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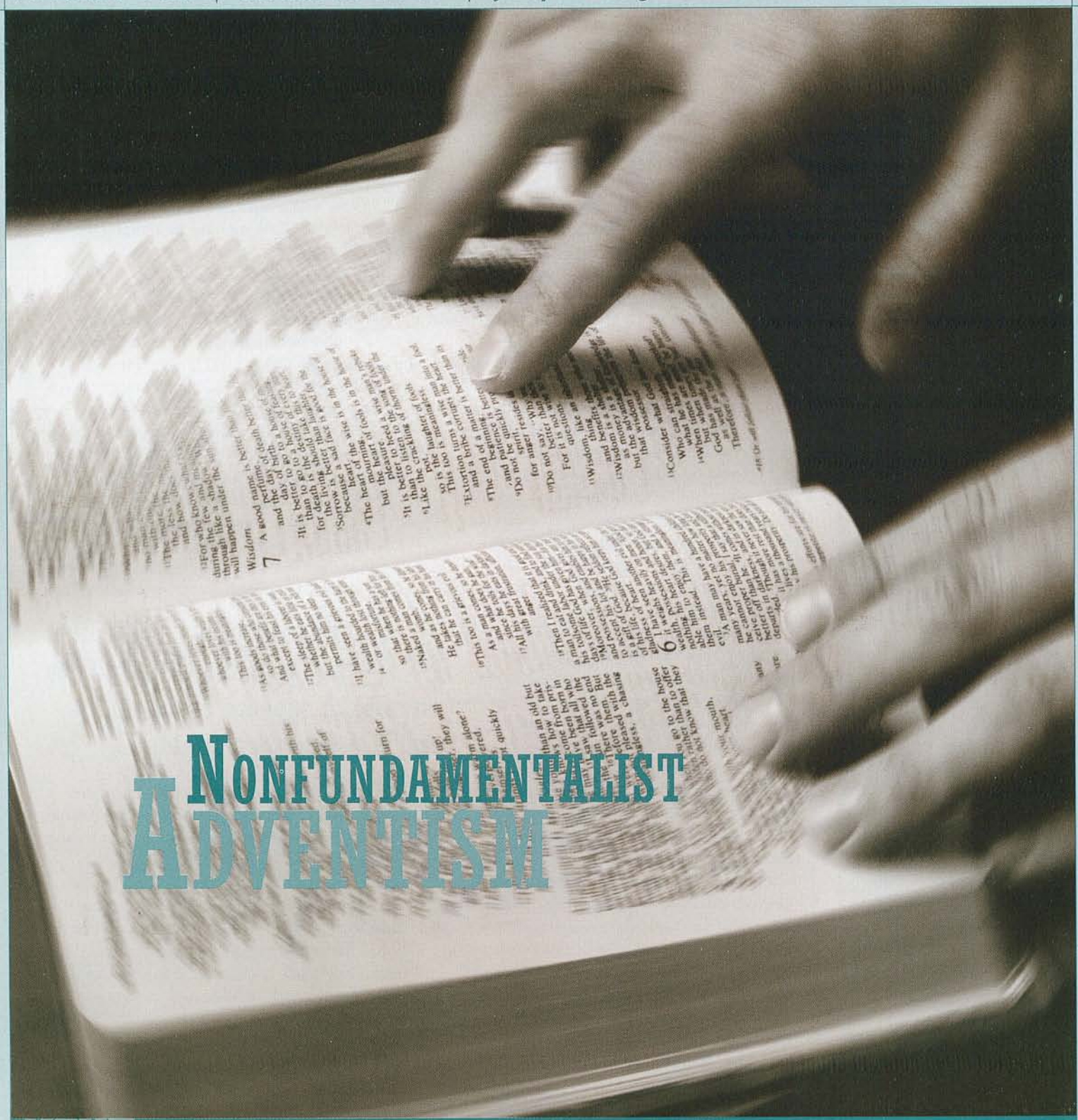

NONFUNDAMENTALIST ADVENTISM

NEXT ISSUE: A NEW BEGINNING FOR ADVENTIST CREATIONISM?
Report on the first GC-sponsored conference on origins

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Nonfundamentalist Adventism

JOHN MCLARTY

I was sitting in the back row at Sabbath School at Cowboy Campmeeting, an informal gathering of Adventist equestrians for a long weekend of fellowship and trail riding. At these gatherings I feel a little out of place, wondering how these cowboys and girls would respond if they knew who I really was (an effete intellectual with left-of-center political sympathies and progressive theological notions). My cover is that I'm there as driver and mechanic for my wife's old van and older horse trailer.

My feelings of alienation were dramatically heightened as I listened to the Sabbath School discussion. The teacher was speaking rather critically of progressive ideas (Israel was seduced by idolatry because it seemed progressive). I demurred politely, but my comments didn't make much impression. Two or three other people picked up the antiprogressive theme and lamented progress and modernization in the church.

Paul was the most emphatic: "We would have none of these problems if people would simply quit interpreting the Bible. If they would ask the Holy Spirit to guide them, they would all come to the same right conclusions. There would be no controversy at all. And there would be none of this modern music for the kids. What gets us into trouble is our attempt to interpret the Bible."

I sank into my chair, thinking, I really don't belong here.

At the heart of Adventist fundamentalism is a rock-solid conviction that God has spoken through the Bible—with absolute authority and clarity. And if there is any obscurity, it is perfectly clarified by the inspired commentary of Ellen White. There is no need for humility in asserting my convictions, because they are not "mere opinions." They are the inevitable outgrowth of submitting to the infallible, unambiguous revelation of God. Fundamentalists have no need to learn. They are fully qualified to teach. If you disagree, you are either perverse or stupid. And that applies to you whether you are a "regular person" or a highly educated theologian or scientist.

Paul's diatribe was interrupted by Beth. "I'm tired of hearing people beat up on our kids. Today's kids are no worse than we were." There was fire in her voice. Paul argued with her, but the passion of her speech broke the spell. Dwight asked, "God commanded the Jews to make all kinds of sacrifices, and told them not to wear clothes of mixed fabric. Don't we have to interpret those texts?"

Paul answered, "No we don't. God didn't command all that stuff. Moses did."

Dwight leaned over and whispered to me. "I don't care how many times they tell me two plus two is five, I just can't buy it." I smiled. Maybe I did belong here after all. Dwight was a non-fundamentalist. And so was Beth. And Glen sitting across the circle…I knew he was no fundamentalist. Through the weekend I met others—people who are happily Adventist and open to other people and new ideas. Turns out that most of these cowboys and girls were non-fundamentalist Adventists.

Fundamentalists talk like they own the church. They attempt to squeeze everyone else into their mold. And those they can't control, they are willing to eliminate. Their shouting obscures the real facts: non-fundamentalist Adventism is alive and growing—not just at University Church but at Cowboy Campmeeting and in churches across the country. Non-fundamentalists are not a monolithic group. Their departures from historic Adventism take them in all sorts of directions. They argue with each other. What unites them is a common heritage and the grace to honor what God is doing in people who have different convictions and habits—a diversity we work to reflect in the pages of AT.

> **"Fundamentalists talk like they own the church. They attempt to squeeze everyone else into their mold."**

Fundamentalists shout. If we don't at least make a commotion, many of our friends will be fooled into thinking the fundamentalists really do own Adventism. So keep making noise. And if you're sitting on the back row, don't wait for someone else to speak up. ■

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LETTERS

Abortion and the Church

I was pleasantly surprised to discover...two articles dealing with abortion and a front-page picture of a developing baby in the latest issue of your magazine (AT Jan/Feb 2002)... Your cover story, "A Death in the Family," by Gregory Hoenes, ...is quite thought-provoking, but unfortunately draws the wrong moral conclusion. The fact that spontaneous abortion occurs naturally is a non-sequitur for concluding that the intentional destruction of prenatal life is morally acceptable. Hoenes would not argue, I believe, that because some children naturally die in their sleep, that therefore a parent would be justified in intentionally suffocating a child with a pillow, thus imitating nature.

Your "Abortion and the Bible" article, written by Jim Miller, is well written and it reveals great erudition and scholarship, but it misses a fundamental point. Regardless of which interpretation of the Exodus 21:22-25 text you opt for, there is no valid conclusion we can draw regarding the issue of abortion in the 21st century. If the unborn were treated as property in the Old Testament, so were slaves and women. Are we to conclude that slaves and women are devoid of personhood today? Going to the Old Testament to solve the moral issue raised by abortion is reminiscent of the theologians who justified slavery in the South a century and a half ago with the Bible in their hands.

I wish my church would...make a strong stand in defense of the unborn. In our official "Guidelines on Abortion," we describe prenatal life as a "magnificent gift of God," and then proceed to state that "God gives humanity the freedom of choice."...On our official SDA Web site we affirm that "prenatal life...should be protected," and then go on to announce that "the church has chosen not to define the precise moment human life begins."...It is time, I believe, that we stop straddling over the life fence, and throw the weight of our influence on behalf of those destined to perish before they have a chance to take their first breath.

Nic Samojluk | Loma Linda, CA

Taxonomy of Doctrines

Kudos for printing Johnston's "Taxonomy of Doctrines" (AT Jan/Feb 2002). How gently and seriously he probes some of our hoariest traditions!... Perhaps most thought-provoking is his ninth way of classifying doctrines, viz. as being either living or dead. He suggests that..." an embarrassing doctrine need not be violently killed. It can fade away incrementally by successive redefinitions, reformulations, qualifications and general whittling down." He observes that such whittling down can also help keep a doctrine alive—if this be desired—by "preserving or restoring a relevance or acceptability that had been lost, or by relieving cognitive dissonance."

There ineluctably comes to mind our one fundamentally unique doctrine, that derived from study of Daniel 8. Measures that have been taken to preserve or restore its relevance and acceptability, or to reduce its cognitive dissonance, include: (1) In place of improbable transfers from one apartment to another, we now speak of the beginning of a new phase of heavenly ministry. Just why a new phase was needed a century and a half ago is unclear, except that that is when the time period is believed to have ended. (2) In place of speaking of the "investigative judgment," we now prefer to call it a "pre-advent judgment," which, according to the meaning of the word, could mean any time before the Second Advent. (3) Lest the doctrine seem too personally close and fear engendering, we now modestly suggest that its real purpose is to vindicate God before the watching universe! (How would He fare without us?) And so proceeds the redefinition, reformulation and qualification. Hopefully some reduction of cognitive dissonance is thereby achieved.

On the opposite hand have been those who, impatient with benign neglect, and mercifully questioning the wisdom of continuing life-support, have anticipated an honorable burial. It troubles me that even the few longtime Adventist workers who have felt constrained publicly to question our traditional interpretation of Daniel 8 (e.g, Ballenger, Fletcher and Ford) seem to have had so little prophetically to offer in its place. Instead of virtually doing away with the day-for-a-year principle, and with it, much of the "historicist" understanding of prophecy, it seems to me that what is needed is a fresh interpretation of the time-prophecies of Daniel 8, 9 and 12, one that enhances

"Your "Abortion and the Bible" article, written by Jim Miller, is well written and it reveals great erudition and scholarship, but it misses a fundamental point. Regardless of which interpretation of the Exodus 21: 22-25 text you opt for, there is no valid conclusion we can draw regarding the issue of abortion in the 21st century. If the unborn were treated as property in the Old Testament, so were slaves and women."

rather than diminishes the day-for-a-year principle, one that contains not an iota of future date-setting nor any concession to dispensational futurism, yet which restores continuity with pre-Millerite historicist interpreters of past centuries. A large majority of the latter group understood Islam to represent the little horn of Daniel 8, whom they termed "the Eastern Antichrist."

