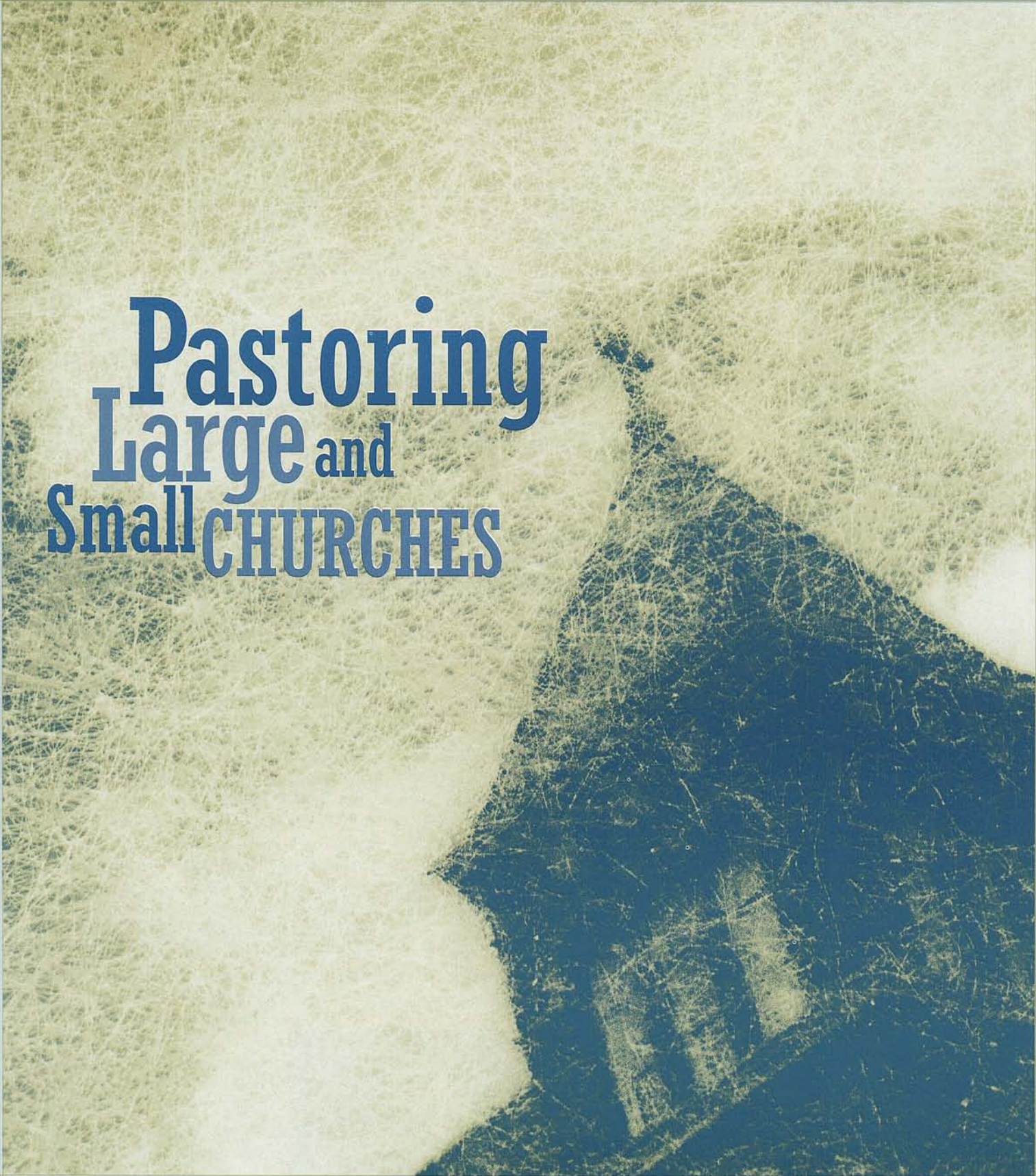


adventist today

NEWS
ANALYSIS
OPINION

volume ten | number three | may . june 2002



Pastoring Large and Small CHURCHES

Boston Conference October 2001 Science and the Spiritual Quest

Foundation Board

Elwin Dunn—Board Chair
Greg Billock
Keith Colburn
Raymond Cottrell
Larry Downing
Diana Fisher
Edmund Jones
John McLarty
Chuck Mitchell
Randy Roberts
Nate Schilt
Eldon Stratton
James Stirling
Erv Talyor
Eugene Platt—Treasurer
John Vogt
James Walters
Kit Watts

Raymond F. Cottrell Endowment Board

Douglass Ewing—Board Chair
James Walters—Treasurer
Ron Cafferky
Merlyn Duerksen
Richard Guth
Nate Schilt
Erv Taylor
John Vogt

Advisory Council

Ken and Jo Abbott
John and Susan Adams
Ken and Diana Bauer
Robert and Kelli Black
Gary and Jeanne Bogle
Antonius and Lilia Brandon
Todd and Ginny Burley
Ron and Anita Cafferky
Greg and Dana Carlson
John and Charlotte Cassell
Keith and Judy Colburn
Ronald and Patricia Cople
James and Kathryn Dexter
Merlyn and Rosemary Duerksen
James Dunn
H.O. Engen
Douglass and Patricia Ewing
Jack and Elsie Facundus
Gary and Sharon Fraser
Gary and Annette Frykman
Brent and Karen Gardner
Richard Green
Richard and Kathi Guth
P. Edgar and Patricia Hare
Lyndon and Linda Harder
Bruce Heinrich
Jim and Jackie Henneberg
Dennis and Jolene Hilliard
Russell and Sally Hoenes
Wayne and Susan Jacobsen
John and Judy Jacobson
Brian and Erika Johnson
Jim and Averille Kaatz
Elton and Marga Kerr
Dean and Dolores Kinsey
Frank and Helen Knittel
Janis Larsen
Yung Lau
Berryl and Ralph Longway
Felix Lorenz
Ken and Florence Lorenz
Don and Penny Miller
Richard Morda
Rick Murray
Adele and James Nelson
T. Clint and Elaine Nelson
Eugene Platt
Thaine Price
Gary and Ruthe-Marina Raines
Judith Rausch
Phil and Joyce Reisweig
Gordon and Judy Rick
Richard and Missi Rouhe
Glenn and Cherie Rouse
Doug and Sandy Schultz
Don and Ursula Shasky
Jeff Stevens
Walter L. and Lula Ann Stilson
James and Maryann Stirling
Ervin and Marilyn Taylor
Bob and Karen Torrey
John and Nancy Vogt
David Van Putten
James and Priscilla Walters
James and Betty Webster
Tim and Stephanie Welebir

Ordering All Things Sweetly

JOHN MCLARTY

The rain and fog had disappeared as I drove over Chinook Pass heading from western Washington toward Walla Walla. An hour later, the expansive grassland east of Yakima spread out under an immense blue sky decorated with cottony puffs of cumulus. I was listening to a book on tape, *The Cloister Walk* by Kathleen Norris.

She described an evening with a group of Benedictine sisters, a feast in honor of St. Gertrude. There was much laughter and lightness as they prepared the meal together and ate. Then they shared in worship. One of the readings from St. Gertrude included this affirmation:

You provide for me in the way that is most suitable with the one and uncreated wisdom, my sweetest God, reaching from end to end mightily and ordering all things sweetly.

The words arrested me. I kept driving, but I stopped the tape and rehearsed the words in my mind. "And ordering all things sweetly." Does he?

My own life recently has often felt anything but sweet. Financial challenges at home, organizational perplexities in my congregations, unsettling intellectual and spiritual questions in my mind. And I haven't yet mentioned the pain and trouble I take on as a listening friend and pastor. As I drove, I mulled over those words: "and ordering all things sweetly." Really?

What of the complication of life that comes from my work with *Adventist Today*. How can I edit a magazine which advocates change and acts as a watchdog against institutional injustice and still find the quiet place where I can affirm "He orders all things sweetly?"

I remembered a conversation from twenty years ago. I was eating supper in the cafeteria at Camp Berkshire and vehemently pontificating about some terrible injustice in the church. The older minister sitting next to me listened. He refused to join my outrage or to deny the existence of the injustice. Instead he quietly affirmed his confidence that

God was taking care of things. He had his job to do, pastoring a couple of churches. He was going to give himself fully to that job and trust God to manage the rest of the world, including the church.

I was struck with his tranquility, with his unruffled confidence that he was doing exactly what he was supposed to be doing. And his sturdy confidence that God was alive and active. I still envy him. And I practice spiritual disciplines designed to help agitated, angst-ridden souls like me taste some of the peace of God here and now.

But how do we keep quiet confidence in God from paralyzing us? If everything is already "ordered sweetly," what business do we have agitating for change? Just this: As partners with God, we are called to order our church as sweetly as humanly possible. If God has placed me (or you) in a position where we can affect the shape of policies and corporate deci-

I was struck with his tranquility, with his unruffled confidence that he was doing exactly what he was supposed to be doing.

sions, we are obligated to use our influence to bring the church closer to God's ideal.

It is appropriate to counsel Adventist employees to be content with their pay. It is also obligatory for the committees which set denominational wages to pay close attention to the needs of the people who are farthest from the centers of power within the church.

If you have experienced the peace and quietness of soul expressed in the words of St. Gertrude, then you are better equipped to make decisions that affect the lives of others. You will

sense God's call to work for peace in the homes of every employee and member. And if you do this well, you'll have the satisfaction of knowing that through your words and votes you were cooperating with God in "ordering all things sweetly." ■



contents

PAGE 6

Raymond Cottrell on the sanctuary question after 150 years
By James H. Stirling

PAGE 7

Southeastern California Conference Executive Committee
Votes Statement Regarding Elder Anthony Paschal

PAGE 8

Boston Conference October 2001 Science and the Spiritual Quest
By Richard Rice

PAGE 9

British courts award claim against church



COVER STORY

PAGE 14

The Adventist Tithe conundrum
By Jack Drumm

PAGE 16

What Is PROGRESSIVE Adventism?
By Steve Daily

PAGE 18

Shaping the 27 Fundamental Beliefs and Individual Freedom
By P. Richard Choi

PAGE 19

Reexamining the Year-Day Principle in Prophetic Interpretation
By Tobe Joretteg

feature column

news

PAGE 10

Don't Pay me more
By Gary Walter

PAGE 11

Pastoral Remuneration
By John R. Martin

PAGE 12

Pastoring Large and Small Churches
By Gary Tolbert

features

PAGE 20

Land for a Forgotten People
By Sari fordham

PAGE 22

Oxford Dons, Dragons, & the Bible
By Glen Greenwalt

adventist today

Publisher | Elwin Dunn

Editor Emeritus | Raymond Cottrell

Editor | John McLarty

Executive Editor | Ervin Taylor

Managing Editor | Diana Fisher

Assistant Editor | James H. Stirling

Editorial Advisor | Steve Daily

Office Manager | Hanan Sadek

adventist today reports on contemporary issues of importance to Adventist church members. Following basic principles of ethics and canons of journalism, this publication strives for fairness, candor and good taste. Unsolicited submissions are encouraged. Payment is competitive. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for writer's guidelines. Annual subscriptions \$29.50 (\$50/2years) for individuals \$18 for students \$40 for institutions (Payment by check or credit card. Add \$10 for address outside North America.) Voice | (800) 236-3641 or (909) 785-1295 Fax | (909) 785-1595 E-mail | atoday@atoday.com Web site | www.atoday.com

adventist today (ISSN 1079-5499) is published bimonthly for \$29.50 per year (\$18 for students, \$40 for institutions) by Adventist Today Foundation, Calkins Hall 225 La Sierra University, Riverside, CA 92515. Periodical postage paid at Riverside, California and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Adventist Today, Box 8026 Riverside, CA 92515-8026. Copyright © 2001 by **adventist today** Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering open dialogue in the Adventist community.