David Duffie | Alpena, MI

What Should Be Central

1 Corinthians 15:3,4 informs us that St. Paul had as his main theme...the death and resurrection of our Lord.... We must be true to our distinctives but let's make the death and resurrection central. This is what saves a lost sinner; not diet, healthy lifestyle, the Sabbath. ...AT is needed and I read it from cover to cover, but I have noticed this deficiency.

Paul W. Jackson, M.D. | Wallingford,PA

Editor's note: We agree. Richard Choi pointed out in AT May/June 2002 that a valid argument could be made for any one of our doctrines to be at the "core."

The Sanctuary and the Sacrifices

I just read the article on "The Sanctuary Doctrine—Asset or Liability?" (AT May/June 2002). I have been concerned about who wanted/needed the Sanctuary/sacrificial system. Jeremiah 7:21, 22 says, "I spake not unto your fathers nor commanded them on the day I brought them out of Egypt concerning burnt offerings or sacrifice." And in the new Peterson *The Message*:

"When I brought your ancestors out of Egypt, I never said anything to them about wanting burnt offerings and sacrifices as such." Is this is one of those "very hard to be understood verses"? I have come to believe that it was not God who needed or wanted the "systems" but the people, and as in the case of their wanting a king, God allowed them to have this and tried to use it to shed some light on sin and the concept of salvation.

Jay Rasco | Via the Internet

Restoring Fallen Pastors

Errol Lawrence raised an interesting question when he asked if fallen SDA pastors either can or should be restored (AT Winter, Jan/Feb 2002). In my response I will write in the male gender, as most fallen SDA pastors are men.

In a sense, our church already attempts to restore such pastors. It does it by an accomplished practice of denial, which results in statements such as: penetration was incomplete, so intercourse did not take place; rubbing her breasts is not immorality; vaginal ejaculation did not take place, so there was no violation of the seventh commandment. The outside world knows better than this. The Uniform Code of Military Justice, as just about every military person knows, states that in rape cases penetration is not required. Penile contact with labia is all that is needed.

Our denial allows us to attempt to restore the person who is considered to have made a mistake in judgment. All too often this restoration has included such measures as: advice not to do it again, redemptive transfers, and attendance at a field school of evangelism. Advice not to do it again will most likely communicate that he should not get caught. Redemptive transfers are usually done without the knowledge of the gaining congregation. No one can hold the pastor accountable. Participation in evangelistic efforts neither deals with the root cause in the individual, nor really gives him time to devote to his spiritual life.

On a personal basis, I agree that sexual impropriety should not be an automatic, permanent disbarment from spiritual leadership functions. But I believe that while there should be exceptions, in the majority of cases there should be a permanent withdrawing from pastoral care.

One example of an exception would be a single pastor who has stepped outside of bounds in a dating relationship. Another would be a pastor who patronizes a prostitute. These can both result from a "falling into sin" and not a commitment to sin. In addition, they may involve the individual's sexual maturation. It is common in the Adventist church to repress our sexuality. Some of the most vulnerable people are those who do so. It is very unhealthy for a pastor to be unable to acknowledge that he finds a certain female sexually attractive. It is a normal part of life to be sexually attracted to a person not your wife. The pastor, in establishing boundaries and standards for appropriate relationships, should acknowledge his sexual attraction to another and thus make decisions as to his future relationship with that person. One who cannot acknowledge this places the relationship on an unconstrained basis where whatever happens, just happens. This is a failure to accept responsibility, and a foundation for real problems. These two exceptions, for me, represent cases where there can be a high likelihood of restoration, both spiritually and behaviorally.

The majority of situations of pastoral sexual misconduct will typically not allow for restoration to pastoral care. These will generally involve sexual misconduct with either a parishioner or with a minor....

Secular ethics in the helping professions deal with the establishment of boundaries, transference and counter

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LETTERS

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transference. All of these come into consideration when the sexual misconduct involves a parishioner. The violation of professional ethics is so great that serious consideration should be given to whether or not the pastor should ever again provide pastoral care. In the secular world there are standards that may provide for permanent loss of license or credentials.

"The standards are tough. But they are reasonable, and we need to hold pastors to tough standards. Sexual involvement with a congregational member is much more than an individual sin. It is a sin against the congregation, the denomination, and the profession of ministry."

A certified public accountant who embezzles from a client may be permanently barred from accounting. A police officer who uses excessive force once, may never again work in law enforcement. The standards are tough. But they are reasonable, and we need to hold pastors to tough standards. Sexual involvement with a congregational member is much more than an individual sin. It is a sin against the congregation, the denomination, and the profession of ministry. A reasonable consequence of such may be that the person never again is involved in pastoral care.

This also is true for one who has become sexually involved with a child. Pastoral care always has the potential for care to children. One who has been so involved can never be deemed to be safe to provide care to children. This involvement is not about sex. It may be about power, control, and violence. The sexual and emotional feelings that participated in the sexual assault on the child often remain in the criminal for years and even decades.

The criminal may talk a good story about repentance, and make behavioral changes. But, he may still see the 12-year-old as a small woman. He may refer to her as a Lolita, which indicates he still sexually fantasizes about her in his mind. Often he will have no idea of the emotional impact on the family and on the victim. Such children may develop significant behavioral problems and become spiritually estranged from God and church. Yet the criminal will see the victim as getting on with her life, and have no sense of the destructiveness of the sexual assault. Some will attempt to sublimate their unresolved sexual issues in a socially acceptable manner. Pastoral care provides a good means to do this. But, all the time the basic underlying issues remain in the criminal. Such people have justly earned a permanent disbarment from pastoral care.

Grace is required of Christians, but grace does not require restoration to a pastoral position. While there are exceptions, the majority of cases of pastoral sexual misconduct should not be followed by restoration to a pastoral position.

Gregory Matthews | Brighton, CO

(Gregory Matthews is an ordained Seventh-day Adventist minister and a retired U. S. Army Chaplain, and currently is a chaplain in a Veterans Affairs hospital in Denver, Colorado. He also participates in an Internet ministry to sexually abused women at: www.s-n-t.org.)

Hanan Sadek, AT Office Manager

Hanan Sadek's name has been on the masthead of AT almost since its beginning in 1993. Unseen in headlines, she is still the sparkplug that keeps AT moving through all the processing of orders, payments, correspondence, label-making and more, and is the voice of AT to subscribers who call. She has moved recently from her office in La Sierra University's Calkins Hall to an annex of the Biology Department. Hanan comes from an Adventist community in Egypt and provides the staff with insights into the "other" Arab world of Christians. Her e-mail address is hanan@atoday.com.

THE FUNDAMENTALIST FACTOR: Another Perspective

ERVIN TAYLOR

The recently held GC-sponsored conference on "Theological Unity in a Growing World Church" brings to mind an opinion piece written by Clifford Goldstein that appeared last year in the *Adventist Review* (July 26, 2001). It was titled "The Pythagoras Factor" and it raises the issue of what a "true" Seventh-day Adventist must believe. A church, Goldstein insists, "must define itself, must identify what it is, what it believes in, what it stands for." Then he asks the very interesting question: How much "deviation" from its traditional doctrinal formulations "can a church allow before losing its identity?" Or, put another way, How much pluralism in theology can a denomination stand?

Goldstein states that he obtained his inspiration from the ancient Pythagoreans. According to him, they would disfellowship any members who divulged to outsiders the nature of irrational numbers—a belief that Goldstein characterizes as "wacky." Even if it is "wacky," he argues, every religion has "the right...to identify the parameters of its faith, whatever those parameters are and whatever the rationale—'good' or (as with the Pythagoreans) 'bad'—behind them." He cites beliefs such as atheism and being an "avowed Satanist" that, if held by an individual, would preclude him or her from serving as an ordained Adventist pastor or member of an Adventist theology faculty.

To this reasonable list, Goldstein adds other sets of beliefs which, he insists, we must examine if we are to talk about a "true" Seventh-day Adventist. How about, he asks, someone who does not believe in a literal six-day Creation, rejects a worldwide flood, thinks that Daniel was written in the 2nd century B.C., does not accept the entire 27 "fundamentals" as written, and questions if anything important happened in 1844? Goldstein states, "For me, it's hard to understand why one who rejects those teachings would even *want* [his emphasis] to be an Adventist, much less teach or preach among us. But the issue isn't if they want to; the issue is Should they even be allowed to (that is, teach or preach among us)?" And then finally, his crowning comment: "Our leaders and administrators not only must define the parameters of our faith; they have the right—even the obligation—to enforce them."

> **"How much pluralism can our church stand? Actually, the basis of church unity has little to do with doctrinal uniformity, and to insist on it will only foster disunity and schism."**

Why does Goldstein feel so free to proclaim the idea that administrators have the right to define the Adventist "parameters of faith"—even if some of these "parameters" (for example, a recent worldwide flood or that the Adventist institutional church is "the remnant church" of the Book of Revelation) are, to use his own term, "wacky"? As Raymond Cottrell has well documented, having church administrators think they can define Adventist faith parameters is one of the very regrettable legacies left behind by Robert Pierson, General Conference president from 1966 to 1979. Since that time a number of church administrators have attempted to take on the role of arbiters of what is and what is not "orthodox" Adventist theology, despite the fact that they have few qualifications in theological scholarship. In almost every case—Glacier View, for example—the results have been disasters for the church. The fundamentalist side of Adventist theology currently being advanced by the Adventist Theological Society (ATS) appears to have been adopted by a number of these administrators as representing normative and orthodox Adventism. One suspects that Goldstein has adopted the ATS agenda, a position that might be labeled—with apologies to the late Eric Hoffer—as "The Fundamentalist Factor."

I am sorry that he and others of like mind cannot understand that many individuals with a solid commitment to our faith community are not beholden to "The Fundamentalist Factor." Membership for these people does not require them to park their intellect and rationality at the church door. They have come to the conclusion that a number of our traditional positions cannot be supported, when one takes the Biblical narratives seriously with their cultural and historical context, and they seek to understand what these passages are trying to communicate. Most important, non-fundamentalist Adventists have no need to require other church members—including Goldstein—to understand the scriptures in the same way they do. Why should he insist that other church members must view the scriptures as he does?

How much pluralism can our church stand? Actually, the basis of church unity has little to do with doctrinal uniformity, and to insist on it will only foster disunity and schism. The true basis of unity in any Christian body should be the same as that which united the earliest Christians—the confession that Jesus is Lord. Everything else is commentary. ■

Ervin Taylor is professor of anthropology at the University of California, Riverside and Executive Editor of Adventist Today.

Desmond Ford and Church Reconciliation

An open letter from Richard M. Davidson

To Whom It May Concern, Readers of the Document "Mapping the Past and Sketching the Future":

Recently I received a copy of the March 1, 2002, edited version of a report by the Membership and Relational Issues Committee of the Avondale College Church entitled "Mapping the Past and Sketching the Future." I was very surprised to see my name appearing in the document, along with allusions to my NNSW Camp Meeting presentations made in October 2001, and further allusions to the Adventist Theological Society. Especially disturbing to me was the carefully crafted language leaving the impression that Des Ford's views and mine are not that far apart. The report states "that several aspects of doctrine which Dr. Ford's critics classified as aberrations in the late 1970s/early 1980s were proclaimed with great acceptance at a recent camp meeting by a respected past-president of the Adventist Theological Society." (A later statement in the document specifically identifies me by name as the one making these presentations.) While acknowledging that "such observations do not imply concurrence in all matters," the remainder of the paragraph (and later portions of the document) nonetheless suggests both explicitly and in the general tenor of expression that my camp meeting presentations actually lend support to the move to reinstate Des Ford as a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

With this letter, I wish to strongly object to what I feel is a flagrant misuse of my name, misrepresentation of my theology, and the misconstruing of my camp meeting presentations to the exact opposite of what I intended. I want to make it clear that in my understanding Des Ford and I are light years apart on the most crucial issues of present truth within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I do not support the move to reinstate Des Ford to church membership while he continues in his present belief system.

It is true that I believe in and enthusiastically preach the biblical doctrines of justification by faith and assurance of salvation. The Church has always had enlightened guidance on these subjects in the writings of Ellen White. I, along with others, have embraced these precious truths through earnest Bible study and prayer. Among the many sources which have contributed to my experiential understanding of the Gospel are included some of Des Ford's sermons from the early 1970's. But because both Des Ford and I believe in justification by faith (though with some significantly differing end results—see my attached document "The Good News of Yom Kippur"), this does not imply that the Seventh-day Adventist Church should now throw open its arms to Des for membership any more than we should throw open the Church for membership to Lutherans or Seventh-day Baptists or other evangelicals who teach this doctrine. Those who accept justification by faith, or even the Sabbath, do not thereby qualify for SDA membership. Seventh-day Adventists believe that the Gospel has an end-time setting of "present truth" concentrated in the Three Angels' Message of Revelation 14. At the heart of that present truth is our "reason for existence" centered in the sanctuary message: "The hour of His judgment has come." What makes this movement distinctive is the belief that since 1844 we are now living in the pre-Advent investigative judgment of professed believers conducted in the heavenly sanctuary, as indicated by Daniel 8:14 and many kindred biblical passages. Ellen White indicated that this "correct understanding of the ministration in the heavenly sanctuary" constitutes "the foundation of our faith" (*Evangelism* 221, Letter 208, 1906). This central pillar of Adventist identity and message to the world, Des Ford has rejected, and continues to reject. The concept of an investigative judgment of believers, the year-day principle, the exegesis of Daniel 8:14 leading to the date 1844 and the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, the historicist view of prophecy, the validity of arguing from the Old Testament sanctuary types to Christ's antitypical heavenly sanctuary ministry, the evidence from the books of Hebrews and Revelation for an end-time pre-Advent investigative judgment of God's professed people—these and many more foundational points in the Adventist sanctuary doctrine are denied by Des as unbiblical. Other aspects of Adventist doctrine are also rejected by Ford, but I will not go into these in this letter.

I have testified publicly of my former doubts regarding the sanctuary message in the wake of reading Des Ford's 991-page Glacier View Manuscript in 1980. I was ready to leave the Seventh-day Adventist Church if this distinctive message was not biblical. I determined that if the Adventist sanctuary message could not stand the test of the closest investigation, if it was not solidly founded upon Scripture alone, I could not stay an Adventist. I thank God that my wrestling with the biblical data in the months and years following 1980 convinced me beyond question that the sanctuary doctrine was indeed biblical, and not only biblical, but Gospel! I've written up my personal experience with regard to the sanctuary doctrine in several articles, two of which I am attaching for your perusal ("In Confirmation of the Sanctuary Message" and "The Good News of Yom Kippur") if you wish to read more detail of my own pilgrimage and of the

powerful biblical evidence for the truthfulness and relevance and gospel orientation of our sanctuary message.

Since I began teaching the Doctrine of the Sanctuary class at the SDA Theological Seminary here at Andrews University (now over 15 years), I regularly conduct a special prayer session in my class when we begin to deal with issues that surrounded Glacier View and Ford's manuscript and continued teaching. We kneel in a special intercessory prayer especially for Des, that God may yet reclaim him for the Adventist Church, to once again preach the Gospel in its end-time "present truth" setting of the sanctuary message. I have longed for, agonized in prayer for, reconciliation between Des Ford and the Adventist Church. I desire with all my heart to see him back as a member "in good and regular standing." *But I am convinced that the way of reconciliation is not for us to compromise the core distinctive of Adventist doctrine!*

The way of reconciliation, in my opinion, is not to claim, as does the Report from Avondale College Church, that the situation "is not so much a doctrinal issue as a relational one." I cannot speak to the relational issues, since I was not present at Glacier View nor in Australia in its aftermath. But I can speak to the doctrinal issue—and I find this to be foundational. At heart is the question of what it means to be an Adventist.

Look at all the other Fundamental Beliefs of SDAs—these are shared with other Christian denominations, including the Great Controversy (see the new book by Gregory Boyd), Sabbath, state of the dead, gift of prophecy, footwashing, tithing, etc. But Fundamental Belief Number 23, "Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary," involving the work of investigative judgment which began in 1844, is the one distinctive doctrine which sets us apart from all other churches, and constitutes the special Gospel-centered "present truth" entrusted to our Movement to preach. It is also one of the "old landmarks" which Ellen White was shown to be central and nonnegotiable to Adventism (see *Selected Messages I* 160-162, Letter 329, 1905).

In my October 2001 camp meeting presentations, I sought to uphold the Gospel, and show the beauty and joy of the sanctuary message, but my overall goal was to show that the sanctuary message as affirmed by Seventh-day Adventists is in harmony with the Gospel, and is solidly supported in Scripture. Those who listen to my presentations will hear my personal testimony and the setting forth of biblical evidence upon evidence that the points regarding the SDA sanctuary message denied by Des Ford are fully grounded in Scripture. True, I did not mention Des Ford by name, inasmuch as I wished the presentations to be Bible-centered and issue-centered, not personality-centered. But none who have followed the debate since 1980 can miss the underlying thread in my entire series, seeking to show the truthfulness and continued relevance of the SDA sanctuary message as opposed to those who have rejected it as unbiblical.

> **"I determined that if the Adventist sanctuary message could not stand the test of the closest investigation, if it was not solidly founded upon Scripture alone, I could not stay an Adventist. I thank God that my wrestling with the biblical data in the months and years following 1980 convinced me beyond question that the sanctuary doctrine was indeed biblical, and not only biblical, but Gospel!"**

I still pray often that Des Ford and the SDA Church can be reconciled. I challenge SDA leaders and lay members in Australia and beyond to join me even more earnestly and agonizingly in that prayer. What might happen if a whole continent, yea a whole denomination, were interceding the Almighty for the reclaiming of Des! But let not that reconciliation be achieved by ignoring or minimizing the deep doctrinal divide that now separates us. Let us rather pray for heavenly eye salve to anoint Des's eyes, for humbleness of heart and a teachable spirit that he may be willing to see and accept the biblical evidence on the sanctuary, prophecy, and other kindred aspects of "present truth" without prejudice. Let us also pray for the spirit of Daniel (in his prayer of Daniel 9) in all of us that we may identify and empathize with those in error even though we may not have been personally at fault. Let us pray for repentance if there are any wrongs to confess on the part of the Church in dealing with Des (I wasn't there and don't know if such repentance is needed or not). Let us pray for the power of the sanctuary message—seen in its gospel beauty—to revitalize a whole continent and our whole Church as never before.

The Adventist Theological Society (ATS), also mentioned in the Avondale Report, has as its primary goal to uplift such neglected and maligned biblical truths as the sanctuary doctrine. As a past-president of ATS, I can attest to the centrist stance of the society and its supportive mission within the Church to present and foster solid, balanced Bible-based scholarship that upholds and deepens our appreciation of the 27 Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I'm confident that the local chapter of ATS will continue to be constructive in providing support for the SDA Church in Australia and for the doctrinal beliefs of our Church. Our new (as of next month) president of ATS International, Jiri Moskala, has recently fulfilled Conference-initiated speaking appointments in the Australian Union,

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FINDING A VOICE ONLINE:

A review of SDA online forums

BEVIN R. BRETT

And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh. Eccl 12:12

Every prudent man dealeth with knowledge: but a fool layeth open his folly. Prov 13:16

The arrival of cheap home computers, Internet access, powerful Internet search engines, and software allows anybody to run a chat room or a bulletin board, and anybody else who wants to can contribute. Many of these sites are related in some manner to the activities and membership of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

A fairly extensive list of the sites where active discussions take place can be found at *dmoz.org/Society/Religion_and_Spirituality/Christianity/Denominations/Seventh-day_Adventists/Chats_and_Forums* (or you can go to *dmoz.org* and follow the links). By visiting this site you can see a range of everything from extremely conservative to extremely liberal groups.

Proceed with caution

Before I take you on a quick tour, I would like to give you a few words of warning.

First, and foremost, anyone can publish anything on the Internet. Your hardest problem is going to be determining the truth from the error in what you encounter. Consider, for instance, the story at *www.brisinst.org.au/resources/brisbane_institute_sailing.html* of a man's search for accurate information about the first person to sail solo around the world. Even mainstream encyclopedias get their facts wrong. Your only protection is a solid background of information from reputable sources.

People are basically anonymous on the Internet. You will encounter some lovely people that you wished lived or worked right beside you. You will also encounter liars, cheats, and malicious or vindictive people who hide behind innocuous facades but who delight in stirring up trouble. People can be very nasty to each other on the Internet, writing things that they would never say in a face-to-face meeting. Somehow the lack of physical contact reduces the normal social barriers. You will notice that such impoliteness never achieves anything, except maybe annoying someone enough that they leave the conversation.

The quick tour

The site *remnant-online.com* is a calm, conservative forum that restricts many of its discussions to people who are Seventh-day Adventist church members. To achieve this calmness, its administrators (Richard Myers being the foremost) keeps things relatively mainstream, erring on the conservative side of Adventism.

At *www.atomorrow.com* you will find a fairly small membership from both ends of the spectrum—avid creationists and evolutionists, people with wide-ranging views on Ellen White's writings, and many opinions on directions the Adventist denomination should move. The participants tend to be polite in their statement of their own opinions, and tolerant of the opinions of others—although always ready to discuss them.

The *www.ClubAdventist.com* forum seems to have the largest membership (although membership in general in these forums can fluctuate widely and relatively quickly). Conversations range widely, with most views expressed being middle-of-the-road Adventist ones, and there is usually a pleasant tone (although, again, this can change over a matter of weeks or months at any given site). This is a more social site than some of the others—sort of like a Saturday night conversation.

The conversations at *www.online-adventist.org* tend to be sharper—with a certain amount of name-calling and unpleasantness sometimes cropping up. This site is one where I tend to hang out, because I am interested in the discussions about creationism and evolution, how to understand the Bible, and various views on Ellen White. Also, a certain amount of pseudoscience crops up, which brings in scientific fact-finding that intrigues me.

A couple of other interesting-looking sites that you may want to take a closer look at include *www.adventistinteractive.org*, where they have restricted many of the discussions to current or former church members, and *www.maritime-sda-online.org*, where a calm and well-moderated group of Seventh-day Adventists and friends hold quiet, conservative-to-moderate (not liberal) discussions.

If you want to see what a more unusual site looks like, try *www.everythingimportant.org*, where some more extreme positions are fervently presented.

In one newsgroup—*alt.religion.christian.adventist*—anything goes and you'll find an obnoxious free-for-all (not at all representative of most Adventist church members) going on all the time. If you don't know what newsgroups are, this one is not worth finding out for!

Why?

Lots of reasons may motivate you to participate in an online forum.

1. Are you looking for support? Friendship? You are probably in the wrong place. Investigate your local church and community instead.

2. If you are looking for information about spiritual matters, you will get a range of responses depending solely on where you go. Everyone from extremely conservative Adventists to radical atheists populate these forums.

3. You can find information, and misinformation, about the state of the Adventist church. Very often the first information about a genuine scandal within the denomination, and the first wrong information, gets propagated through these forums. The General Conference has not yet learned the value of having employees monitoring, building solid reputations for speaking the truth, and providing correct information to these forums.