LETTERS

ATS Not “Centrist”

James Hilton's letter (AT vol.10 issue. 2, March/April 2002) characterizing the Adventist Theological Society (ATS) as representing the fundamentalist end of the SDA spectrum is right on target. I too wish to say: Shame on *Adventist Today* for publishing the ATS propaganda that ATS is “centrist!”

All one has to do is read the latest issue of the *ATS Perspective Digest* (vol. 7, no. 2, 2002) to see the truth of the matter. C. Mervyn Maxwell has an article about the “Genuine Adventist” and Jack J. Blanco (the recently retired holder of the Ellen G. White Chair at Southern Adventist University) has an article on “The Genuine Church.” According to Maxwell, “genuine Adventists” have no questions about what they believe, “love” the writings of E. G. White, and are members of “the’ remnant movement (i.e., the SDA Church) not ‘a’ remnant movement.” Blanco quotes the late Gerhard Hasel, the former theological dean of sophisticated fundamentalist SDA theology, as supporting the position of the Bible as the “infallible Holy Scriptures.” If these quotes are not classic SDA fundamentalism, I don't know what is!

Felix Yellen | Loma Linda, CA

Thompson on Presbyterian Schools

I noticed in your reprint of “Adventists and Education: Can the Marriage Be Saved?” (AT March-April, 2002) by Dr. Alden Thompson continues the errors of the original article. I corresponded with Dr. Thompson and pointed out a specific factual error. The statement by the academic dean from Whitworth College “that of all the Presbyterian colleges founded in the 19th century in the U. S. only Whitworth has retained an explicit Christian identity. All the others have gone secular.” Since my daughter was considering Grove City College in Grove City, Penn. for her education, I knew this to be incorrect. Grove City College has a strong Christian identity and was founded in 1876. King College in Bristol,

Tenn. founded in 1867 also has a strong Christian commitment. Both of these colleges are listed as Presbyterian USA schools on its web site. If you compare Grove City and King Colleges web sites with other Presbyterian colleges you can appreciate the significant difference as these schools hold to an evangelical faith in the middle of a liberal denomination. How did they maintain their Christian identity? Maybe we have something to learn from them.

Ralph Weitz | Via the Internet

Taylor on BRISCO Report

In the Nov/Dec 2001 issue of AT, Erv Taylor reported some highlights of the most recent BRISCO meeting. I'm glad he did, because that meeting truly was an historic one, marking a paradigm shift in Adventist creationism away from the traditional picture of Earth history provided by so-called Flood geology, toward one in which non-Flood geological processes are considered responsible for most or all of the fossil record. However, while he reports the broad outlines of the meeting fairly, I wonder about the veracity of details I cannot directly confirm because of the way in which my own contribution was treated.

When he writes that I presented a paper that “proposes a means of salvaging the current Adventist Flood model,” Taylor grossly misrepresents me. Instead, I am in agreement with the majority of the Earth scientists who spoke at BRISCO in saying that Flood geology has got to go. I said so very clearly for twelve pages of the paper and ten minutes of the talk to which he refers. In fact, in the very same paragraph of the paper from which Taylor quotes me complaining about the grossly apologetic methodology essential to Flood geology, I state that my intention is to replace Flood geology with a new framework for creationist research. If this weren't enough, I corrected him on the

point twice personally before he submitted his article—once over lunch, once via a solicited e-mail.

Dr. Taylor's criticisms of Adventist creationism are well known, and I for one am glad to have them. I do hope, however, that in the future he will try harder to lend others the same attentive, respectful, sympathetic ear he wishes they would lend to him. Voicing criticism is a valuable contribution, but critics do well to apprehend good news when it happens too.

Richard Peters | Loma Linda, CA

Biblical Literacy

In your Winter 2001 issue Letters column, the editor's reply to John Hughes's query as to whether the apostles wrote the gospels contains some interesting new information. Many will be surprised to hear that Mark was an apostle. This

“Timely or not, you have kept me up to date on what's really going on in my church. I just received your latest issue yesterday, and it begs the question. Where is the news?”

earliest canonical gospel was attributed to Mark by Papias and not even Eusebius thought him to be correct. No one knows who Matthew and John are.

Neither gospel reveals authorship. Contemporary scholars doubt that Matthew was the Simon of the other gospels. We must quit automatically accepting positions just because we have believed them a long time. The church that does not change when new information is available is destined to become an anachronism. More biblical literacy, please.

Paul Hughes | Redding, CA

Appreciate AT

We appreciate Adventist Today, its goals and content, and wish to contribute.

Bonnie Starr | San Diego, CA

Likes and Dislikes in AT

I have been a subscriber to Adventist Today since your beginning. I have always looked forward to each issue, and when it arrived, sat down, and read it cover to cover. I felt that reading the Review, Ministry, Spectrum, and Adventist Today, I was getting a well rounded information on the happenings in our SDA church. Seeing the cover of your last issue (AT Jan/Feb 2002) I thought, what is happening to Adventist Today?

The article by Pastor Gregory Hoenes, on his wife's miscarriage, though sad, did not belong in AT. . . . Then the article on Abortion, and "Why My Empty Arms?"...

I liked the article, "Plain and Fancy Christians," by John McLarty, but not . . . "Listening for a Talking God: Beyond Protestantism." . . . He informs us there must be articles on drug addiction, abortion, obesity, income inequity, pornography, environmental degradation, immigration policy and slavery. Are these the topics that will be covered. . . in the future? If that happens I will certainly drop my subscription.

May I suggest some topics. . . . The Muslim people . . . What is happening in the Holy Land. . . . The religion department at Walla Walla. . . . Articles by Dr. Cottrell I would like to see an article of his choosing in every issue.

Maria Schulte | Patterson, CA

Where's the News?

I subscribe to Adventist Today for one reason: independent news and analysis of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. You have provided excellent coverage of numerous events in recent history: controversy at the Walla Walla College School of Theology; the shuttering of Greater Boston Medical Center; and the departure of Robert Folkenberg from the

GC presidency are some of the more memorable stories for me. Timely or not, you have kept me up to date on what's really going on in my church. I just received your latest issue yesterday, and it begs the question. Where is the news? I just don't see it anywhere. All I could find is an article about Adventist Today fundraising activities. If that is indicative of the type of "news" you intend to publish in the future, please cancel my subscription.

Larry Witzel | Vancouver, WA

True Heart of Adventism

I really appreciated your article (AT Vol. 9, issue 1, January/February 2001). I hope that you have some kind of authority to represent the beliefs of millions of fellow Adventists, and that this article is consistent with their beliefs.

If so, I am impressed. Overall, I find that the Adventist "Plan of Salvation", or "God's story" as you may call it, is very close to the Bible, and indeed very different from the apostate "Mystery" of the Catholic Church.

However I would like you to expound a bit, in a reply to me, where you find scriptural authority to support the claims that—God created the earth because he wanted friends—The millenium will be a "question-and-answer free-for-all".

These two points made me smile a bit, but I believe they are very relevant, especially the first one, and I am not aware of any passage of scripture to support them. Further on, the Holy Ghost doesn't witness to me that they are true.

I would greatly appreciate if you could answer my questions. I am truly interested.

Nicolas Connault | Via the Internet

Send Letters to the Editor:

atoday@atoday.com or

Adventist Today, P.O. Box 8026
Riverside, CA 92515-8026

THANK YOU

We would like to recognize the Advisory Council Members who recently responded to our call for financial support of *Adventist Today*.

Thank you for your generous support.

Patrons: (Gifts of \$5,000 or more)
Elwin and Beth Dunn

Councilors: (Gifts of \$1,800-\$4,999)
Edwin and Mariellyn Hill
Brian Johnson
Judith Rauch

Advisors: (Gifts of \$500-\$1,799)
Robert and Kelli Black
Gary and Jeanne Bogle
Todd and Virginia Burley
James and Kathryn Dexter
Peter and Patti Hare
Jim and Jackie Henneberg
Elton and Marga Kerr
Eugene Platt
Thaine Price

Raymond Cottrell on the sanctuary question after 150 years

JAMES H. STIRLING

Although Adventist theologians have had a century and a half to refine their thinking on the sanctuary and the investigative judgment, there is still much disagreement. How does “the sanctuary doctrine” really reflect the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s stance on Bible-based faith statements?

The topic was discussed at a meeting of the San Diego, California, chapter of the Association of Adventist Forums in the Tierrasanta Seventh-day Adventist church on February 6, 2002.

Raymond F. Cottrell, D.Div., retired editor of the *Adventist Review* and collaborator of the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary series, had written an exhaustive review of the subject for presentation at this meeting. Because Cottrell was recovering from an illness, his paper was presented by Larry Christoffel, associate pastor of the Loma Linda Campus Hill Church.

Cottrell titled his paper “The Sanctuary Doctrine—Asset or Liability?” His conclusion, crafted after long and deep study of the history and theology of the doctrine as developed in the Adventist church, was that it is more of liability to the church now than an asset.

Discussion on the topic has centered mostly on chapters 8 and 9 in the Book of Daniel.

Cottrell typifies three methods of studying and interpreting the Bible: Proof-text, historical, and historicist. The proof-text method is the easiest, for the reader looks at verses from a modern, contemporary perspective and uses the English translation of the Bible, usually the King James Version, as authoritative. Using the historical method, on the other hand, the reader looks at a passage in its original context and tries to discover what the Bible writer meant to say to his audience, including the words used in the original language. The reader tries to base his or her conclusions on the weight of evidence. Most Adventist scholars since 1940

have used this method. The historicist method, sometimes called the “historical-grammatical” method, is an attempt to blend the two, a “hybrid,” as Cottrell calls it. Readers using this method usually are prompted by proof-text suppositions but seek to find some scholarly support for traditional conclusions.

Cottrell illustrated the historical method in dealing with passages in Daniel 8 and 9 that have been used traditionally by Adventists to describe a far-reaching prediction beginning in 457 BC with a decree issued by Artaxerxes, a Persian king, and ending 2,300 years later, in 1844. A significant element in the computing of this date is the concept of a “day for a year.” But Cottrell declared that the traditional method was based on faulty interpretation of the texts in Daniel. For the decree in question, he says, “the word went forth” in heaven, from God himself, not from an earthly king (Dan. 9:23, 25), and at the beginning of his prayer, in the year 537 B.C. The 2,300 “evenings and mornings,” Cottrell points out, should be considered in the light of the sanctuary being discussed: sacrificial offerings made twice each day; therefore the time elapsed should be reckoned at half the 2,300, or 1,150. When Gabriel tells Daniel, “Consider well the word, understand the vision, seventy weeks are marked out for your people and your holy city,” Cottrell accepts the idea of “weeks of years,” each a seven-year period.

Gabriel’s explanation of that “word” in verses 25-27 very briefly sketched the future of God’s covenant people during the seventy weeks of years, or 490 years, and announced its climax in the ruthless oppression by “the prince who is to come” during the seventieth of the seventy “weeks,” which he had already foretold in chapter 8:9-13 and explained in verses 19 to 25.

In what he called “Daniel’s perspective of salvation history,” Cottrell pointed to the triumphant conclusion of the prophecy in Christ’s life and death on Calvary and subsequent ascension to heaven. This view stands in contrast to the traditional Adventist interpretation of Daniel, originally worked out by early pioneers of the faith. If those who had formulated that interpretation had had access to the original Hebrew and Aramaic text of Daniel, or an accurate English translation, he says, they would never have developed the outline the church now officially promotes.

While Cottrell’s views may be accept-

“While Cottrell’s views may be acceptable to many Adventist scholars and unacceptable to others, the reasoning behind them deserves the attention of all who would like to see Adventist teachings to be based squarely on the Sola Scriptura principle.”

able to many Adventist scholars and unacceptable to others, the reasoning behind them deserves the attention of all who would like to see Adventist teachings to be based squarely on the Sola Scriptura principle. Some years ago Cottrell canvassed Adventist college and university theologians who were versed in biblical languages regarding their views on the sanctuary question. Most of them, he found, did not hold to the traditional stance. Church administrators, on the other hand, are reluctant to admit we were ever wrong. Cottrell says it is time that we should recognize the traditional interpretation as a part of our history but not our present understanding.

The full text of Raymond Cottrell’s presentation can be ordered from the San Diego chapter of the Association of Adventist Forums, P.O. Box 3148, La Mesa, CA 91944-3148. Email at ak-jk@cox.net. ■

James Stirling is an assistant editor of AT.

Southeastern California Conference Executive Committee Votes Statement Regarding Elder Anthony Paschal

On January 17, 2002, Elder Anthony Paschal was placed on administrative leave in connection with his responsibilities as Vice-President for African-American Ministries within the Southeastern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The decision to place Elder Paschal on administrative leave was made by the officers of the Southeastern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists based upon Elder Paschal's involvement in attempting to purchase an expensive parcel of real estate in Orange County, California. Subsequently, on January 24, 2002 the Southeastern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Executive Committee voted to continue the administrative leave of Elder Paschal in connection with his responsibilities as Vice-President of African American Ministries until the facts and circumstances surrounding the attempted property acquisition could be fully investigated.

At the Conference Executive Committee Meeting on January 24, 2002, the Executive Committee appointed a select Sub-Committee to fully investigate the issues surrounding the attempted property acquisition. The Sub-Committee was thoughtfully chosen to be representative of the broad diversity within the Southeastern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Following the appointment of the select Sub-Committee, the Sub-Committee commenced a process to carefully review the facts and circumstances surrounding the transaction and to personally interview Elder Paschal and other knowledgeable individuals. Based upon this process, the select Sub-Committee made a number of findings which can be summarized as follows:

1. Elder Paschal was attempting to locate real estate that would facilitate and further the ministry of the African-American work of the Southeastern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

2. Although Elder Paschal had gener-

ally consulted with a number of church leaders within the African-American community, at no time prior to signing the relevant purchase agreement and the opening of escrow for the subject property did Elder Paschal consult with either the conference officers or the Conference Executive Committee as required by Conference policy and procedure.

3. In addition, as part of the escrow transaction, Elder Paschal obtained personal loans from several individuals. Regrettably, one of those individuals has chosen to file suit against the Southeastern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Elder Paschal and a third party.

4. The Sub-Committee determined that Elder Paschal was not authorized to sign purchase and sale documents or to open an escrow on behalf of the Southeastern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

5. In light of the fact that: a) the Conference's name was placed on purchase and sale documents and an escrow was opened without its authorization; b) Elder Paschal knew or should have known that he was not an authorized signatory on behalf of the Southeastern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists; c) the process of identifying and negotiating this purchase occurred over many months and Elder Paschal at no time discussed this transaction with Conference officers until called in by them; d) the magnitude of this purchase (\$14,600,000) would make it the single largest property purchase in the history of the Southeastern California Conference; e) the financial plan for purchasing this property was totally inadequate and exposed the Conference, the African American work and Elder Paschal personally to significant liability, the select Sub-Committee recommended that Elder Paschal be removed from his responsibilities as Vice-President of African American Ministries in the Southeastern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

6. In recognition, however, of Elder

Paschal's significant contributions to pastoral ministry within the Southeastern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and in further recognition of his significant contribution as the Vice-President for African American Ministries, the Sub-Committee recommended that Elder Paschal be asked to serve as the Senior Pastor of the 16th Street Seventh-day Adventist Church in San Bernardino, California.

On March 19, 2002, the Conference Executive Committee met and received the report and recommendation from the select Sub-Committee. In addition, the Executive Committee received input from the African American caucus and from select members of the African American Ministerial Association within the Southeastern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Based upon the report and recommendation of the select Sub-Committee, as well as input from the African American caucus and select members of the African American Ministerial Association, the Conference Executive Committee: "Voted that Elder Paschal be named as the Senior Pastor of the 16th Street Seventh-day Adventist Church in San Bernardino, California and that he not continue in the position of Vice-President of African American Ministries."

The Conference Executive Committee has thoughtfully and thoroughly reviewed this matter and believes this decision upholds the principles of responsible leadership within the Southeastern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists while respecting the viewpoint on this issue of members within the African American community. The decision to name Elder Anthony Paschal as the Senior Pastor of the 16th Street Seventh-day Adventist Church in San Bernardino, California affirms his ministry within the Southeastern California Conference. ■

Southeastern California Conference, March 20, 2002 Released by the President's Office and the Communication Department.

Boston Conference October 2001 Science and the Spiritual Quest

RICHARD RICE

It was a thrill to finally study at Harvard, even though my stint lasted only three days and came thirty years after my graduate school experience.

Last October I attended a conference that was held in The Memorial Church, right in the middle of famous Harvard Yard. Entitled "The Quest for Knowledge, Truth, and Values in Science and Religion," it was one of an extended series of meetings on the theme of Science and the Spiritual Quest directed by the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences (CTNS), sponsored by a number of other organizations, and generously supported by the Templeton Foundation. With 650 in attendance this was the largest public event ever planned by CTNS, but it was not unique. The Boston Conference was part of Science and the Spiritual Quest II, which consists of ten programs scheduled over a four-year period (2000-2003) in various parts of the world. Future meetings are slated for Paris, Israel, Japan and India. And before SSQ II there was SSQ I, another series of meetings and conferences that were held from 1996 through 1998.

Both "Quests" comprise two types of programs: private meetings, which bring together accomplished scientists who have a serious interest in spirituality, and public programs like the Boston Conference, which make the conclusions of their discussions available to a larger audience. Together the two phases of SSQ have involved a large number of scientists, nearly 130, according to the program. The roster of SSQ II participants listed the names of 17 individuals in the area of "physics and cosmology," 18 in the area of "genetics and evolutionary biology," 16 who are involved in "sciences of the human person," and 14 whose area is "computer science and information technology."

The Boston Conference offered a full

schedule, to say the least. There were ten program sessions, each consisting of two major presentations and a panel discussion involving the presenters and/or other respondents. Then followed questions from other scientists participating in the program, and finally questions submitted in writing from the general audience. The programs covered a wide gamut of current issues in the area of science and religion, with titles ranging from "physics, natural law, and divine action," through "evolutionary biology and the question of purpose," "cosmology, origins, and creation," "what does it mean to be human?" "reduction and emergence in science and spirituality," to "neuroscience, cognition, and consciousness," and "information sciences, intelligence, and creativity." There was also a program on "ethics, policy and the practice of science."

Many of the most prominent figures in the area of science and religion were present, including Ian Barbour and Paul Davies, winners of the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion, the largest cash award ever for intellectual achievement. (Arthur Peacocke, who received a Templeton Prize since then, was also present.) Certainly the most famous participant was Jane Goodall, who entered the discussion via satellite.

Arthur Peacocke set an irenic tone for the meeting by proposing that we can start with the world described by the sciences and come to see that an Ultimate Reality, or God, provides the best

explanation of all that is and all that is becoming. Peacocke also called for an "open, revisable, exploratory" theology in all religious traditions. Though the general spirit of Peacocke's presentation pervaded the program, his vision of God as the point where science and religion converge and where different religious traditions find common ground was by no means universally embraced.

Biologist Ursula Goodenough endorses an idea some describe as "horizontal transcendence." She does not believe in a supreme personal be-

“Arthur Peacocke set an irenic tone for the meeting by proposing that we can start with the world described by the sciences and come to see that an Ultimate Reality, or God, provides the best explanation of all that is and all that is becoming. Peacocke also called for an ‘open, revisable, exploratory’ theology in all religious traditions.”

ing, but finds the universe with its vast complex narrative an object of wonder and a source of meaning. And Terrence Deacon insists that something can come from nothing, that is, that "combinatorial creative processes" can adequately account for what we typically call "emergence," obviating the need for some guiding principle or higher power.

At the other end of the spectrum there were Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, and Muslims, who seemed to embody conservative versions of their traditions without sensing any conflict between their religious convictions and their scientific beliefs. A Buddhist

scientist observed that there is no personal god, and a Hindu participant argued that science and spirituality really belong to separate spheres of experience. One of the most outspoken participants was Bruno Guiderdoni, of the Institut d'Astrophysique de Paris, who is a devout Muslim. An influential figure somewhere between these poles is Paul Davies, who finds the biofriendliness of the cosmos remarkable and accepts the anthropic principle but does not endorse a conventional concept of God.

The most memorable comments in the meeting from my point of view concerned the distinctive nature of the human. Jane Goodall noted that the chimps she is famous for studying have nothing that resembles the complex symbol system of human language. And William Newsome, Professor of Neurobiology at Stanford University Medical School, asserted that human freedom reveals a higher level of organization than computational models of the mind can account for.

Overall, the emphasis of science and the spiritual quest was definitely on science, and there was little of what I could consider genuine theological work. Though capably moderated by two religion scholars, Philip Clayton and Mark Richardson, identified as "SSQ investigators," the discussion did not provide serious interaction between scientific and theological perspectives. With the exception of Peacocke, a scientist who became an Anglican priest, those offering constructive proposals were scientists with an interest in religion, or quasi-religious themes, rather than specialists in a religious tradition.

But even though the discussion was often complex and occasionally a bit tedious, the varied audience remained large and attentive throughout the meeting. I chatted with a couple from Wisconsin in a Cambridge restaurant while their teenage son put away a massive plate of French fries. She was a junior college science teacher, he was a Lutheran pastor. All three of them went to all the sessions and thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

For someone without a scientific background, I found a good deal of the discussion challenging, but I was strongly impressed by a number of things about the meeting. One was the good spirit among the participants, especially among those with widely differing views. Of course, I suspect they were all acquainted with each other from earlier meetings, but it was a pleasure to see such amicable disagreement. I also noted that some of the concerns that occupy Seventh-day Adventists were notably absent from the discussion. No one at the conference questioned the conventional cosmological and biological accounts of the history of the universe and the development of life on earth. Nor was any consideration given to the intelligent design movement that has attracted widespread attention elsewhere. Accordingly, if Adventists wish to participate in the current religion and science discussion in a more expansive way we need to look beyond the single issue that has preoccupied us for decades, important as it is, namely, the relation between earth history and biblical chronology. To mention two possibilities, we might enter the discussion in the areas of metaphysics, which deals with questions of ultimate reality, and philosophical anthropology, where our wholistic view of the human provides a natural basis for important work.

Coming when it did, the shadow of September 11 hung over the meeting, and there were numerous references to the events of that day. Boston's Logan airport, after all, was the origin of the American Airlines flights that crashed into the World Trade Center. The tragic memories imparted an undertone of urgency to the meetings, a sense that life is precious, however we account for it, and that people of science and faith must blend their efforts to stem the frightening tide of misunderstanding and violence. ■

Richard Rice is a professor in the faculty of religion at Loma Linda University.

British courts award claim against church

British newspaper readers were given a window into the workings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church last April in Britain through a much-publicized case claiming race and sex discrimination and unfair dismissal. Valerie Eccles, a black female employed as an information technology (IT) technician, was awarded 77,000 pounds (over \$100,000 US), called a "record compensation" for such a case in Britain. Her attorney, Lawrence Davies, issued a press report saying, "The award reflects the appalling and despotic treatment Mrs. Eccles was subjected. The church should be ashamed." Her charges ranged from rude speech and behavior to exclusion from trips to Iceland and Greece. The most devastating charge was that she had been summarily dismissed for gross misconduct.