4. Some people are here just to argue—they certainly get that!

5. A chance to influence? Personally, I have stuck around partially because I don't want to see the forums completely taken over by conservatives and eccentrics. Moderates and knowledgeable thinkers are the two least represented groups on these forums, possibly because they don't see anything in them worth their time.

6. A challenge? You will certainly be challenged!

7. Evangelism? Forget about it. Everything we know about evangelism says that public argument does not work. If you want to evangelize, go and become active in your local community, make face-to-face friends, let people see Christ through you.

If you decide to post

Unless your goal is to be obnoxious, these simple tips may help you make more effective forum posts.

1. Insults and criticisms don't achieve anything. When you are the target of attacks, the best thing is to completely ignore them or simply provide more facts backing up your position.

2. Don't put in long notes. People don't read them and may classify you as a crank for posting them.

3. Find out and obey the rules of the forum you are in—they range widely. The administrator has paid for the right to kick you out.

4. Remember, the Internet is open to everyone—and much of what you read is false.

Finally

The Internet is just a tool. It can be used for good or for ill. If nothing else, a tour of these sites will expose you to the wide range of people interested enough in the Seventh-day Adventist church to hang around the forums. That alone, to me, is worth the price of admission. ■

Bevin R. Brett can be found exploring the Internet from his home in Brookline, New Hampshire.

Online SDA forums

www.atomorrow.com

remnant-online.com

www.ClubAdventist.com

www.online-adventist.org

www.adventistinteractive.org

www.maritime-sda-online.org

www.everythingimportant.org

Desmond Ford and Church Reconciliation

Continued from page 9

and has a strong desire to maintain and even enhance the supportive role of the society in harmony with church leadership in the South Pacific Division.

I trust that this letter serves to set straight any confusion caused by the use of my name, my NNSW Camp Meeting presentations, and the Adventist Theological Society in the Avondale College Church Report. I do not wish to intrude upon the internal procedures of the local Avondale College Church, nor of the wider Adventist community, in their dealing with Des Ford. But I feel it is imperative that readers of the report are not misled by references to me, my camp meeting series, and ATS, to think that I or ATS support a move to reinstate Des Ford into membership in the SDA Church while he continues to reject central distinctive Adventist doctrine. Such a move I do not support. I would only support Des Ford's reinstatement into SDA Church membership if he once again embraces the "present truth" that distinguishes this Church from other denominations. And for that change of heart on the part of my brother Des, I earnestly pray! I also pray for the SDA community in Australia and beyond, that we continue to reach out to Des, loving him, interceding for him, laying hold of the Arm of Omnipotence on his behalf, calling him back to the old landmarks that stand more solid than ever!

I request that this letter in its entirety be made available to those who have received the document "Mapping the Past and Sketching the Future" that they might have an accurate understanding of my position and that of ATS, in light of the references in the report. I will be happy to provide any additional information that may be requested to clarify other points involving myself, my camp meeting presentations, or the positions of ATS, in the ongoing process outlined in the Avondale College Church Report. May God's hand guide this process and may His will be done.

Cordially in Christ, Richard M. Davidson

P.S. I request that no individual sentence or portion thereof in this letter be used on its own for any purpose. I do not wish to be quoted out of context! ■

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JUBILEE FESTIVAL

Christians and the Ancient Sanctuary

LEE GREER

When the tribes of Israel were about to be settled in Canaan, Moses spelled out for them a new way to reckon time, as part of God's covenant with them. They were to use "Sabbaths of years" or "weeks of years" (Lev 25). The land was to keep a Sabbath every seventh year. For a six-year period they were to grow, plant, prune and reap (v. 3). But on the seventh year, they were to let the land "rest," not sowing grain or pruning vines (v. 4). Then everyone, the poor, the servants, the strangers (non-Israelites), the cattle, and even the animals would all enjoy whatever grew on its own, along with the blessed increase of the sixth year (v. 5-7, 21-22).

Israel was also to reckon "7 Sabbaths of years" or "7 times 7 years," which is 49 years (v. 8). During these years if an Israelite became poor and sold his possessions or his liberty into debt bondage, he could redeem himself, or any "next of kin" could redeem him and his possessions, by paying the debt as surety (v. 25-26). But if not, he would remain in debt bondage only until the 49th year. Then in the year of Jubilee (50th year) all would be forgiven, and he and everyone else would be free of debt and bondage. All outstanding debts were to be canceled. Lost lands would be restored. Creditor and debtor, bond holder and bond slave, were all to stand free, equal and forgiven. Thus no one would become a wealthy landowner to the exclusion of the poor and landless. On the 10th day of the 7th month of the 49th year, the Day of Atonement, the priests would blow throughout the land long blasts (*yobel*) on the ram's horn (*shofar*), proclaiming the 50th year of Jubilee, to be kept holy again without sowing or reaping (v. 9-10; see also Lev 16).

On that same day, a Jubilee Day of Atonement, the high priest as "mediator of the covenant" entered into the Most Holy Place "within the veil" and made atonement for Israel by sprinkling the blood onto the mercy seat on the ark containing the covenant (Lev 16). Sins as well as debts were forgiven in one day. The covenant people were to forgive one another of their debts and wrongs. The year of redemption began on that same day. On a Jubilee Day of Atonement, the Lord God of Israel became Surety and Kinsman-Redeemer for all indebtedness and sin through the atoning blood on the mercy seat above the covenant. There was no default! Covenant justice and mercy could ask nothing more; the Lord himself as divine Proxy had underwritten and paid the debt.

Of course, one will immediately recognize in this a representation of none other than the New Testament gospel of Jesus Christ!

Sabbatical desolation and messianic hope

There seems to be no historical evidence that ancient Israel ever kept this beautiful festival. Instead, they repeatedly forsook God's covenant "till there was no remedy" except the Babylonian captivity (2 Chron 36:16,17), just as they had been warned (Lev 26:14-46). For every "week of years" (7 years) that Israel forsook God's covenant, the Lord said the land would have to keep Sabbath (1 year) in desolation while the people were in captivity "to fulfill her Sabbaths; for as long as the land lies desolate it keeps Sabbath" (Lev 26: 33-35).

In Daniel's covenant vision (Dan 8: 1-14), he hears of the final "vindication of the sanctuary" after seeing a preternatural "little horn" attack the "glorious" land, assault "the host of heaven," and throw down and trample some of the stars and "host" to the ground. He sees the "little horn" self-magnify against the "Prince of the host," take away from him "the daily [*hatamid*]" sanctuary rites, cast down "the place of his sanctuary," and set up "the desolating transgression" [*hapesha' shemem*] (see also Isa 14; Rev 12). As Gabriel explains the vision Daniel sickens, and some details are left unexplained for a time.

As the "70 years" of exile drew to a close, Daniel in earnest prayer appealed to God's covenant righteousness on behalf of Jerusalem and the sanctuary (Dan 9:1-20; see also Lev 26). Gabriel (Dan 9:23-27) explains the vision of Daniel 8 in covenant Jubilee terms. Another "70 weeks" of years, or 10 Jubilees, are decreed for Daniel's people and holy city to "quell [*kala'*] the transgression [*hapesha'*], to seal an end [*khatam*] of sins, to atone [*kaphar*] for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness [*tzedeq*, from the same root as *nitzdaq* of Dan 8:14], to seal an end [*khatam*] of vision and prophecy, and to anoint a Most Holy [*qodesh qadashim*]" (v. 24). Daniel 9:24 combines the key elements of the Day of

Atonement (Lev 16) and dedication (Num 7; Lev 8-9) in a Jubilee Day of Atonement (Lev 25-26) setting, and in this way describes the final vindication [*nitzdaq*] of the sanctuary.[1]

Jerusalem would be rebuilt in "7 weeks," or one Jubilee (49 years). After "7 weeks and 62 weeks" (69 weeks) would appear "Messiah a Prince" (that is, Prince of the host) who would be "cut off and left with nothing." The people of "a coming prince" (that is, the little horn) would destroy both "city and sanctuary" and until the end desolations were decreed (v. 25-26). This would occur in the final 70th sabbatical week, when covenant would be confirmed with many (v. 27). In the half of the week (first 3½ times), he "shall put a Sabbath end [*yeshebuat*] to sacrifice and offering" (that is, the taking away of "the daily"). Upon "the outskirts" would be "the abominations of a desolator (the little horn) even until the end" (final 3½ times). Finally, "what is decreed" would "pour out upon the desolator."

"The real eschatological gospel of the kingdom must be preached in all the world, and then the long-delayed Advent will come (Matt. 24:14). Forgotten truths that we as Seventh-day Adventists have only begun to recover since 1844, Scripture proclaims to be true since Christ's death and resurrection."

The gospel feast (New Testament) since A.D. 31

Around A.D. 27, Jesus announced, "The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand..." (Mark 1:15), an obvious reference to the "70 weeks" of Daniel 9. About A.D. 31, Jesus was crucified, buried, arose from the dead and ascended to the throne of God. By so doing he accomplished several things, including:

1. Judgment of the world. The lifting up of Christ on the cross was the "judgment of this world" when its "prince... [was] cast outside" (John 12:31-32; 16:11, see also Rev 12). When "cut off and left with nothing" by the greatest assault of Satan, the real "little horn," Christ put "a Sabbath end to sacrifice and offering" (see also Heb 10:1-22). The hour of God's judgment came with the public display of Christ as Mercy Seat [*'ilastyrion*] in the Jubilee redemption verdict of justification for all who believe (Rom 3:4, 21-25, see also Rev 14:6-7). Jesus' "kingdom prayer" (Matt 6:9-13) is an eschatological Jubilee Day of Atonement prayer proclaiming forgiveness for indebtedness in heaven and on earth ever since.

2. Entrance into the Most Holy. As the ancient "high priest enter[ed] into the Holiest [*ta 'agia*] every year with blood not his own," so also at his ascension our great "High Priest entered into the Holiest [*ta 'agia*] once for all not by the blood of he-goats and calves but by his own blood having secured eternal redemption [Jubilee]" (Heb 9:11-12, 25). Christ purchased that eternal rest signified by the Sabbath when he "passed through the heavens" to the "throne of grace" and "entered within the innermost veil" (Heb 4:4,10,14,16; 6:19-20). In one redemptive act he both "cleansed" and "dedicated a new and living way through the veil," making atonement once for all (Heb 1:3; 9:11-12, 23-28; 10:14, 19-22).

3. Heavenly judgment and justification by faith. At his ascension, the eschatological Son of man "came with clouds" to "the Ancient of Days to receive his kingdom" (Dan 7:13-14; Mark 14:62; Acts 1:9-11). Since then believers in Jesus have entered into the heavenly pre-Advent judgment and found perfect justification in Jesus their Mediator (Rom 3:1-5:1; Heb 12:22-24; 1 Tim 5:24). "For by one offering he has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Heb 10:14). Likewise all who died in faith before Christ have already been justified and declared perfect in that judgment (Heb 11-12: 22-24; see also Rev 12:5-12; 14:6-7; 1 Pet 4:17).

The real eschatological gospel of the kingdom must be preached in all the world, and then the long-delayed Advent will come (Matt 24:14). Forgotten truths that we as Seventh-day Adventists have only begun to recover since 1844, Scripture proclaims to be true since Christ's death and resurrection.

When we recover justification by faith in its covenant Christ-centered prophetic framework, we discover the only gospel and sanctuary doctrine Scripture knows anything about. Christians will someday advance beyond limiting atonement theories and inadequate prophetic schemata. Then the only true gospel will be preached—Jesus our Proxy paid our debt, threw the accuser out of court, and declared righteous both God and believing sinners ever since, and yes, he's coming back for his own! Why not in our day? Why not our generation? ■

Lee Greer is active in lay New Testament scholarship through the Jesus Institute Forum. To learn more, visit www.jesusinstituteforum.org.