People close to the scene have a different view of the situation, although the Trans-European Division of the church accepted the final decision of the court and paid the award. They point out that the principal documents used in the court were thousands of pages of a diary kept minutely by Ms. Eccles for the thirteen years she worked for the church, first as a secretary and then later as an IT staff member. The "gross misconduct" they charged her with was her conducting of an "outside" business using her office quarters in the denomination's building. They say that when Ms. Eccles began to voice a complaint they offered to settle out of court, but she chose to call an attorney and take it to trial. The attorney's initial demand of 5 million pounds, based on a percentage of the church's income, was much reduced as many of her charges were discounted. The presiding judge in the case had taken particular exception to the church's recommendation that its members not resort to civil courts, but try to settle grievances in a biblical fashion. He suggested that the church was enslaving its members. ■

With all the talk of salary adjustments for pastors, including a recent letter to the editor in the *Adventist Review* pleading for an increase in pay, I have been doing some thinking. When I decided to enter the full-time ministry, I left a job that in 1995 paid me \$55,000 per year. My replacement is now making more than \$80,000. If money had been my motivation, I would have stayed there and now be making a very comfortable living (plus, my retirement savings would be intact). I don't believe it is

allowed me to work with some of the top surgeons in the country. I loved working with these people.

When I first began pastoring, in Southern California, I worked at the most progressive and successful young adult ministry in the Adventist Church in the US and Canada (at that time). I had a leadership team of twelve dedicated people who made ministry their top priority. Another thirty to forty were always available to serve. These people were the greatest.

Then I went to seminary. It was like a large church where everyone was com-

my vision. I've stopped expecting people to get excited about the potential in southwest Wyoming.

Yesterday I read an interview with Adventist church-growth specialist Ron Gladden. As I write this morning, I'm reminded of his comments regarding the dedication and enthusiasm that are characteristic of church plant core teams. I miss that kind of environment. I hear from my friend Dave in Franktown and my friend Tami in Riverside — I hear about the enthusiasm of their "established" churches. My friends Alan, Roger, and Shasta tell me their growing

DON'T PAY ME MORE

An open letter to the presidents of the church

GARY WALTER

money that attracts the best pastoral candidates. I have no data to support this view other than my own experience.

This morning I received the latest John Maxwell e-newsletter. The first article jumped out at me. He talked about the motivational impact of working together with people who share your dreams and passions, your commitment to excellence. Again, it connected with my experience.

Before entering the pastorate, I worked at Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue. There I worked with some of the top emergency services people in the country. We were movers and shakers. We were changing the industry. As a flight paramedic, I worked with the 14 best paramedics in the Portland Metro area. For four years, I chaired a state committee that included some of the brightest and best known physicians, administrators, fire chiefs, paramedics, and nurses in Oregon. We accomplished things that had never been done before. I was given a prestigious award, but in reality it belonged to us all! In addition, serving on the State Trauma Advisory Board

mitted to ministry. Everyday, going to school was like the fellowship one feels in the foyer of a large church with great morale. Discussing dreams, vision, plans, and ideas — it was a wonderful experience. As president of the Seminary Student Forum, coordinating the re:church conference, working at NADEI (The North American Division Evangelism Institute), serving on the Dean's Council, I was constantly interacting with some of the brightest minds in Adventism. In addition I worked with a new church plant in South Bend where people were excited about doing church. My paradigms were constantly stimulated and challenged. These people motivated me to do my best.

But now, things are different. I have a two church district, covering almost 15,000 square miles. I drive about a thousand miles per week. Although there are dedicated people in these churches, there isn't the same spirit of excellence I'm used to. My members are content not to evangelize, not to grow. They are content with the status quo. So I keep turning down the volume on my dreams. I keep scaling back

church plants.

Don't get me wrong. It's not like I'm not being challenged. I'm learning much. I'm learning patience, perseverance, and tolerance—to name a few.

But my point is: I don't need more money. I'm at the bottom of the pay scale. My wife, as my partner in ministry, does not have a separate income. We drive two fairly decent vehicles. We put away money in savings every month. And, we live a comfortable lifestyle and participate in the activities that interest us. More money is not the answer.

The answer is—let me use my gifts, talents, education, and experience to achieve the vision God has put in my heart. Allow me to work with people who are ready to pursue the full potential of His Church. Living up to my potential is the greatest motivator of all.

Don't pay me more, just turn me loose! ■

Gary S. Walter is the pastor, Rock Springs and Rawlins SDA Churches. As we go to press, Gary and his wife have been asked to church plant in Colorado Springs, a challenge that should thoroughly motivate them!

PASTORAL Remuneration

JOHN R. MARTIN

adapting to changing standards of value.

This situation has stripped the district pastor of many of

I believe there are four reasons why the proposed plan to change the remuneration scale for pastors in the North American Division now under discussion is not a good idea.

Evangelistic reasons

We live in a time when organized religion operates under a cloud. The scandals of the televangelists a few years ago, Oral Roberts' threat that the Lord would kill him if people didn't send a million dollars, the high profile news of child molestation by clergy, and the prospect of government giving large amounts of tax dollars to faith-based charities have created in the minds of secular people a great suspicion of the church's need for money. As a Seventh-day Adventist pastor I must go into that cloud and convince people to return 10 percent of their income to the church, plus additional offerings. People are amazed when I tell them that in this age of opulence all Seventh-day Adventist pastors, no matter what the size of their church, receive the same salary. The Holy Spirit uses this to appeal to the sense of mission and altruism that is strong among Baby Boomers and GenX'ers. They can identify with altruistic pastors, even if they are anti-institution. If the proposed change takes place tithing will be infinitely harder to sell.

Political reasons

In 33 years of pastoral ministry I have seen very little political activity among pastors, as far as campaigning for a larger church. Conference administration makes those decisions on the basis of whatever values they currently hold. Pastors do not always like the decisions, but since these have little effect on a pastor's income they are much easier to swallow. If the proposed plan should be adopted I predict there will

be a significant increase in political activity as pastors attempt to get assigned to positions where the salary is higher. This will lead to further distrust of the church and its ministry.

Value reasons

Pastoral ministry is increasingly difficult. Thirty-three years ago I had value just because I was the pastor assigned to a congregation. That is no longer the case. When assigned to a new church I now have to "earn" any respect, cooperation and value I receive from the congregation. And I have to earn that respect in a minefield of conflicting values and theological positions. I am constantly aware that if I make a wrong step the whole situation can explode. In those days at the conference level there were clearly understood, though unwritten, criteria for the evaluation of pastors. If the church the pastor was assigned to had an increase in attendance, an increase in tithe and some baptisms, the pastor was judged successful. That same well understood, though unwritten policy, mandated that if a pastor met those three criteria, when it came time for a move he would be moved to a church of equal or larger size. Today that has changed and there is no consistent standard that defines a good or a successful pastor. Whether or not a pastor is considered good or successful depends on each new administration. While some still define "successful" in the old way, others define it in terms of how creative worship can be, or how many small groups operate, or a hundred other ways. So the district pastor must constantly be

the affirmations of value he once had. Though the corporate church, through its publications and spokespersons, constantly tells the district pastor he is the most valuable person in the organization, that message is muted because the district pastor is the lowest-paid person in the clergy organization. As soon as a minister leaves the district ministry for another position in the hierarchy his salary is increased. The only area where pastors are of equal

“Though the corporate church, through its publications and spokespersons, constantly tells the district pastor he is the most valuable person in the organization, that message is muted because the district pastor is the lowest-paid person in the clergy organization.”

worth is in the pastorate itself. Up to this point all pastors have been paid the same salary regardless of the size of the church. The proposed salary change would take away this last indication of value. The vast majority of pastors serve districts with more than one small church. In the Rocky Mountain Conference where I serve there are 107 churches and companies. Only 17 of these are churches large enough for each to have its own pastor. The proposed changes would send the message that those 17 pastors are somehow more valuable than the rest.

Continued on page 13

Like most pastors I began ministry as the solo pastor of a district of small churches. Now, twenty-five years later, I am the senior pastor of an 850-member church; I have two associates.

The size of the congregation definitely makes a difference in the pastoral role. In a small church I was "a hunter of tigers." In a large church, I am holding a tiger by the tail. Sometimes I delude myself into thinking I am

and I was all too willing to do the ministry myself. There were always involved members who took care of the main activities and structure of the church. But the ideas I promoted and the visions I cast were not picked up so readily by them. They were content to do the basic ministry of the church while the pastor took care of all the outreach and progressive activities. At least that is how it seemed. Of course, this became very frustrating for me and probably for my members as well. I

"my much needed and influential touch" on every activity. Because of this I spent very little time with my family. My children were growing up, and I was not involved in their lives as much as I could have been. I thoroughly enjoyed the ministry, but it was still taking its toll upon my emotional and psychological health.

Pastors who can lead small churches without burning themselves out are the unsung heroes of our denomination. That work can be extremely lonely, and satisfaction in seeing a difference in the church can come very slowly. It was killing me. I kept dreaming of becoming an artist.

A Multi-staff church

Years later I became the senior pastor of a multi-staff congregation. This was enjoyable and seemed much easier for many reasons. I no longer felt so alone in the ministry. I now had someone to share the challenges and joys and planning. Not all of the responsibility was on my shoulders. This was a great relief. The congregation had someone else they could relate to as well and to blame things on. I didn't have to take all the heat anymore.

The different personalities of several pastors can more effectively serve a congregation of diverse people.

I really don't ever want to go back to

PASTORING

Large and Small Churches

GARY TOLBERT

in charge of the situation, then the tiger growls and I am reminded: Just hold on.

Two small churches

When I started out, young, full of ideas and ambition, I thought I knew how to do church and save the world. And the members of those smaller churches were happy to watch me do it. Normally small churches don't have an overabundance of talent, so there's a limit to what the church ministries can accomplish. If the pastor comes in and has all kinds of ideas and perceived talent, if he is self-motivated and excited about ministry and the gospel, the church is happy to sit back and watch. So I became a workaholic hunter of tigers.

Of course, in the seminary we were taught that the members need to be involved in ministry and the pastor is there to lead them, encourage them, train them, and not do it all himself. But I was never able to convince the members of my churches of this. In fact, I was not taught how to do that,

sometimes dreamed of growing my hair long, putting it in a ponytail and becoming a starving artist.

A larger church, more programs

Then I was asked to go to a larger district where one church was the primary congregation and was much larger than the other. Here there were more members available with talent and interest. The church could carry on a Pathfinder program, a very good church school, evangelistic outreach, and maybe some very creative ministry ideas.

I was not killing myself by doing it all, though it was still easy for me to be a workaholic. I was still a solo pastor. And my churches were relatively small.

The nature of my work changed. I became more like a butterfly flipping from flower to flower, leaving behind

“When I started out, young, full of ideas and ambition, I thought I knew how to do church and save the world. And the members of those smaller churches were happy to watch me do it.”

doing it alone again. The pastoral ministry can be lonely work. Having other staff members with the same dedication and commitment who are full-time, in-

Continued on page 13

PASTORING Large and Small Churches

Continued from page 12

creases the level of enjoyment and fun. Sometimes, it's just nice to have other pastors around. They're not always even half bad. The workload can be shared, divided up according to pastoral talent. The input from other minds adds depth to the planning needed for successful ministry.

In an ideal church, staff relationships would always be warm and congenial. Too often, reality is different. Humans are likely to act in very human ways. Sometimes pastors can actually be inhuman. Like any other group of people who have to work closely together, a pastoral staff can experience personality clashes, differences in expectations, competition for turf, conflicts regarding hours on and off, and issues of authority. For the senior pastor, the strain of managing these challenges can be quite acute.

For all the advantages of increased resources and staffing in larger churches, they require more commit-

tees and meeting times. You find that you are less of a shepherd and more of a manager. At least that is the temptation. It is a challenge to manage your time. In larger churches there are more educated and talented people, doctors, lawyers, professors, and retired denominational workers, some of whom are very helpful. But others in this category are difficult personalities who want to control, who need public recognition and ego-stroking and who want the pastor's ear in order to manipulate him. These kinds of people can make life complicated for the pastor. Often these folks are on committees or even in charge of them, so the pastor must have a working relationship with them. In a small church you may have one or two of these people who can tie up the work for years. In a larger church everything is multiplied in intensity.