NOTES

[1] This linking of Jubilee Day of Atonement, judgment, restoration, and Messiah as Melchizedek king-high priest was made in the Melchizedek fragment (11Q13) from Qumran (1st century B.C. to A.D. 1st century) and of course in the book of Hebrews. (Compare also Isaiah 61, 63 and Jesus' citation of Isaiah 61 in Luke 4).

The Year-Day Principle and the 2300 days

JERRY MOON

In the May-June 2002 issue of *Adventist Today*, Toby Joreteg addressed the issue of the year-day principle in biblical prophecy. The article seemed to imply (1) that the year-day principle was unknown until the 9th century. It further argued (2) that "there are only two Bible texts that clearly use" this principle, (3) that the year-day principle applies only in contexts of "sin/sinners/judgment," (4) that Daniel 8:14 has nothing to do with judgment and therefore (5) the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14 are to be interpreted simply as ordinary days, not as 2300 years. I will present evidence to the contrary on each of these points.

Working definition and history of interpretation

The year-day principle is one of the distinguishing features of historicist prophetic interpretation as contrasted with preterism and futurism. Historicists hold that in certain time prophecies, a "prophetic day" represents an entire year of "actual calendrical time" (William H. Shea, "Year-Day Principle, Part I," in *Selected Studies in Prophetic Interpretation*).

As early as the 3rd century B.C., the 70 weeks of Daniel 9 were understood to be 70 "weeks of years," that is, 70 x 7 = 490 years. The Septuagint, in translating the Hebrew for "weeks" in Daniel 7:25-27, inserted the additional phrase "of years," providing the first published example of what would later be called the "year-day principle" (L. E. Froom, *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*).

Not until enough centuries had passed to make such long ages of prophecy comprehensible were the longer prophecies of 1290 days, 1335 days, and 2300 days understood as years. Thus Rabbi Nahawendi in the early 9th century was the first to recognize the year-day principle as operative in the 1290 and 2300 days (Froom). But the year-day principle had been recognized in Daniel 9 at least as early as the 3rd century B.C., and in such an authoritative Jewish writing as the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Linguistic background

The linguistic background of the year-day principle is found in many Old Testament texts where the word "days" actually stood for "year" or "years." Note, for example, the formula that recurs 10 times in Genesis 5: "All the days of x were so many years, and he died." Old Testament poetry also used "days" and "years" in equivalent parallelism, referring to the same period of time. "For all our days pass away under thy wrath, our years come to an end like a sigh. The days of our years are threescore and ten" (Ps 90:9-10). After many such examples, Shea observes that this closely parallel use of "days" and "years" prepared the "ancient Semite, whose mind was steeped in this parallelistic type of thought," to intuitively associate the "days" of chronological prophecies with calendar years, especially in symbolic passages where literal days do not make logical sense (Shea).

Biblical usage of the year-day principle

The earliest biblical text that directly reflects the year-day principle is Leviticus 25:1-7. Here the command to "keep a Sabbath," previously associated with the seventh day of the literal week, is applied to a seventh year. Verses 3 and 4 are parallel in structure to the fourth commandment, Exodus 20: 8-11, except that the word "year(s)" is substituted for the word day(s). The Sabbath here commanded is not the weekly seventh-day Sabbath, but a seventh-year Sabbath (Shea).

Exodus 20:8-11	Leviticus 25:1-7
v. 8: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."	v. 2: ..."the land shall keep a Sabbath [year] to the Lord."
v. 9: "Six days you shall labor and do all your work."	v. 3: "Six years you shall sow,... prune, ...and gather..."
v. 10: "But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work."	v. 4: "But in the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of solemn rest for the land; a Sabbath [year] to the Lord; you shall not sow or prune."

Leviticus 25:8 further extends the year-day symbolism. "You shall count 7 Sabbaths of years, 7 years, 7 times, and to you the days of the 7 Sabbaths of years shall be 49 years." Clearly the weekly cycle of sevens of days, has

> **"Not until enough centuries had passed to make such long ages of prophecy comprehensible, were the longer prophecies of 1290 days, 1335 days, and 2300 days understood as years."**

become a symbol for a cycle of sevens of years. The weekly seventh-day Sabbath is the origin of the term here applied to a seventh-year Sabbath, and the term *weeks* means not weeks of days, but weeks of years.

This furnishes a textual background for the prophecy of Daniel 9. In Leviticus 25:8, 7 weeks of years, or 7 times 7 years, reaches to 1 jubilee. In Daniel 9:24, 70 weeks of years, (70 x 7 years, or 10 jubilees) reaches to the Messiah, the personification of the jubilee.

Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6 provide further confirmation that in certain contexts the prophetic message was constructed on the basis of a scale or symbolic correspondence between prophetic days and calendar years.

Year-day principle not limited to judgment passages

While the day-year correspondence does often occur in contexts of judgment, it also occurs in nonjudgmental contexts. The sabbatical year and jubilee ordinances of Leviticus 25:1-8 were not focused primarily on judgment in the punitive sense but on rest, deliverance, and restoration.

Is the idea of judgment absent from Daniel 8:14?

Leviticus 25 shows that year-day texts need not be directly concerned with judgment. Therefore, if the idea of judgment were absent from Daniel 8:14, that would not prove the year-day principle to be irrelevant to Daniel 8:14 and the 2300 days. To the contrary, both the main verb and the context support the conclusion that Daniel 8:14 is concerned with judgment. The Hebrew verb *nisdaq* has a range of meanings including to "vindicate," "restore," "justify," "put right," "declare right," "make righteous," etc. Its root *sadaq* and cognates are commonly used in judicial or forensic settings in Scripture. Furthermore, the "vision" mentioned in Daniel 8:13 concerns the horn's criminal activities against the true sanctuary of the "prince of the host," and the vindication or restoration of that sanctuary when the horn will be "broken without human hand" (v. 25). Thus the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14 are directly concerned with divine judgment on the little horn.

Additional evidence comes from the larger context. Historicists recognize that the visions of Daniel 2, 7, and 8-9 are essentially parallel, with each recapitulation marking progression from simple to more complex. Thus Daniel 7 features the same four kingdoms as Daniel 2, with the further elaboration of ten horns and a little horn that would grow out of the fourth. When Daniel asked the meaning of the vision, the angel summarized that after the little horn's career of persecution (7:25), "the court shall be seated, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it forever" (7:26). Thus in Daniel 7, the career of the little horn (7:25) climaxes in judgment (7:26), just before the "kingdoms under the whole heaven" are "given to the people of the saints of the most high" (7:27).

"The year-day principle is one of the distinguishing features of historicist prophetic interpretation as contrasted with preterism and futurism. Historicists hold that in certain time prophecies, a "prophetic day" represents an entire year of actual calendrical time."

The analogy between Daniel 7 and 8 shows that the "cleansing/vindication/restoration" of the sanctuary in Daniel 8:14 stands chronologically parallel to the "court shall be seated" in Daniel 7:26. Both mark the turning point that leads to the destruction of the pretender little horn and the rewarding of the persecuted "saints of the Most High." Thus to deny that Daniel 8:14 concerns judgment is to overlook both the immediate context (8:13-14, 25), and the parallel in Daniel 7:25-27.

A further evidence that the days of Daniel 8:14 represent years comes from the question of Daniel 8:13: "How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled?" The answer given in 8:14 is 2300 days. If these are literal days, the period is some 6 years, 3 months, 20 days. But the "vision" began in the Persian period and spanned the Greek and Roman periods, the time of the little horn's supremacy, and on to "the time of the end" (Dan 8:17, 20-23). The span of the vision specified in Daniel 8:13 demands that the 2300 days be understood as representing years.

Conclusion

The year-day principle rests not on two texts only, but on a broad Scriptural foundation. (Shea gives 23 lines of biblical evidence.) The translators of the LXX applied the year-day principle to the 70 weeks of Daniel 9 at least as early as the 3rd century B.C. The year-day principle is used not only in "judgment" passages, but in contexts of rest and restoration, such as the sabbatical and jubilee years. Even if the year-day principle were restricted only to judgment passages, the immediate context of Daniel 8:14 is two parallel chapters (Daniel 7-8) that both concern overt eschatological judgment. Hence there appears to be no valid reason to exclude the year-day principle from Daniel 8:14. ■

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INTELLIGENT DESIGN and the THINKING CHRISTIAN

TIMOTHY G. STANDISH, GEOSCIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Prejudging the outcome of sporting events is outrageously unfair. This was illustrated during the 2002 Winter Olympics when Canadians Jamie Sale and David Pelletier outperformed all other pairs skaters, but colluding judges initially denied them a gold medal.

Sometimes in the sciences the outcomes of investigation are also prejudged. For example, when attacking creationism, the National Academy of Sciences stated: "The job of science is to provide plausible natural explanations for natural phenomena."[1] This definition allows only "natural" processes as the "scientific" explanation. It precludes finding any evidence within science of a supernatural Creator.

Restricting science with the ancient philosophy of naturalism ensures that naturalistic theories about life will win every time, but it fails to ensure these are the best explanations. Applied to sports, this logic might mean for instance, that the Dallas Cowboys would win every game no matter how they played—a great thing for Cowboys fans perhaps, but not for football. Applied to science, if we include radical naturalism as part of the definition of science we thereby remove rational competition between ideas and fail to ensure that the best explanations of nature are accepted.

Intelligent Design (ID), an emerging field of scientific inquiry, elegantly challenges the naturalistic bias intercalated into definitions of science. ID asks the simple question: If the designer is unknown, is it possible to detect design? For example, when archaeologists studying the Nazca Lines in Peru find stones arranged to form gigantic images of birds and other creatures, is it possible to infer that intelligent beings lined up the stones? Scientists involved with the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI) face the other side of the same problem: How can radio signals from intelligent space aliens be differentiated from those originating in exploding stars? If complex meaningful patterns of stones are accepted as evidence of intelligent action, then complex meaningful patterns in cosmic radio waves may also be viewed as a product of intelligent extraterrestrials. The solution to detection of intelligence lies in recognition of complex meaningful patterns.

ID does not arbitrarily restrict the search for signs of intelligence to space aliens or ancient civilizations, but opens all fields, including the origin of life and the universe, to the logical search for intelligent causes. ID theorists like William Dembski[2] and Michael Behe[3] have broken with restrictive naturalistic definitions of science by applying to biological systems the same logic employed by archaeologists, forensic scientists and other well respected scientific disciplines. Even before deciphering hieroglyphics, archaeologists have no trouble recognizing them as the work of intelligent beings. Dembski argues that information, whether it is written on the walls of ancient gravesites, in the pages of a magazine or in the pattern of bases in a cell's DNA, is logically the product of intelligence. From ancient boats, chariots and other transportation machines, archaeologists infer skilled and intelligent engineers.

Behe has shown how, just like man-made machines, minute molecular machines inside cells exhibit all the properties characteristic of intelligently manufactured products. The logic used by these investigators is sound; the amount of data they work from is immense. It is only the conclusion, that life exhibits properties characteristic of intelligent design, that is controversial.

It is tempting for Bible-believing Christians to embrace ID because it appears to remove the anti-creation bias from science. However, there are several inappropriate responses that thinking Christians should avoid. Claiming that ID proves God created everything is an overreaction and definitely is not what ID aims or claims to do. It is inappropriate to think that ID "finally" answers the challenges to faith that come from science. If ID is science, we must regard all its conclusions as tentative. It is not healthy to base our faith on constantly changing scientific theories, even if at present those theories seem to be friendly to our beliefs. Another inappropriate reaction is viewing ID as irrelevant because it makes no claims about the nature of the Intelligent Designer.

ID represents a very big tent under which people of many faiths, including skeptics, find common ground. ID is not about winning debates or proving the superiority of one's personal faith over another's. ID is about liberating science from a restrictive philosophy that constrains its progress. It opens new areas for research and exploration. It allows for a richer set of questions as we seek to advance our understanding of creation. ■

"Intelligent Design, an emerging field of scientific inquiry, elegantly challenges the naturalistic bias intercalated into definitions of science."

Timothy G. Standish has a Ph.D. from George Mason University and has pursued research in molecular biology.

NOTES

[1] Science and Creationism: A View From the National Academy of Sciences, *2nd edition.*

[2] *Dembski, William A.* Intelligent Design: The Bridge Between Science and Theology.

[3] *Behe, Michael J.* Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution.

A COMMENTARY ON "Intelligent Design and the Thinking Christian"

ERVIN TAYLOR

It will not come as a surprise to anyone familiar with the literature on "Intelligent Design" (ID) that it has not been embraced by the mainline scientific community. In fact, it has been actively rejected as was "scientific creationism" before it. In the United States, major professional scientific groups such as the American Association for the Advancement of Science, various disciplinary scientific societies, and the premier American scientific body of scientists, the U.S. National Academy of Science (NAS) have all negatively evaluated the concept.

Dr. Standish suggests that ID is "an emerging field of scientific inquiry." One wonders what and who he is talking about, other than the handful of scientifically trained authors writing for general, popular audiences, who have employed the term ID as a new designation for what really is a very old approach to traditional Christian creationist apologetics. ID concepts and lines of argument have also been taken up by some whose motivation appears to have more to do with advancing certain conservative political and social agendas rather than addressing contemporary scientific concerns and issues. In this context, one side in the so-called "culture wars" seems to have embraced ID as a "wedge strategy" directed against what they view as the hegemony of "godless" humanistic values in the contemporary Western world, citing "Darwinism" as the cause of a whole host of societal evils.

The principal reason why ID is unacceptable to most practicing scientists is, at its core, relatively simple and straightforward. Dr. Standish even quotes one of the most compelling reasons. However, the explanation does not impress him, perhaps for the same reason that it does not impress Christian fundamentalists. It is, as expressed in *Science and Creationism: The View from the National Academy of Science*, that "The job of science is to provide plausible natural explanations for natural phenomena." If anyone is seriously attracted to ID arguments, it might be helpful to consult the entire text of the NAS document. It can be accessed at one of the NAS Web sites [*stills.nap.edu/html/creationism*].

It is not entirely clear from Dr. Standish's discussion whether he understands the words, but does not comprehend the essence of the argument, or whether he just disagrees with one or more of the implications of the argument. Simply stated, the point of the quote is to insist that contemporary normative science is a way of knowing the natural world. As the NAS document further notes, explanations about how the natural world works "are limited to those based on observations and experiments that can be substantiated by other scientists. Explanations that cannot be based on empirical evidence are not a part of science." Thus, normative science limits itself to a materialist explanation of how the world works using empirical criteria. In more technical language, science employs methodological naturalism in dealing with the natural world. Standard science has a "naturalistic bias" in the same sense that Christian theology has a "supernatural and theistic bias."

There are some scholars—including some very distinguished scientists but especially those who deal with the history and philosophy of science—who have pointed out that science is "a way of knowing" not "the way of knowing." It is a way of knowing that is of relatively recent origin. Since it is a social and cultural construct, its pursuit is subject to all the vagaries inherent in any human endeavor.

However, unlike many other human constructs—for example, some religious or theological systems immediately come to mind—the scientific world view has been extremely successful and productive in accomplishing what it said it would do—understand how the physical world works. It is that overwhelming success that may have contributed to the tendency of a small number of scientists to talk in some popular contexts as if science is "the" way of knowing. It could certainly be argued that some widely quoted scientific writers—for example, the late Carl Sagan—crossed the line between methodological naturalism and ontological naturalism, that is, the view that the natural world is all there is. It has been observed that those few scientists that insist forcefully that science has demonstrated that the natural world is all that really exists exhibit some of the same personality traits as the most rabid fundamentalist.

> **"Standard science has a "naturalistic bias" in the same sense that Christian theology has a "supernatural and theistic" bias."**

Dr. Standish states that he is addressing himself to the "thinking Christian" not the rabid fundamentalist. A thinking Christian is an informed Christian in possession of relevant and appropriate data who understands the history as well as the sometime subtle implications of various points of view. ID is certainly not about "liberating science from a restrictive philosophy that constrains its progress." Science is already very liberated from the stifling effects of a restrictive theologically based ideology. Seventh-day Adventist creationism would very much benefit by being liberated from a restrictive fundamentalist-based ideology. ■

Too Hot to Touch:

The Double Standard in Adornment

J. DAVID NEWMAN

Seventh-day Adventists are not against adornment, only against certain forms of adornment. For example, one of the devotional speakers at an Annual Council that I participated in was a woman. She wore a simple dress. Tied neatly around her neck was a beautiful scarf. Skin showed above and below the scarf. If she had substituted a string of pearls for the scarf many, if not most, of the audience would not have heard a word she said. In fact, she would not have been chosen to speak if it were known that she wore pearls.

However, there is no difference in function between the pearls and the scarf. Both served the same purpose—to complement the attire. And yes, since they are not necessary they both are adornment. If a person hangs a gold pendant around the neck it is adornment. If the same person pins that gold pendant to a dress it becomes a brooch and is now acceptable, but it is still adornment.

Not only are Adventists against certain forms of adornment, they are also for other kinds of adornment. The only function that a necktie serves is adornment. It is not necessary to cover one's nakedness. It does not warm the body. Rather it constricts the neck, takes time to tie, mops up food, and costs lots of money. It is so culturally accepted that we never give the tie a second thought as adornment.

If we were to follow the definition of adornment given by Dr. Angel Rodriguez in his book *Jewelry* we would have to all shed our ties. He defines jewelry as "ornaments made of different materials, with different functions, that can be placed directly on the body or on the garments of a person in order to enhance the appearance of the individual, establish social distinctions, and communicate personal convictions." If we followed this definition, we would have to ban neckties, pocket handkerchiefs, brooches, scarves, cuff links, tie pins, lace collars, and other accessories, since none of these items are necessary to be clothed.

So how did we get into this fix? Some say ornamental jewelry is out, while functional jewelry is OK. Who decided that? Others say "if it is on the skin it is a sin" but "if on the lapel wear it well." Who decided that? On what basis have we drawn up a very narrow list of what is not acceptable when it comes to adornment? Is it possible that the inconsistencies—the double standards—are doing more harm than good when it comes to teaching people about simplicity and modesty?

This issue of adornment has been with us right from our earliest days. The General Conference in its Session of 1866 forbade women from wearing the following items: plumes, feathers, flowers, and all superfluous bonnet ornaments; every species of gold, silver, coral, pearl, rubber, and hair jewelry; ribbons; cording; braid; embroidery; buttons; and low-necked dresses. Men were required not to color or trim their beards. Mustaches and goatees were specifically excluded as inappropriate for men to "adorn the face."

At one time removing jewelry was part of the baptismal instructions for people entering the church. The 1932 Church Manual listed 21 questions for individuals preparing for baptism. Number 17 asked: "In matters of dress will you follow the Bible rule of plainness and simplicity, abstaining from the wearing of gold as ornaments and costly array, observing the principles of modesty and Christian dignity?"

This requirement for baptism was dropped in the 1942 Church Manual when the list of 21 questions was pruned down to just 11 questions. And it has never been reinstated in the baptismal questions. This is why there is still confusion on this subject. The removing of certain forms of adornment is a teaching of the church, like vegetarianism, not a requirement of the church. That is, if you agree that the baptismal questions represent the minimum requirements for joining the church.

Bible and adornment

But doesn't the Bible condemn adornment, including jewelry? The problem lies in the selective use of our traditional Bible texts on jewelry. For example, 1 Timothy 2:9, 10 says too much: "I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God." The text says that women are not to wear gold. We do not teach that. We allow gold eye glasses, pins, broaches, watch bands, wedding rings, and so on. We interpret "gold" to mean a few items such as rings and necklaces. We allow braided hair. We allow pearls if they are sewed on to the dress. We have never defined what expensive clothes are.

When interpreting Scripture we must read it in its context. Is Paul writing a treatise on adornment? No. He is giving counsel on how to worship God. In the verse (8) just before, he wants men to lift their hands in prayer. It seems to me that we teach the opposite today. Then in verses 11-15 he covers how women should or should not participate in worship.

The gospel brought a liberating philosophy to people and the culture. Paul said to the Galatians, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28). Women had been subjected to all kinds of indignities. They could not even worship together with men. Now they were stirring themselves. Paul says, in essence, "Be careful. Don't go too fast. Yes, I understand your needs, but you will have more influence if you dress appropriately for

worship and don't fight your culture in the worship service by demanding equal participation with men."

Paul's letter to Timothy discusses various problems in the church: people teaching false doctrines and creating dissensions (1:3, 4); false views on marriage and diet (4:3, 4); mistreatment of elderly parents and grandparents (5:1-16); fair treatment of church leaders (5:17-20); and problems in worship (2:1-15), of which overdressing had become more important than a worshipful spirit.

Because of space limitations I cannot deal with all the texts we commonly use to support our stand against certain forms of jewelry, except to say that when read in context none of them are forbidding the permanent use of adornment.

Old Testament texts

Isaiah 3:16-23 is another passage that says too much for us. We are so uncomfortable with these verses that almost every book I have read by an Adventist author stops partway through this section. Rodriguez, as well as other Adventist commentators, tries to prove too much from this passage. He says "Isaiah's attack on jewelry, which we have mentioned several times, was a condemnation of jewelry as a religious and social symbol and as an expression of pride."

He rules out the use of necklaces and rings from this passage but does not say whether he believes the use of "fine robes and capes and cloaks, purses, mirrors, linen garments and shawls" are also wrong. I know of no biblical principle that allows us to take a passage where all the items are under the ban of God and then grant an indulgence to some of them.

When you read the passage in context you find that it is part of a larger judgment being pronounced on Jerusalem and Judah. While God is stripping the haughty women of their adornments he is also stripping Judah of food and water (verse 1), the young rise up against the old (verse 5), and men will fall by the sword (verse 25).

God is not saying any of the items listed in the passage is wrong. He simply talks about their misuse for power, oppression and vanity. It was the misuse of these items, not their use, that God was against.

Sinai rebellion

"When the people heard these distressing words, they began to mourn and no one put on any ornaments. For the Lord had said to Moses, 'Tell the Israelites, "You are a stiff-necked people. If I were to go with you even for a moment, I might destroy you. Now take off your ornaments and I will decide what to do with you."' So the Israelites stripped off their ornaments at Mount Horeb." (Exod 33:4-6).

This passage is one of the key sources quoted as indicating God's disapproval of ornaments. What is the context?

1. The children of Israel had given their jewelry to Aaron to make the golden calf (Exod 32:2-4).

2. They worshiped this calf instead of the true God (verse 6).

3. God told the people he could no longer go with them, for they were a "stiff-necked people" and he might "destroy" them (33:3).

4. The people began to mourn and take off their ornaments because God told them to remove these ornaments until he decided what to do with them.

In the days of Jeremiah, God's people also rebelled against him. Again God used the same language. "They were stiff-necked and did more evil than their forefathers" (Jer 7:27). But this time, instead of telling them to strip off their ornaments he commands them, "cut off your hair and throw it away" (verse 29), and he continues, "take up a lament on the barren heights, for the Lord has rejected and abandoned this generation that is under his wrath."