There is a degree of "politics" that the pastor must be involved in. The word "politics" often brings to mind dishonest politicians, "public servants"

who seem to be interested only in themselves. And there are clergy who fit that category. But to be effective, a pastor has to be aware of and work with all the various groups, committees, cliques and circles of influence in the church. In a small church the pastor has more direct contact with every person. In a large church, the senior pastor must work through committees and other structures—which is politics.

In a small church the pastor is, in a sense, a member of the family. In a large church the pastor becomes the head of the corporation. In the Adventist church, we all get paid the same—the pastor of a multi-church rural district, an associate pastor or a senior pastor. So why would someone want to subject himself to all that a senior pastor has to deal with, where the buck stops with him? Why take on the increased expectations and stress when there are no increased monetary rewards?

It must be an inherent character flaw. Now where is that artist palette? ■

PASTORAL Remuneration

Continued from page 11

Reasons of congregationalism

One of the major reasons for the phenomenal worldwide growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is its organizational structure. Every church, through its tithe, supports the worldwide outreach of the denomination. Our system has proved to be a good one, but it is a "man-made system." All that scripture requires is that the tithe be brought to the "storehouse." Our various committees have designated the local conference as the storehouse. The GI generation was a generation of institution builders. Sending the tithe to the conference, and building an effective institution, fit well with their philosophy of life. But the GI generation

is passing from the scene. The Baby Boomers and GenX'ers are naturally distrustful of institutions. More and more we hear church members ask, "If tithe can pay for secretaries and janitors at the conference office, why is it not OK to use tithe to pay a secretary and janitor at the local level?" The only answer is, "It is our policy." Baby boomers and GenX'ers are drawn to causes and people. They like and appreciate their local pastors. The altruism of the idea that all local pastors are equal and receive the same salary is appealing to them. I believe it is what has kept the boomers and GenX'ers supporting the system. If the system is changed, I predict that a large percentage of what is now marked as tithe and sent to the conference will be redirected to the local

level. When the corporate church admonishes that this is inappropriate, the local member will respond by saying, "If you can change the rules we can change the rules, too." If this should happen it would be a major step toward congregationalism.

The system of pastoral remuneration we have is not perfect. However, it is a powerful influence for new members and young Adventists to return 10 percent of their income to the conference. It is a major factor in clergy cooperation when pastoral changes are made. It is the last affirmation of value for the great majority of pastors. And it could be the last thing holding us from going down the road to congregationalism. I hope that those in administration and large churches will look at this issue from the viewpoint of the men and women on whose shoulders this church is carried, the district pastors. ■

Ed. Note. I asked a church administrator where he thought the church was headed in the administration of our tithing system. In his response, he quoted AT Executive editor, Erv Taylor: "Everyone has an idea, but almost no one has data." He then listed four areas of inquiry where he felt data would be most helpful.

The History of the SDA Tithe System (traditional view)

The pioneers of the SDA church decided that all tithe should be collected in the local churches and sent to the conference headquarters for distribution. This decision was obviously not based on biblical mandates, since the Bible writers knew nothing of conferences or even of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church. This plan simply made the most sense. It was the most effective way they could think of to maximize their meager resources. The plan worked so well they immediately recognized that God had led them to adopt this system. History has demonstrated it to be an amazingly effective plan, resulting in unprecedented international growth.

Data Needed:

Someone needs to do some credible historical research, if it has not already been done, to determine if the above statement is true or not. Was our tithe system a crucial factor in our international growth? Was our foreign mission program tithe-driven or Sabbath School offering-driven?

Additional questions that need to be asked: What were the actual alternatives considered by the pioneers, the arguments advanced for each, and the reasons for deciding on the conference-as-storehouse plan? Was it originally presented to the members as "Bible doctrine" or as an effective plan that God had led the church to devise?

The Tithe Envelope as a Moral Obligation (traditional view)

Because the plan was so successful

and the sense of God's leading was so strong, church leaders and laity alike soon began to treat the conference-as-storehouse plan as though it was God's commandment for all time. It was not enough to devote 10 percent of one's income to God; 10 percent had to be devoted to the conference tithe system. Any giving to other persons or ministries must be in addition to the 10 percent to the conference office. In the past, most

church members can still best realize their giving objectives by sending tithe through the regular tithe channels. Donors should realize that if members in the North American Division (NAD) abandon the traditional system, the Adventist church as we know it (and perhaps take for granted) will cease to exist. Some congregations and parachurch ministries may thrive, but we will lose most grade schools, acad-

The Adventist TITHE CONUN

JACK DRUMM

people who are Adventists for long come to feel that giving their tithe anywhere but to the conference is a sin, a violation of God's commandment. But a significant number are coming to believe that the Adventist tithe plan is only a church policy, not God's law, and (in the absence of current arguments supporting the policy) are choosing to give their tithe to the local church to support local pastoral assistants or church budget needs, to Adventist media ministries, and even to non-Adventist ministries and nonreligious causes.

Data Needed:

What percentage of Adventists give 10 percent or more of their income to the church? What percentage believe it is a Biblically—commanded duty to handle their tithe through the regular, official church channels? How has that conviction changed over the past twenty years? What other kinds of ministries or causes do significant numbers of Adventists support with tithe dollars?

The Rational Value of the Tithe System (traditional view)

A strong case can be made that

emies, colleges, universities, summer camps, publishing houses, literature evangelism, ADRA, world missions, trained pastors, the Pathfinder organization, affiliation with Adventist hospitals, and whatever benefits are currently realized from the various levels of church administration. I don't believe most members, probably not even most pastors, realize how much the life of our church is dependent on the centralized financial system we have, of which tithe is the foundation. It is easy to criticize the system. It is difficult to predict what kind of church we would have if we changed it. There is no escaping the law of unintended consequences.

Data Needed:

Presidents and treasurers at all levels seem to agree readily that most of the structure and programs of the church as we know it would cease to exist, or be seriously curtailed; but as far as I know, no one has ever done any analysis to see what the actual impact would be. Maybe the schools would close, and maybe they wouldn't. How many schools would be lost? Would the resources that currently go into schools

go into youth ministry based in local congregations? Would such a redirection of resources increase or decrease our current retention rate? Presidents argue that “congregationalism” would be disastrous for the church, but no one has ever done research to determine exactly what the disaster would look like.

Keeping Fundamentalists and Pragmatists in the Same House (traditional view)

For at least a century the church has officially argued that the only God-

DRUM

approved way of handling tithe was to send it through regular church channels. This was God’s One and Only Plan. Any other use of tithe was rebellion against God and the church. The subarguments here include:

- 1) The SDA church is God’s highest authority on earth and the church has voted this plan in official session.
- 2) Ellen White said the conference-as-storehouse is God’s plan.
- 3) Turning over your tithe to the SDA church organization with no thought about how it is used is an act of faith, a test of faith, that is lost if the individual believer makes an individual choice about its use: This argument appeals to the Christian to be an obedient and trusting child of God.

These arguments keep the “true believers” in line. The problem is that careful study reveals only the most meager biblical support for any coherent policy regarding exactly how tithe is to be managed. Many Adventists argue that while there is no explicit biblical mandate regarding the details of tithing, it is a good policy for the church community.

But it is dangerous for church leaders to make the same statement publicly.

What if church leaders were to publicly say about our tithing system: “Yes, it is only a policy, but it is a good policy. It is the best and most responsible way informed and committed Adventist Christians can allocate their tithe dollars in today’s world. It is the most effective way to finish the work of God on earth and usher in the Second Coming.” These arguments would appeal to the Christian to be a responsible adult follower of God, an adult cooperator in the mission of the church. But such an argument runs the risk of being seen by the traditional givers as a weakening of Bible and church authority. For people who give out of a sense of inescapable duty, might they quit giving altogether if church authorities made a public admission that reasonable, godly people could come to different conclusions about how to apply the Biblical teachings regarding tithe? Why should they give, if they don’t have to?

On the other hand, if we continue to insist that the SDA church practice is God’s One and Only Plan we will increasingly alienate people who are educated and aware of the historical development of our policies.

To date, as far as I can tell, the church has chosen to advance only the God’s Plan, Obedient Child argument. My guess is that church leaders will continue to argue this way until they believe they are losing more money because of the people they alienate than they will lose if they adopt the Good Policy, Responsible Adult argument.

Data Needed:

What would happen if the Good Policy, Responsible Adult argument was thoroughly tested—perhaps in a sample of local churches? Would it lead traditional givers to consider alternative channels? Would large numbers of

them choose new channels? Or would the traditional givers actually increase their giving through traditional channels? Would the Good Policy arguments “convert” nontraditional tithe payers to traditional channels? Are there any policy changes that would attract increased tithe giving through regular channels?

Further testing might determine if there are effective ways to target the church’s messages. Can we continue to present the traditional arguments to the traditional tithers, while addressing nontraditional tithers through other avenues?

As you can probably tell from the section above on the Rational Value of Tithing, I am convinced that a centralized tithing system is indispensable to many valuable elements of Adventist culture. We must be very careful about making changes. We cannot escape

“Turning over your tithe to the SDA church organization with no thought about how it is used is an act of faith, a test of faith, that is lost if the individual believer makes an individual choice about its use. This argument appeals to the Christian to be an obedient and trusting child of God.”

the law of unintended consequences. However, change is inevitable. It is already happening. Our members are changing in the way they handle tithe. I expect that these changes will only accelerate with time. As a church, we can either do nothing and react to the catastrophic realities imposed by diminished cash flow, or we can actively engage the future.

Given the crucial role of tithe in our church system, we must act. Wisely. And soon. ■

Jack Drumm is a pseudonym.

The ancient tale is told of a king who was traveling through a forest with an entourage of knights, when he came upon a wide river, 50 yards across, with three large trees growing on the opposite bank. There was a target on each of these trees, and an arrow planted into the center of the bull's eye on each. The king asked his chief marksman to try to hit the center of each target. The knight took three arrows and managed to hit the target in each case, but

rows into the trees!"

For my definition of Progressive Adventism, there are three main targets. These may not be shared by the majority of Adventists, but they represent my ideal, and I get to "paint the targets" here. The three targets for church members are: 1) to be Christ-Centered in the largest sense; 2) to be Spirit-Anointed in the fullest sense; and 3) to be Service-Oriented in the most relevant sense.

Christ-Centered in the largest sense. I am thrilled that during the last three

On the other hand, Adventist liberals are equally guilty of undermining a picture of God that is Christ-centered in the largest sense. Many "intellectuals" in the church have attended prestigious universities that promote scientific materialism and postmodern relativism, teaching that Jesus was only a man. Some professors in Adventist higher education have embraced such thinking and attempt to pass it along to their students. I have firsthand knowledge of this and have seen liberal administrators cover for the teachers who

What Is PROGRESSIVE Adventism?

STEVE DAILY

never the bull's eye. The king said, "We must find the archer who shot those arrows." As the group continued they came upon a seventeen-year-old youth, and the king asked him if he knew of an archer who practiced in the area. The young man responded, "I am such an archer." The king then said, "Was it you who shot the three arrows into the trees across the river?" "Yes, it was I," said the young man in a humble voice.