The argument is used that the "ornament" command must still apply today, because we still use ornaments and therefore we must take them off just as God commanded the Israelites. If this argument is valid we would then, to be consistent, have to apply the same principle to Jeremiah 7:29 and tell people that they must also cut off their hair when repenting, since we all still wear hair and we still mourn.

Why did God ask the Israelites to strip themselves of their ornaments? They had just used those same ornaments to make a false god, and just as God poured out plagues on the symbols of the false gods of Egypt (river, frogs, flies and more) he again made the symbols of false gods objects of his wrath. They took off their ornaments as a sign of mourning, of sorrow, of repentance. There is no indication that this injunction was permanent. Indeed, just a short while later Moses was asking for donations from those same ornaments to construct the tabernacle.

Positive side of jewelry

There is a place in Scripture where God actually commands his people to wear jewelry. When God spoke to Moses at the burning bush he gave this command, which has been strangely overlooked: "Every woman shall borrow of her neighbor, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your son, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians" (Exod 3:22).

How do we erase our double standard on adornment which has caused and still causes so much grief and argument, especially when directed chiefly against women? We can either develop a comprehensive list, omitting nothing, or we can teach the principles and leave it to each person to decide how to apply the principle.

Ellen White sums up how to deal with jewelry, not by making up lists and standards, but by leading people to Jesus. She talks about those who try to pick the ornaments off other people: "Talk of Christ, and when the heart is converted, everything that is out of harmony with the Word of God will drop off. It is only labor in vain to pick leaves off a living tree. The leaves will only reappear. The ax must be laid at the root of the tree, and then the leaves will fall off, never to return" (*Evangelism*).

If we leave it up to God to convince people regarding what is appropriate adornment, we will have got rid of our double standard. ■

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DANIEL 9: Putting the Focus on Jesus

A Comment on the Sabbath School Lesson for April 27-May 3, 2002, "Daniel 9: The Coming of the Messiah"

ALDEN THOMPSON

For those who worry about the loss of traditional "Adventist" interpretations, Daniel 9 is at least as scary as Daniel 8. The 1844 movement was born out of the conviction that the time for the cleansing or renewal of the sanctuary (Oct. 22, 1844) is established by linking the 70-weeks prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27) with the 2300-days prophecy of Daniel 8:14. Whereas we have always stood alone in our interpretation of Daniel 8, we once had lots of good company in our interpretation of Daniel 9. Now most of those friends have vanished.

Although the interpretation of Daniel 8 and 9 presents numerous puzzling challenges, Adventists have never been alone in linking the two chapters together. The linkage is based on solid arguments from the text. In both chapters Gabriel is the angelic interpreter; 9:21 and 9:23 refer to an antecedent "vision," logically the vision of chapter 8; the sanctuary is the focal point of both chapters; and, finally, the period in 8:14, the 2300 days, is the only feature left unexplained in chapter 8.

However, if scholars from every school of interpretation agree in linking the two chapters together, they quickly part company when interpreting the 70-weeks prophecy itself. That diversity is even reflected in modern translations of the Bible. In so-called "mainstream" Protestant communities, that is, in the more "liberal" churches that are less inclined to talk about the return of Jesus and the end of the world, Daniel 9:24-27 is interpreted as focusing on Antiochus Epiphanes and his desecration of the Jerusalem temple (168-67 B.C.). On such a view, the text has no application whatsoever to Jesus Christ. That is the interpretation suggested (dictated?) by the New Revised Standard Version.

Dispensationalist evangelical communities take quite a different approach, typically interpreting the first 69 weeks as extending to Christ's triumphal entry, but moving the 70th week to the end of time, where it is marked off at the beginning by the secret coming of Christ (rapture) and at the end by Jesus' public return. During that 70th week, Palestine is the focal point of the political and religious turmoil described in 9:24-27.

Meanwhile, supporters of the traditional Reformation view (our fellow-travelers in Daniel 9) are becoming ever more scarce. Sir Isaac Newton, in his commentary on Daniel, described the prophecy of Daniel 9:24-47 as "the foundation stone of the Christian religion." Very few Christians would now agree with him on that point; at least very few would see any reference to the death of Christ in Daniel 9. In the standard dispensationalist interpretation, the classic King James Version phrase, "in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease," is no longer applied to the death of Christ, but to the cessation of sacrifice in the restored Jerusalem temple.

Even if one holds to the traditional Reformation interpretation of Daniel 9, the complications multiply. Adventists begin the seventy weeks in 458-57 B.C. and end them in A.D. 34. However, those particular dates were first proposed (apparently) by Johann Funck (d. 1566) in the Reformation era. Today, commentators are far from unanimous in their choice of starting dates. There are at least three popular alternative dates for the restoration "decree" of Daniel 9:25: 538 (Cyrus), 458/57 (Artaxerxes), and 445 (Artaxerxes). What may be even more troubling for traditionalists is the fact that it is virtually impossible to find a modern reference work that dates the crucifixion at A.D. 31. Most scholars, regardless of their theological assumptions, place it somewhere between A.D. 27 and 32 and leave it at that.

So, now, let's be "practical" in the light of all those "technical" challenges to the traditional interpretation. What is likely to happen in Adventist churches around the world? What is already happening? Here are some "facts of life":

1. Lack of Interest. The detailed study of the prophecy of Daniel 9 is virtually ignored by the vast majority of Adventists, and interest in the traditional interpretation will continue to wane. Every week thousands join the church with only the barest knowledge of Daniel 9 if they know anything at all.

2. Lack of Competence. A few years ago, the U.S. Department of Education literacy survey showed that 47 percent of all adults in the United States "cannot read dense, continuous text." If half the adults in America can't handle Romans or Matthew, what will they do with Daniel 9? William Miller took his Bible and concordance and immersed himself in the study of Scripture for two years. For his day, he developed admirable competence in Bible study, even if we might part company with him in some of his methods.

Even if there were a comparable level of interest today combined with good reading skills, the question still remains: Who has the ability to master the Hebrew of Daniel 9 and to mount a convincing argument for a particular interpretation? The Hebrew of Daniel 9 is some the most difficult in all of the Old Testament. Any way you look at it, very few Adventists could study it out for

themselves. Should the rest of us simply adopt the conclusions of the few and have the church mandate that all Adventists "believe" them? That might work for Roman Catholics, but that's not the Adventist way.

So what is the Adventist way? First, it must be biblical, rooted in Scripture. Second, it must be simple, yet capable of sophisticated development. All that is there in our heritage, just waiting to be applied. In that connection, I have two specific suggestions.

1. Focus on Jesus and His Ministry, Rather Than on Dates. In the traditional Adventist interpretation of Daniel 8 and 9, the 2300-day prophecy directs our attention to the heavenly sanctuary and to Jesus' ministry on our behalf; the 70-weeks prophecy points to Jesus' sacrificial death. The reality of those events is now much more important than the dates themselves. While keeping our primary focus on Jesus' sacrifice and ministry, we can also recognize that the prophecies of the 2300 days and 70 weeks lie at the heart of our birth story. When telling our story, we should use the Bible of our pioneers (King James Version) and show how they came to their conclusions. We would use their texts, their dates, not moving a pin. It's the story of our birth and we don't need to be ashamed of it. But our primary focus must always be on what Jesus has done and continues to do for his people.

2. The Covenant. My second suggestion is just as important: a call for the rediscovery of the original covenant used when Adventists organized our local conference (Michigan) in 1861. Apparently the covenant was also recommended for use in the formation of local churches. Normally I'm not keen on signed statements of belief. Adventists have always been opposed to any creed other than the Bible. However, that first "covenant" is a statement I would gladly sign: "We, the undersigned, hereby associate ourselves together, as a church, taking the name, Seventh-day Adventists, covenanting to keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus Christ [Rev 14:12]."

Throughout the world, the bond that holds Adventists together consists of God's law, which gives us structure, and Jesus, who gives us hope. At the practical level of day-to-day living, dates and time prophecies are virtually irrelevant. When I first became seriously interested in messianic prophecy I was startled to discover a similar reality in the New Testament era. Here are my conclusions:

A. The messianic hope in Jesus' day apparently was not based on time prophecies. Given our interest in time prophecies, we have too readily assumed they are implied in the New Testament by such phrases as "the time is fulfilled" (Mark 1:15) and "when the fullness of the time had come" (Gal 4:4). But there is virtually no evidence in the New Testament itself or in early literature outside the Bible that the time prophecies (including the 70 weeks of Daniel 9) were a key factor in the messianic hope.

B. Jesus exploded popular views of the Messiah—and was rejected as a result. The New Testament clearly shows that Jesus' message flew in the face of popular messianic expectations. Jesus' opponents had good Scriptural support for their hopes of a conquering hero: Balaam's "star" would crush every enemy in sight (Num 24:17); Isaiah's "shoot" from the stump of Jesse would "strike the earth with the rod of his mouth" and "kill the wicked" with the "breath of his lips" (Isa 11:4).

There are plenty more where those came from. When Jesus declared that he had come, not to kill his enemies, but to die, the people rejected him; even his own disciples deserted him. In short, Jesus' first coming was a "Great Disappointment." Everyone had expected the Messiah; the real question was not if, whether, or when. No, the real question was: What kind of Messiah? Only after the resurrection did the truth of the Suffering One break through to their hearts. I suspect a truth is lurking there that we need to hear.

In conclusion, I have one more word about birthdays, anniversaries and other such events. The first coming of Christ as God incarnate and the birth of our own Advent movement are both crucial events for those of us who call ourselves Adventists. As I suggested above, however, the reality of the events is now much more important than the dates.

I have an example close to home that helps me keep such priorities straight. You see, because the records in Buckley, Washington, are not clear, my dad was never sure whether he was born in 1914 or 1915. I'm quite certain of the fact of my dad's birth; we celebrated his birthday regularly. But none of us ever knew for sure when it actually happened. I look at prophetic dates in somewhat the same way: The realities are clear even if the dates are not.

I now live in hope of another event, a future one, resting on the good promises of one who lived among us, died, rose from the dead, and said he would come back to take us home. That's precious stuff. You can't take it away from me. ■

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FURTHER READING

Alden Thompson, "The Best Story in the Old Testament: The Messiah," in Who's Afraid of the Old Testament God?

"The Great Disappointment(s)." Adventist Review. Sept. 24, 1992. Also available online at: homepages .wwc.edu/staff/thomal.

Coming of Age

Reading Chaim Potok

GLEN GREENWALT

Chaim Potok, the Jewish rabbi and novelist, died today. Potok's first novels, *The Chosen* (1967), *The Promise* (1969), and *My Name is Asher Lev* (1972) span the pivotal years I was a student at Walla Walla College. His urban, Hasidic world of brownstones, taxis, bagels and lox, earlocks, and Torah was about as foreign to my world of rural farmhouses, pickups, range beef, and crew cuts as a Montana farm boy could imagine. Yet in reading Potok's stories I became conscious for the first time of being an Adventist.

I lack the skill and the space to bring the plots and characters of Potok's stories to life. Suffice it to say, Potok characters confront decisions that push the boundaries of the Hasidic tradition while leading them to uncover the deepest values and meanings of the tradition. My own world was never as narrowly defined as the closed, Hasidic world of Potok's characters, but the parallels were strong. We put away all secular books and magazines on Sabbath, so that only Adventist literature showed, and we tried to have morning worship and evening lesson study, but were usually not successful. We were always at church and prayer meeting, and we never missed Ingathering. The difference between my world and that of the characters in Potok's stories was that none of our neighbors were Adventists, nor was my dad's closest friend. And most telling, none of my mother's relatives were Adventist, which inevitably raised boundary issues at Christmas, New Year's, and Easter.