The king marveled at his modesty and said, "If you will swear to me that you shot those three arrows across the river I will christen you as my knight right here on this spot." The young man, who had always dreamed of being a knight, fell to his knees and said, "I do so swear." So the king ordained him as his chief marksman and presented him with three golden arrows, a sword and a white steed. As the band returned to the castle, the king ordered his men to stop at the same spot so their new knight could display his skills. The youth took his three gold arrows and shot each of them directly into the trunk of each tree, but not one of the arrows even hit a target, much less a bull's eye. The king frowned, knowing he could not reverse his decision unless he had cause. "What is the meaning of this?" he demanded. "Why did you lie to me?" "Oh, I did not lie," replied the new knight, "I just failed to mention that I painted the targets after I shot the ar-

decades we have witnessed a concerted effort by religious leaders to teach church members righteousness by faith and to move away from the legalistic legacy that has troubled us in the past. Yet there are still many Adventists who have not elevated Christ to his proper place or internalized the gospel. A high percentage of our people still cling to an ethnocentric Christ who is viewed as the possession of Adventism, just as many other Christians delude themselves into believing that Jesus belongs exclusively to Christianity. But the Gospels tell us that Jesus is the Light who lights up every human being (John 1:9), and that he transcends every man-made religion, including Christianity and Adventism. Christ's true followers can be found in every religion and culture. Every human-made faith, including the denominations of Christianity, has among its members many who have a false or unhealthy spirituality. This is not to imply that God wasn't active in raising up such movements, but the human element in their leadership ensures that they continually struggle between worshipping the god of self-preservation and the true God of heaven. My major concern with conservatives is that they seem preoccupied with externalism and ethnocentricity, two characteristics that Jesus repeatedly warned against and condemned in the Gospels (see Matthew 23, etc.).

practice it.

Liberals in the church can be just as intolerant, unfair, power-hungry and dishonest as the conservatives. Those who advocate a theology that does not elevate Jesus as Lord and God rob the incarnation of its power and make the gospel impotent. I want to see our church become known for its passion for Jesus Christ—more than vegetarianism, our health message, the Sabbath or academic excellence. This cannot happen through human effort or emphasis, but only through the Spirit of God.

Spirit-Anointed in the fullest sense. As powerful as the death and resurrection of Jesus are, the focal point of Scripture and universal history, Jesus said that wasn't enough. He told his disciples to pray and to wait in the upper room until they had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Progressive Adventism acknowledges our desperate need for the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Of the three goals discussed in this article, this is the one where we are most off target. I went through undergraduate training in theology at two of our universities, and through three years of seminary training, and never once was I required to take a class that focused on the Holy Spirit. In all of my course work I never heard the baptism of the Holy Spirit emphasized or even discussed. How far have we spiritually regressed as a people with regard to our understand-

ing and experience with the Holy Spirit since Ellen White's day? Progressive Adventism is committed to resurrecting the importance of this doctrine, not in perfectionism but in the context of Matthew 25, where we are told that the difference between the wise virgins who are saved and the foolish virgins who are lost is the degree to which they possess God's Holy Spirit.

For too long we have assumed that people who don't keep the Sabbath have little to teach us about Scripture or theology. This certainly is not the case. There are churches that are far ahead of us when it comes to the experiential understanding and practice of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We need to learn on our knees at the feet of Jesus. The powerlessness today in Adventism comes because there is so much prayerlessness. As Lennard Ravenhill once said, "Poverty-stricken as the church is today in so many ways, she is most stricken here—in the place of prayer." (*While Revival Tarrys*, Minneapolis: Bethany Press, 1988, p. 10). If ever there has been a need for passionate prayer that seeks God's direction and discernment it is in our confused and chaotic culture, but only a tiny fraction of the church shows up for prayer meetings.

During my years as a university chaplain we had an open prayer group that met in the middle of our campus every morning at 7:00. We had a few students, maybe one percent of the student body, but those who came never regretted it, for they saw the power of God at work. We will not survive as God's people if we do not get serious about passionate prayer and the power and baptism of God's Holy Spirit.

The recent terrorist attack on America has awakened in many people a spiritual longing and openness that provides those of us who are believers with an opportunity to touch their lives for the kingdom of God. An anointed mentor of mine recently shared a prophecy with me, that is related to these events. The vision stated that what God has done in the natural realm over the past century he is about to do in the spiritual realm now. God is about to bring an accelerated progress

into the realm of the Spirit. He is about to move his people out of the spiritual stone age, and pour out an anointing that is far greater than anything his church has seen before. This is not the only channel that God is going to use to reach new people for his Kingdom, but it is the most powerful one. Yet, many are not ready to receive God at this level, so we need to meet them at the level of their own human need.

For too long we have assumed that people who don't keep the Sabbath have little to teach us about Scripture or theology. This certainly is not the case. There are churches that are far ahead of us when it comes to the experiential understanding and practice of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Service-Oriented in the most relevant sense. Just as the baptism of the Holy Spirit follows embracing Jesus as Lord, so a true life of service to humanity and God is best experienced in the context of meeting the first two goals. Progressive Adventists recognize that we must marry the deepest spirituality with the greatest community service. The error of conservative Christians has traditionally been isolating themselves from their community through a narrow understanding of evangelism, escapist theology, and remnant eschatology. The error of liberal Christians has been their de-emphasis on evangelism and their inclination to embrace Universalism and to deny the divinity of Christ and de-emphasize the

Holy Spirit, as well as to overemphasize the "social gospel" with humanism as its force. But Jesus models a perfectly balanced gospel that avoids all of these extremes. Christ had a personal devotional life that was so intimate and tuned into his Father's voice that he could say, "I don't do anything unless the Father has directed me to do it" (John 8:28, 29). On the other hand, the things which he did were generally based on meeting human needs at the most relevant level. He was the champion of the hurting and disenfranchised from every walk of life, and he was constantly being misunderstood by his own faith community as a result.

Everyone says they are for serving humanity, but how many churches and individual Christians are actively engaged in such activity? I have seen a lot of community service projects come and go for lack of church support.

When Rudy Torres asked me some years ago to join him at the Garden Grove, California, Seventh-day Adventist church, the Holy Spirit convinced me that this man understood the importance of ministering to one's community. His entire career as a pastor had modeled such service, in contrast to those who just talk about it, so I agreed to join him. The Lord gave us a vision together, called the KEYS Family Resource Center, which is focused on meeting the practical needs of our community in ways that Adventist churches had never done before. It has been exciting to see many community people in our area change their prejudiced views about Adventism through the interactions that we have had together.

Progressive Adventism, like any other definition of Adventism, is in the eye of the beholder. But since I've had the opportunity to paint the targets in this particular article I invite you as the reader to challenge, disagree or dialogue with what you've read through a letter to the editor. I'm sure my biases are highly fallible, but this is progressive Adventism as I define it and attempt to live it, with passion for Christ and his return. ■

(See Steve Daily "Reaching Hurting Families Inside and Outside the Church," *Adventist Today* (Vol. 8, No. 6, Nov./Dec., 2000) pp. 16,17.)

The Twenty-Seven Fundamental beliefs of our church are a loosely connected system of beliefs. Presently, each of them is a potential center for the church's identity and beliefs. George R. Knight says it well: "To put it bluntly, the 27 fundamentals are set forth as a list, somewhat like a string of beads with each bead having the same size, shape, and weight."¹ Thus the doctrine of health reform and modest dress² stands shoulder to shoulder with the doctrine of the Trinity³, and the

rest. This kind of pluralistic system can function, however, only as divergent views regarding what is the central doctrine continue to be accepted as genuinely Adventist.⁶

Some extremely intelligent and well-meaning people, however, have proposed to give shape to our belief system, so that one doctrine is subordinated to another in some meaningfully hierarchical order.⁷

But an attempt
to achieve

One might object, however, that this kind of pluralism violates the spirit of the New Testament, whose undisputed center is Christ. It should be remembered, however, that within the discipline of biblical studies, the question of "center" is an extremely controversial one for both Testaments.¹⁶ There is no consensus even in Pauline scholarship regarding Paul's theological center. J. Paul Sampley speaks for the majority when he states: "But precisely because Paul's thought is cast in balances and not in isolated ideas, the

nuclear model with its single 'center' is not adequate."¹⁷ Rather, the feeling is that John, Hebrews, James, Revelation, Romans, and 1 and 2

Shaping the 27 Fundamental Beliefs and Individual Freedom

P. RICHARD CHOI

doctrine of soul sleep⁴ is given the same weight as the doctrine of the atonement of Christ.⁵ This view that the twenty-seven doctrines are all of equal value is demonstrated in the actual life of the church community. For example, an Adventist Bible teacher who eats pork or smokes will be just as unacceptable to the community as a teacher who teaches the immortality of the soul. Both of them will be dismissed from their positions and fellowship just as much as a Bible teacher who denies the atonement of Christ or the Trinity.

Although it is unclear whether the framers intentionally set up the church's current belief system the way it is, there is something remarkably ingenious about it. I believe that, properly understood and applied, the church's present belief system can help the church become an open community of faith. One of us might prefer one doctrine as the center of faith, while another person might prefer a different one. But since the church has not designated any of the fundamental beliefs as its central doctrine, an Adventist is free to choose any one of them as the foundation on which to build his or her understanding of the

an official consensus about which of the beliefs should be relegated to a secondary position could be costly and difficult. Some might feel very strongly that the doctrines on Ellen G. White's prophetic gift⁸ and the Great Controversy⁹ are the church's central doctrines. Evangelically-minded believers might counter that the doctrine of Christ's free grace is still more fundamental.¹⁰ Those concerned with the question of identity might advance powerful arguments that the Second Coming¹¹ and the Sabbath¹² are the central doctrines of our church. Still others might argue that the center is Christian lifestyle or family.¹³ Actually, there are as many possibilities as the fundamental beliefs themselves.¹⁴ In my opinion, one should be left to choose any one of the church's fundamental beliefs as the center of his or her religious system, provided he or she does not use his or her central belief as the criterion by which the authenticity of others' beliefs are judged.¹⁵

Corinthians are all valid expositions of the meaning of the Christ-event intersecting with life's situations.¹⁸ The Scripture simply does not offer a systematized form of theology.¹⁹

Thus if we want to remain true to the

“Although it is unclear whether the framers intentionally set up the church's current belief system the way it is, there is something remarkably ingenious about it. I believe that, properly understood and applied, the church's present belief system can help the church become an open community of faith.”

Spirit of the New Testament, we need to find ways to explain the meaning of all of our fundamental beliefs from the standpoint of the Christ-event rather than isolate and elevate as central the

Continued on page 21

Reexamining the Year-Day Principle

TO BE JORETEG

IN PROPHETIC INTERPRETATION

these texts. The passages from Numbers and Ezekiel deal with sin and sinners and God's declaring a judgment on the people. In the

The "year-day" principle used in calculating eras in Bible prophecy assumes that for certain passages that describe elapsed time in "days," the reader may substitute "years." Although pioneer scholars in the Adventist church made use of this idea in interpreting some of Daniel's prophecies, they were not the first nor the last to do so. Others in different churches and at various times in history have also used the method.

The Bible Texts

Is it possible to find a common denominator for all the texts dealing with prophetic time? There are only two Bible texts that explicitly state the year-day principle.

Numbers 14:34 "For forty years—one year for each of the forty days you explored the land—you will suffer for your sins" (NIV).

When the Israelites approached Canaan for the first time, God promised them he would guide and protect them when they encountered resistance from the inhabitants. Moses sent men to check out the new land, and after forty days of searching the group brought back such a discouraging report that the people became terrified and rebelled. As a result of their unbelief and unreadiness God told them they must stay in the desert for another forty years.

Ezekiel 4:4-6 "Lie on your left side and put the sin of the house of Israel upon yourself. You are to bear their sin for the number of days you lie on your side. I have assigned you the same number of days as the years of their sin. So for 390 days you will bear the sin of the house of Israel. After you have finished this, lie down again, this time on your right side, and bear the sin of the house of Judah. I have assigned you 40 days, a day for each year."

In this context the Israelites have misbehaved for 390 years, and now the prophet

is told to "bear the sin" for a corresponding number of days.

But if we look at these texts more carefully we find that in the first example there is a day-year principle, where 40 days translated to 40 years. In the second example there is a year-day principle, where 390 years translated to 390 days. That actually seems to be two principles and not one! When should a day become a year and when should a year become a day? These two texts do not tell us. Has it anything to do with the severity of the sin? Is God arbitrary in deciding when to use one principle or the other? It would certainly be comforting to find other texts supporting this concept before we use it as a tool for our studies. Sometimes two other texts are used to illustrate this days-for-years principle.

Psalm 90:4: "For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night."

2 Peter 3:8, 9: "But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish."

In these texts we are not dealing with one day and one year but one day and 1,000 years! This is a thousandfold difference. In the first text a day equals 1,000 years; in the second 1,000 years equal one day.

When should the first principle be used and when the other? With these different ideas of interpretation of prophecy the results will vary depending on which method we use. Up to this point, after studying four texts about God's ways of dealing with time in human affairs, we actually have found four different principles.

Deeper Understanding

If we prayerfully investigate the passages there is something we can get out of

Book of Numbers God foretells punishment and a very long period of disappointment. In Ezekiel every year of sin is symbolized by a day of punishment experienced by the prophet. Both these texts show how God is dealing with sin and sinners. This may provide a clue for using the so-called year-day principle.

If we look at the texts from 2 Peter 3 and Psalm 90 we are seeing, not a picture of judgment, but of wonder at God's greatness. He is beyond time and awesome! These two texts could hardly be used in prophecies about sinful people. Therefore, when the primary focus is on "time" in prophecy, it appears that the context of sin, sinners, and judgment has to be present before the year-day principle can be used.

Implementation

If that is the right understanding about when we should use the year-day principle, we have to look at some texts to see if it can be confirmed.

Daniel 9:24: "Seventy 'sevens' [weeks] are decreed for your holy people to finish transgression, put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy."

In this verse we have such a situation and we can clearly see that God is dealing with sin and sinners. If repentance does not take place, a separation from God will be the result. It is certainly a judgment as well. Therefore in Daniel 9:24 it seems very appropriate to use the year-day principle.

Elsewhere in Daniel are other prophecies outlining the rise and fall of kingdoms, with God's kingdom triumphing at last, concluding with the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus. ■

Toby Joreteg, MD, PhD, is an assistant professor at the Loma Linda University Medical Center.

They seem like characters from some ancient fairy tale. Not everyday people, with real lives. Maybe that's why in Uganda, pygmies are called "the forgotten people." But I cannot forget them. The Batwa pygmies sing in my dreams.

I met a community of Batwa pygmies while I worked as an intern for ADRA Uganda. I remember the morning vividly. Not because of the brilliant sky or the lush mountains, but because I had the flu. My stomach flinched at every bump in the dirt road. I rested my cheek on the vinyl seat and felt sorry for myself. I should be in bed, I thought. At the village, I stumbled out of the Land Cruiser and pushed hair out of my face. I zipped my jacket against the cool mountain air. I hadn't expected Africa to be so cold. We walked single file toward the huts set back from the road. A pygmy lady led the way. She was just a bit shorter than I. Her face was creased with wrinkles. A yellow cloth was wrapped efficiently around her body. She walked quickly, balancing a basket on her head.

I had my camera slung around my neck, the stereotype of an ugly American. I'm taking pictures for ADRA, not me, I chanted in my head. I still felt awkward taking photos of someone's tragedy.

By now, I was used to poverty. I knew the grim statistics. Globally, one in five people lives on less than a dollar a day. My economical trip to Taco Bell, my dollar laid casually on the counter, is all that another girl has to live on for the whole day.

The poverty of the Batwa pygmies though went beyond statistics. The huts looked like the "after" picture of a natural disaster. The thatched roofs were sliding toward the dirt. There were gaps in the mud walls. One of the huts didn't

even have any walls, it was just a lean-to. The nicest home in the village used a piece of metal for a door. The owner was a seventeen-year-old boy who had just gotten married. In that one-room hut, he lived with his bride, three younger siblings and his mother.

The matriarch of the community explained why the place looked so barren.

hope for the future. The Batwa pygmies have survived by living as squatters. They work in other people's fields in return for a place to build a home. They are virtually indentured servants.

But they don't have the same security. The matriarch told me that they always have to be ready to move—once the crop is harvested, once the seeds are planted, once the landlord changes his mind. Tomorrow can mean being homeless, starving.

For the Batwa pygmies, survival isn't about getting through a board meeting; it's about finding food. And

forget showers, indoor toilets or even outhouses, for that matter.

The Batwa pygmies are un-

able to practice good hygiene

because their landlords will not allow them to build outhouses. And it's hard to bathe or wash your clothes often, if you must walk three miles to fetch water.

My own hands smelled like coconut, courtesy of the scented antibacterial

hand gel I carried so I could "wash" my hands on the road. Now, I tugged at my jacket and felt pampered. What did I do to deserve being born into privilege?

The Batwa pygmy children surrounded me in a respectful circle. They gazed at my clean clothes, expensive camera, white skin. A movie star or princess would not have been met with more awe. Just when I was certain they must hate me, they started singing.

The song was joyful, upbeat. A young girl skillfully played homemade drums. The matriarch began to dance. The words were lilting, effortless. Yet it was a new song.

The program's officer translated that they were singing a song about ADRA. They were thanking us for caring about them. They even sang about me.

Land for a Forgotten People

SARI FORDHAM

This was not their home. They had only lived here for a couple of months. They only expected to live here for a couple more months, weeks, days—no one knew. And the irony is that the nicer they fixed things up, the sooner they'd

“The Batwa pygmy children surrounded me in a respectful circle. They gazed at my clean clothes, expensive camera, white skin. A movie star or princess would not have been met with more awe. Just when I was certain they must hate me, they started singing.”

be asked to leave.

Ten years ago, the Batwa pygmies were evicted from the forest in order to make a preserve for mountain gorillas. They were not given any land in exchange. The consequences were tragic. Uganda is an agricultural society. Land means money, food, education, a home,

Land for a Forgotten People

Continued from page 20

But the tragedy is that although ADRA is assisting the Batwa pygmies by teaching them to read and helping them with investment projects, ADRA can't get them the one thing they need—land.

As we drove back to town the project manager, Esther Irankunda, lamented that they can't find anyone who will support a land project. "If the pygmies just had their own land," she waves a hand through the air letting the movement complete the sentence. "And it's so frustrating," she finally continued. "This whole cycle of poverty. It's unnecessary."

"Then, let's do it," I said. "We can tell the donors about the Batwa pygmies. We can raise funds. How much would it cost?"

Patiently, Esther explained to me that ADRA Uganda's projects are sponsored by two European countries. Red tape

makes these donors unable to buy land in another country. The donors will pay for education, but not land. My eyes must have been burning with ideas, because Esther turned to me and smiled.

"What about churches?" I said. "What about colleges? We could write letters. If people just saw the pygmies, they'd want to help. This could work." I remembered a kid I read about in *Readers Digest*. He was in elementary school and raised enough money to build a well in Uganda.

Instead of saying something practical, Esther grinned. "Maybe God sent you to help the pygmies."

I thought of the baby I'd seen that morning at the village. He was naked, shivering. His eyes were puffy, his mouth formed a miserable O. His legs were wrapped tightly around the teenage girl who held him. When I had reached out and tentatively touched his arm, it was as cold as marble.

I wanted to help that child. I wanted to help the Batwa pygmies. The solution seemed so simple. Buying land for the three hundred Batwa pygmies in the area would cost only 70,000 US dollars. But although I could see the solution, it became like a hologram disappearing every time I tried to make it a reality.

That's not the end of the story, though. I don't want it to be a tragedy and there is plenty of time left for a happy ending. The middle of the story is this—it's been four months since I visited the Batwa pygmies. The only money I've been able to raise is my own. But there is now an official ADRA project called the Ugandan Pygmy Land Fund. I dream of recruiting youth groups, churches, service clubs, schools, to help provide land for the pygmies. It's not an impossible dream. ■

If you would like to help the Batwa pygmies, call ADRA toll free at 1-888-237-2367 and give to the Ugandan Pygmy Land Fund. For more information, e-mail me sarikf@yahoo.com.

Shaping the 27 Fundamental Beliefs

Continued from page 18

ones that directly mention the themes of salvation.²⁰ One might wonder whether I have not turned the Christ-event (belief #9) into a hidden center. In some ways, I have. If anyone denies the centrality of the Christ-event, he or she cannot be a Christian. But upon a careful examination of fundamental belief #9, one finds references to atonement, substitution, and expiation.²¹ These terms are metaphors of the Christ-event, meaningful to some and not so meaningful to others. It should be borne in mind that not even Paul mentions or develops terms like expiation (=atonement)²² and justification in 1 Corinthians. Yet no one would deny that right alongside Romans and Galatians, the letter is one of the most powerful expositions of the Christ-event in the New Testament. All of our beliefs—even the doctrines of the soul's

mortality and health reform as well as the Sanctuary—arise from the Bible and should be articulated to derive their meanings from the Christ-event.²³ I do not oppose making Christ the center of our belief system. I question whether making one of the twenty-seven fundamental beliefs like belief #9 and belief #10²⁴ will do the job.²⁵ Christ is behind all of our fundamental beliefs. If it is determined that Christ is not behind any one of them, we need to seriously question whether it deserves to be among the fundamental beliefs at all.

In my view, the problem of Adventism does not reside in its failure to decide which of the fundamental beliefs is the center of faith. We as a body have already expended great energy and destroyed relationships arguing over the centrality of someone's favorite doctrine. Such a search for an illusive center can

result in a distorted understanding of the meaning of salvation, often leading to the false dilemma of being an Adventist vs. being a Christian. I do not feel we need to make the choice. Adventism is a lens through which Christ is seen. William G. Johnsson, the editor of the *Adventist Review*, offers a fitting metaphor in this regard;

"True doctrine is not a list of teachings derived from Scripture, with 'Christ' being one among them. Rather, one might think of doctrine as the spokes of a wheel. The hub of the wheel is Christ, His person and His work. Every teaching occupies its rightful place as it is joined to Christ."²⁶ ■

Ed note: This article was presented at the 2001 Convention of ASRS (The Adventist Society of Religious Scholars) in Denver. For footnotes visit our Web site at www.atoday.com.

Hardly a person in the world has not heard of J. R. R. Tolkien in the wake of the blockbuster movie, "The Lord of the Rings." Few, perhaps, know of the role Tolkien played in the conversion of C. S. Lewis, considered by many to be the foremost apologist for the Christian faith in the twentieth century.

Tolkien and Lewis were both dons at Oxford. The one was tall and thin, with bushy eyebrows. The other was rounder, but not corpulent, and going bald. They ate regularly together at a pub called The Eagle and the Child, dressed in rumpled tweeds smoking their pipes. The one spoke with a speech impediment and was apparently a rather boorish lecturer. The other was a magnet for students. The first man was married and liked putting in his garden. The other was a confirmed bachelor, who married late in life an American woman as a matter of convenience so that she could live in England. At first she kept her own house. Later, her husband, as he cared for her as she suffered from cancer, fell deeply in love with her. It was a short marriage, as she died within three years of their living together as man and wife.

To the outside observer, our dons would have seemed a bit odd perhaps, but within the world of Oxford, they attracted little notice. Both were hard-working, productive scholars, whose reputations were largely established by and confined to the world of medieval English scholarship. And so both might have remained, except that in the spaces between giving lectures and writing scholarly works they wrote fantastic stories about amazing places like Middle Earth and Narnia.

Tolkien was a devout Roman Catholic, who seldom spoke overtly about his faith.

Lewis, on the other hand, did not come easily to the Christian faith. He had long been an agnostic, and while he had become a theist by the time he met Tolkien, he resisted becoming a Christian because of the mythical elements he recognized in the Bible. As Lewis commented to Tolkien, "Myths are lies even though breathed

through with silver."

In time, Tolkien would convert Lewis to the Christian faith.

But here is the paradox. Tolkien converted Lewis, not by dissuading him that the Bible contains myth, but by doing precisely the opposite. He convinced Lewis of the importance of myth for Christian faith. Lewis, who could never stomach a flabby faith that read the Bible as great

Oxford Dons, GLEN GREENWALT Dragons, & the Bible

literature but denied its truth, became a Christian because he was finally convinced that myth provides the most authentic and truthful bridge to a relationship with God.