The outside world also came into our home in the form of *Life* and *Look* magazines, until the pastor had a sermon about Christian purity and made a point of addressing the dangers of the half-dressed starlets that populated the covers and stories of these papers. But we still took *National Geographic* and *Popular Mechanics*, which offered their own windows on the world.

Potok's stories are all about the impossibility of a subculture to remain isolated from its umbrella culture. Our academies and to some extent our colleges once tried the path of isolation. We originally built our schools in rural areas and prohibited access to radios and television. But that has changed. The cities have built up around our schools, and school officials have given up policing radios and televisions. After all, students always had access to ideas foreign and even antithetical to Adventism via the school library and the contraband that flooded into the dorms after town and home leaves.

For a community that has long prided itself on its sectarianism, the question arises then, "How can the church retain its identity as Adventist when the lives of its members are thoroughly enmeshed in the life of the wider culture?"

I don't claim to have a full answer to this question. What I do know is that recent moves in the direction of policing theology professors and pruning membership lists are bound to fail. At best, all that such tribunals accomplish is to drive creative thinking and action at the boundaries of a community underground, where it does more damage than when it is in the open, or they drive good people from leadership and even membership in the church. At worst they leave irreparable scars where families, colleagues and friends are torn apart. Jesus warned of this when he said to leave the tares until the harvest because their roots were enmeshed with the wheat.

When Potok was asked why he remained a member of the Jewish faith when the tradition of his birth shunned him, and his own personal integrity demanded openness to the outer world, his answer was illuminative for Adventists who fear the encroachment of the outside world. He replied that in the first place, he had no alternative. Jewish life was simply who he was. It was the community of his birth. His family and closest friends were Jewish. His thought world was shaped and formed by Jewish schools until he was an adult. Moreover, Potok said, he remained a Jew because he found an alternative to the narrowness of Jewish fundamentalism within the Jewish tradition itself. "Had there been no alternative," he told Terry Gross in a 1986 interview, "as James Joyce was faced by his Catholicism, I would have left Judaism entirely. I had an alternative. I had a nonfundamentalist reading of Judaism. I did not have to go the way of James Joyce."

Fortunately, Adventism still contains a rich variety of viewpoints and lifestyles within its membership. However painful the differences, Montana farmers and their physician daughters and physical therapist sons still belong to the same church, even though they likely attend very different churches. If the church is to be a church of all people, including the strangers we unwittingly become to each other as the result of education and life experiences, then we must find a way to embrace our differences without fear of losing our identity.

The practice of art helps me imagine a model for how this might take place. In the first place, from the perspective of art, images are extremely resilient to a loss of identification, even when subject to a great deal of transformation. Think of looking in the mirror each morning. We clearly recognize ourselves. But the picture in the photo album from 10 years ago records a quite different face. Yet we clearly see that it is our face. Or think of Picasso's famous image of a steer's head made of a bicycle seat and handlebars. A child can tell it is the image of a steer. The point is that we recognize and identify things because of the brain's power to locate common shapes and patterns in

the myriad details that bombard it. Without this power to draw associations between differing stimuli, every thing we saw would be an entirely new entity.

The fact is that most of the issues that distinguish one Adventist from another are so minor that they are indistinguishable to those outside the tradition. If we thought of Adventism like an artist, or novelist or poet might, rather than as a trial lawyer would, we would recognize the multitude of things that comprise our shared identity. Candles on Friday night. Popcorn and apples on Saturday night. FriChik. Sundown tables. Pathfinders. Union College. Ellen White. Camp meeting. Ingathering. Second Coming. State of the dead. Sanctuary. And the list could go on and on. Even when we fight over things like the interpretation of Daniel 8, movie attendance (which is pretty much a dead issue among most Adventists), dancing and so on, we fight over issues and values we hold in common. Strangers see us as one people. We need to see ourselves the same.

Secondly, great art is never fully delineated. Ambiguities, blurred boundaries, tension between lines, shapes and values, skewed perspectives and the like always exist—even in the most realistic art of the masters. This is intentional. Leonardo da Vinci is credited with discovering that images look more lifelike and dynamic when the boundaries between lines, planes, tones and color are left distinct. This is because the eye does not see as a camera. It is constantly changing its perspective, its focus of attention, and the aperture of the lens opening. And most of what we see has already moved by the time its image is recorded in our brain. We see in passing what is no longer even there.

The great artists are distinguished by their ability to capture the essential form and expression of things without getting bogged down with the peripheral. Conversely, amateur art is either so detailed that not a hair on the head is missing or so general that the head of the farmer is indistinguishable from the cabbage he is carrying. Yet, in either case, pictures look artificial and dead. Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Rembrandt and the other masters, on the other hand, are able to create a living person, a tree, a monumental palace or a farmer's hut with scarcely a handful of lines. The difference between the work of amateurs and masters is that masters capture the essence of things whereas amateurs get bogged down or overcome with the details.

As Adventists we need more than bland generalities and more than a paint-by-number image of ourselves. We need a living portraiture of ourselves. Perhaps this means we need fewer administrators, theologians and lawyers to define our identity and more artists who can help us sing, dance, laugh and cry our identity. We can never make enough rules and laws to hold ourselves together, any more than we can make enough rules and laws to hold a marriage together or make blacks love whites or Jews respect Palestinians. Relationships are not maintained by legal codes. In contrast, rules of art, like the laws of nature, are shorthand descriptions of life itself. This is perhaps what Jesus was talking about when he told those bent on stoning the woman caught in adultery that their teaching produced judgment and death, whereas his teaching makes alive. The eye of an artist is reflected throughout Jesus' teaching.

In nature we find established structures, but they are not those imposed by creeds, legal codices or engineering blueprints. No two of anything are exactly the same. And nothing that is remains forever the same. Yet we have no trouble identifying apple trees and distinguishing them from other trees. Nor are most of us interested in reducing biodiversity to a few easily understood and controlled specimens.

Why should we treat religious faith differently? If we believe that the God who created the birds of the air and the lilies of the field also created human beings with all of our diversity, why not pursue what is beautiful, excellent, and life-affirming wherever we find it? And who knows, perhaps we should even create sanctuaries in the church to preserve specimens of apparently toxic faith, as biologists preserve lethal viruses for the possible undiscovered benefits they may contain. Jesus, after all, kept Judas in his circle, and many a heretic killed is a prophet mourned.

"How can the church retain its identity as Adventist when the lives of its members are thoroughly enmeshed in the life of the wider culture?" I don't claim to have a full answer to this question. What I do know is that recent moves in the direction of policing theology professors and pruning membership lists are bound to fail. At best, all that such tribunals accomplish is to drive creative thinking and action at the boundaries of a community underground, where it does more damage than when it is in the open.

Because of Chaim Potok I think often about my place in the world as an Adventist. Adventism is richer in my mind because Potok dared to explore the boundaries of his Jewish faith. He will be missed. ■

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LUCERNE FRENCH SNIPES

Twenty-five years ago Stanley Fish saved me from worshipping an idol: "principle" as "The Truth." We turn "principle" into "Principle" when we exaggerate the status of ideas abstracted from experience. When we assume that our Principles are unchanging, transcendent standards, not situated in experience, we cross the line from worshipping God to worshipping our Beliefs. Those who wouldn't worship God, in any case, can still make the mistake of worshipping Principle. So the trouble with principle is what we do with it.

BOOK SELECTION:

Fish, Stanley. "The Trouble With Principle." Harvard University Press, 1999.

Once we have idolized Principle we fall into two camps: the believers and the skeptics. The believers have The Truth and are intolerant of untruths. The skeptics, suspending judgment until The Truth is undeniable, in the meantime worship the Principle of Tolerance. Both camps require transcendent Truth. Holding out for The Truth is an endorsement of Principle, the mirror image of believing one "has" The Truth. Skeptics will abandon their relativism once they too "have" The Truth.

In his book *The Trouble With Principle*, Stanley Fish once again exposes the either/or dilemma we create for ourselves. Rather than succumb to the tyranny of Absolutist Truth, we overreact with Relativism. But both extremes, despite appeals to transcendent Principle, are disguises of political positions and power plays, because even our abstractions are earthly products, framed in language derived from experience. And so, if it is politics all the way down, and all principle is situated, let's admit it and reconsider how we make commitments.

A lawyer as well as a literary critic and Milton scholar, Fish devotes much of *The Trouble With Principle* to freedom of speech and the separation of church and state. Another reviewer might focus on the legal analysis that comprises several of these essays. But the underlying purpose, which unifies this collection, is to expose the political nature of Relativism. Once relativism is understood as the mirror opposite of absolutism, Fish comes on strong. He calls his target relativists Liberals, which is misleading, because he often takes stands that could be called politically liberal (he favors affirmative action, for example). "My target," writes Fish, "is never liberalism in the sense of a set of particular political positions on debated issues; rather my target is Liberalism with a capital L, that is, liberalism as an effort to bracket metaphysical or religious views...." Fish is really attacking the deification of Tolerance (that is, Relativism) as it paralyzes people when they need to take a stand.

When we take a stand, Fish explains, we need not invoke Absolute Truth. Instead, we acknowledge that, although our knowledge is limited and our information will probably change, to not take a stand would be wrong. To be paralyzed by "mere opinion" is to refuse responsibility, a political position Fish deplores. Situated as we are, we are where the action is, and to refuse to act until our decisions can be unsituated, ratified by absolute Principle, is to cop out. Fish believes that "in a world where nothing is fixed or permanent and the relationship between present urgencies and ultimate ends is continually changing, one must take one's constructs not less seriously...but more seriously. For if we wait for constructs that are in touch with eternity, we will fail to act in moments when action is possible for limited creatures."

Although Fish has been called a relativist, and he may have been one in his reader-response days, he acknowledged in class 25 years ago that he had changed. He recognized the paralyzing effects of relativism years ago. *The Trouble With Principle* is about moral judgment and responsible action, but it reverses the location of morality from theory to politics: "Politics, interest, partisan conviction, and belief are the locations of morality. It is in and through them that one's sense of justice and of the 'good' lives and is put into action. Immorality resides in the mantras of liberal theory—fairness, impartiality, and mutual respect—all devices for painting the world various shades of gray."

If, as Fish says, theory is the liberal's game, and "liberals don't have to win the theory game in order to win; all they have to do is get antiliberals to play it," one wonders if Fish, the antiliberal, hasn't played in vain. Nevertheless, Fish argues strongly and invokes the authoritative example of his specialty, John Milton, because Milton's view is also "alien to the modern liberal Enlightenment picture of cognitive activity in which the mind is conceived of as a calculating and assessing machine that is open to all thoughts and closed to none." At the outset, Fish tells us he is "with Milton," whose view "is exactly the reverse" of liberalism. "One's consciousness must be grounded in an originary act of faith—a stipulation of basic value—from which determinations of right and wrong, relevant and irrelevant, real and unreal, will then follow." And "Satan is the very type of those who would reason before they believe." And, in case you still suspect Fish of relativism, he invokes Dante, who cast liberals into the seventh level of hell.

Without a transcendent anchor, yet with passionate belief, Fish acknowledges that his thesis is "resisted by both the right and the left." As long as Principle is given transcendent status, Fish's alternative view of situated principles which can change may seem relativistic. "To be sure," says Fish, "the process is circular, but as the operation of a dictionary is circular.... It is beliefs that alter beliefs...and among the beliefs internal to any structure will be a belief as to what might be a reason for its own revision."

Stanley Fish is dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He is also the author of *How Milton Works*, *Surprised by Sin* and *There's No Such Thing as Free Speech, and It's a Good Thing Too.* ■