Lewis explained his conversion to Christianity in September of 1931 after a long night walk with Tolkien and another friend this way:

"Now what [Hugo] Dyson and Tolkien showed me was this: That the idea of sacrifice in a Pagan story I didn't mind it at all... provided I met it anywhere except in the Gospels. The reason was that in the Pagan stories I was prepared to feel the myth as profound and suggestive of meaning beyond my grasp even tho I could not say in cold prose what it meant. Now the story of Christ is simply a true myth: a myth working on us in the same way as the others, but with this tremendous difference that it really happened... The doctrines we get out of the true myth are of course less true; They are translations into our concept and ideas of that which God has already expressed in a language more adequate, namely the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection."

Lewis's comments are important to

Adventists in two ways. First, Lewis reminds us that myths are not simply a pack of lies, even though breathed with silver. Myths are oral and literary stories that enact truths that escape our ordinary, everyday prose. When we give ourselves to a myth, we are drawn into events that are greater than ourselves, often depicted as the quest of a hero. In this way a myth is more like the real thing than any listing of facts, rational analysis, or theological development.

An example may help—take falling in love. However right one gets all the facts about how two

people met, when they first knew they were in love, what was the sign of true love, these facts are not really love's true story. However prosaic our love, we inevitably fall back on poetry and fairy tales and metaphors of handsome princes, beautiful princesses, twinkles, goose bumps and the like.

Likewise, the facts of biblical history fall far short of the reality of God's action in the world or in our lives today.

The second important point Lewis makes, for Adventists, is that our theology, like everyone else's, is always less than the truth. This is not to suggest that Adventists need to give up their quest for truth. It only means that all theology is constructed by human beings out of their own insights and needs, and is therefore less than the complete truth. To petrify one's theology, therefore, is to petrify untruth. Truth by its very nature is greater than our attempts to understand and interpret it. Oddly, we have little trouble recognizing this principle at work in every facet of our lives except our theology. Yet, nowhere is it more important than in our doctrines to recognize our limits. Our ideas and beliefs never confine God. Nor is God's will in the world dependent upon our getting all of our ducks in a row. Faith is a response to a living, active God who can take care of not only himself, but everything else as well. Our theology is best, then, when it opens our eyes, ears, hearts and imaginations to the infinite possibilities of God.

I make this rather extended point about myth, to talk about recent hard times that have fallen upon the Roman Catholic Church.

I just happen to be one of those people who is completely captivated by all of the dragons and beasts of Adventist eschatology. Unfortunately, all of the talk about dragons and beasts has not always contributed positively to my being Christlike. I came to this shocking realization as I listened to reports of the growing scandal in the Catholic Church over its cover-up of the terrible actions of a sad number of pedophile priests. I suddenly became aware that I was taking a certain perverse pleasure from the Catholic Church's drumming in the press. The black-lighted warnings of the evangelistic hall were coming into the light of day.

No sooner had the thought passed through my mind, than I felt a terrible pang of guilt. The prejudice I decried in others, I found in myself. I was guilty of scapegoating the faith of millions because of the terrible deeds of a few. I was acting, that is say, downright beastly and not at all like the Lamb of the Apocalypse.

By petrifying our interpretation of Daniel and Revelation by applying the beastly images almost almost completely to the Roman Catholic Church and her subordinates, Adventists like myself are in grave danger of not only calling names out of turn, but of failing to see how our own actions typify the behavior of that old dragon and beast—Satan himself.

The facts are that our doctrines, just as we have recognized in Catholic doctrine, are less than the truth; so when we treat them as ultimate truth, we turn them into idols—i.e. images of the-beast, especially when we turn them against others.

The greatest safeguard against such behavior, I believe, is to recognize the mythical roots of our teachings about the beasts of Daniel and Revelation. Like Lewis, we need to recognize that the myth, with its universal encompass, is closer to the truth than are our doctrines which are limited by time and self-interest.

Let me lay out a thumbnail sketch of the dragon/serpent myths of the Ancient Near East, and then take you to some biblical texts that bear echoes of these ancient myths. Like Tolkien, my object is not to un-

dermine faith, but to provide what I believe is a more persuasive argument for Adventist eschatological concerns. Here is the thumbnail sketch. For a longer study see *Python: A Study of Delphic Myth and its Origins*, by Joseph Fontenrose and *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*, by John Day:

- An Enemy of divine origins threatens the earth and its inhabitants with chaos and destruction.
- The Enemy dwells in a distinctive place—a desert, cave, sea, lake, spring.
- The Enemy has a nonhuman form: most times that of a dragon or snake, but also of a lizard, crocodile, scorpion, fish, hippopotamus, boar, lion, wolf, dog, horse, bull, eagle, vulture, or other creature, and sometimes a mixed form of these, often with multiple heads, arms, legs, etc.
- The Enemy is vicious and greedy; he plunders, robs, murders, and makes war; he is lecherous and gluttonous.
- The Enemy conspires against heaven.
- A Divine Champion appears to face him; his first exploits take place when he is a mere boy.
- The Champion fights the enemy, and almost loses; he suffers temporary defeat or death.
- The Enemy is finally destroyed after being outwitted.
- The Champion disposes of the Enemy and celebrates victory.

That some such story lies behind a great deal of the Bible narratives seems evident. In texts such as Job 38-40; Psalms 74, 89, 104; Isaiah 27, 51, Revelation 12, 13 the outline is transparent. In the book of Job, God's power to care for the likes of Job is vouchsafed by the fact that he created, and toys with, leviathan like a plaything; therefore, God can certainly deal with our personal problems when our lives are awash in chaos. Likewise, in Psalms 74:12-13, 89:10-14, and 104:26, the eventual rescue of God's people is ensured by the fact that God previously made sport of the sea dragons and cracked their heads. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that in Isaiah 27: 1-3, 51:9, and Revelation 12-13, the ancient myth of the hero's triumph over the chaos monsters becomes the archetype of God's final victory over evil.

Given the dangers the sea posed for an-

cients, we might expect that the enemies who trouble Israel appear as beasts out of the sea—Egypt in Isa. 30:7, 51:10; Ps. 87:4; Ezek. 29:3-5, 32:2-8; Assyria in Isa. 17:1-14; Babylon in Hab. 3:8-10, 15; Jer. 51:34; an uncertain enemy in Isa. 27:1; and nations in general in Ps. 46:3-4.

In this same vein, early Adventists discovered in their readings of Daniel 7 and Revelation 12-13 that images of dragons, serpents, beasts fit the history of Rome and Apostate Rome.

The truth is, however, that the taxonomical identification of beasts in the Bible is a meaningless enterprise when one is face to face with the chaos-dragons in one's personal life. Exegetical speculation about ancient texts is the business of those at leisure. For those with chaos breathing down their necks, the Bible is of interest only if it offers hope of present rescue from danger. This is the truth of the true myth: That Old Dragon and Serpent still haunts our realm, seeking to harm and destroy all he can. He comes in many disguises, but his actions are always the same. He is bent on the destruction of the good by any means at hand—malice, lies, slander, plunder, violence, greed, gluttony, licentiousness, the making of war. Wherever we see hurt and sorrow, we can be assured that the chaos monster is close at hand, inspiring and prompting the worst for all.

Adventist theology is to be commended for its lookout for lurking beasts and dragons in the surrounding glades and woods. It could do a great more by sounding warnings about the beasts and dragons lurking within our walls.

In the final analysis, however, myths are not really about beasts and dragons, but about the Champion who conquers them. What the true myth of the Bible teaches is that the child Champion has in fact come. At times his victory appears thwarted by the Enemy. But what we know from the ancient stories is that although the Champion is severely wounded, and in some stories even dies, he inevitably comes back and triumphs over the Enemy. The ancient stories all testify to this. So when the battle seems lost and the dragons are all about, remember that the champion cracks heads and makes sport of dragons. Go forth, therefore, boldly on your adventure! ■

Soundings: Lightscares

MERLE J. WHITNEY

Pictures and reflections while driving from Orange County, California, to the San Jacinto Mountains on January 27 and during a day of solitude January 28, 2002, as part of "The Journey" at Pine Springs Ranch

Dark, dangling, lowering skies,
suddenly split with a wide rift,
reveal the upper reaches of 10,804-foot
San Jacinto Peak,
covered with snow and glistening
as from somewhere above and beyond
the sun bathes the craggy mountain

in late afternoon shine.

Off to the south loom billowing, sullen
gray masses of cumulus threatening storm
but touched on their tallest tips
with sunlight that turns the foreboding gray
into startling white puffs of promise.

Shadows drift across the valley
and cover the highway as it skirts the Bernasconi Hills,
which in turn block the eastern view.

Around a bend one anticipates
multiplied shadows and dark drifting clouds,
only to have light span the eastern horizon,
anchored by ascending mountains
and topped by a gigantic silver moon
set in complementary blue.

Each curve upon curve up the canyon
reveals new vistas to frame the rising fullness of the moon.

Now it beams above the mighty
granite boulders of Tahquitz.

Now it rides across the ridge
and dips toward the snowy forest.

Now its silver turns to gold
as it nears the red and ochre reaches of Antsell Rock.

Clouds swarm from nowhere,
masking moon and mountain,
only to merge and mass in magnificent configurations.

One smooth yet frothy mound
hides the massive Spitler Peak,
transforms from gray to lovely rose
in the light from the sinking sun
and leaves space above

for the pale golden moon
set in a sapphire sky.

At last, its sharpness fuzzed
by frosty, foggy wisps,

the silver moon swims above the saddle
bridging Apache and Spitler Peaks,
while circled with a rainbow halo.

Dawn, with a glow of brilliant mystery
much too intense for the early hour,
draws a sleepy riser to the window.

Ah, a coat of snow blankets
ground and grass,
pine and oak,
chamise and manzanita.

Jigsaw pieces of sunlight play up and down
the mountain slopes, turning them
into ever-changing puzzle pictures
of shine and shadow,
green and gray,

snowy sentinels and ghostly troops,
silver slides and hidden hollows.

Heavy clouds hang over Thomas Mountain
while their undersides dangle
streamers into sunlight

reversing the expected pattern.

Somehow sun floods Garner Valley,
an island of bright light
in a sea of ominous gray.

Antsell Rock, its red and ochre tones
capped and highlighted with snow,
juts its jagged head into the brilliant blue sky
as a challenge to the clouds crossing
from valley to desert.

The clouds, scintillating in the sun,
sweep past the peak,
sometimes swirling in a circle
through the forest at its base,
sometimes launched and leaping
for the sky,

sometimes playing hide-and-seek
with the rocks themselves.

Snowflakes fall, bounced here and there
by the buffeting breeze,
and change into playful diamonds
as the sun comes beaming through
a crack in the clouds.

What is to be said in reflection on these lightscares?

Lessons galore, no doubt,
but perhaps more profoundly:

A feast for the eyes

and food for the soul.

Pleasure for the spirit

and promise for the heart.

Beauty for the brain

and blessing for the body.

A panorama of rest in which

to ponder the providence of God.

Scenes of dynamic silence in which

to sit in the presence of the Savior.

A place to experience

the company of the Spirit.

Epilogue—The same splendors of sun and snow and shadow continued on Tuesday. Wednesday morning was shockingly clear with brilliant blue sky and blazing sun. The entire landscape was coated with fresh snow and dancing with diamonds as the breeze dislodged snowflakes from their perches on pine needles. However, the most spectacular sight began at about the 5500-foot level (about 300' above the camp) and rose to the tips of the tallest peaks. Everything—pines, firs, oaks, chaparral, ground, rocks, cliffs—was covered inside and out, top to bottom, in absolutely glistening white. On Tuesday, from time to time, the clouds settled in beginning at that 5500-foot level and continuing above, and froze to everything. Of course, each time they settled in, a new coat of rime would be added. It made for a glorious, silencing sight when the sun struck the scene on Wednesday morning. ■