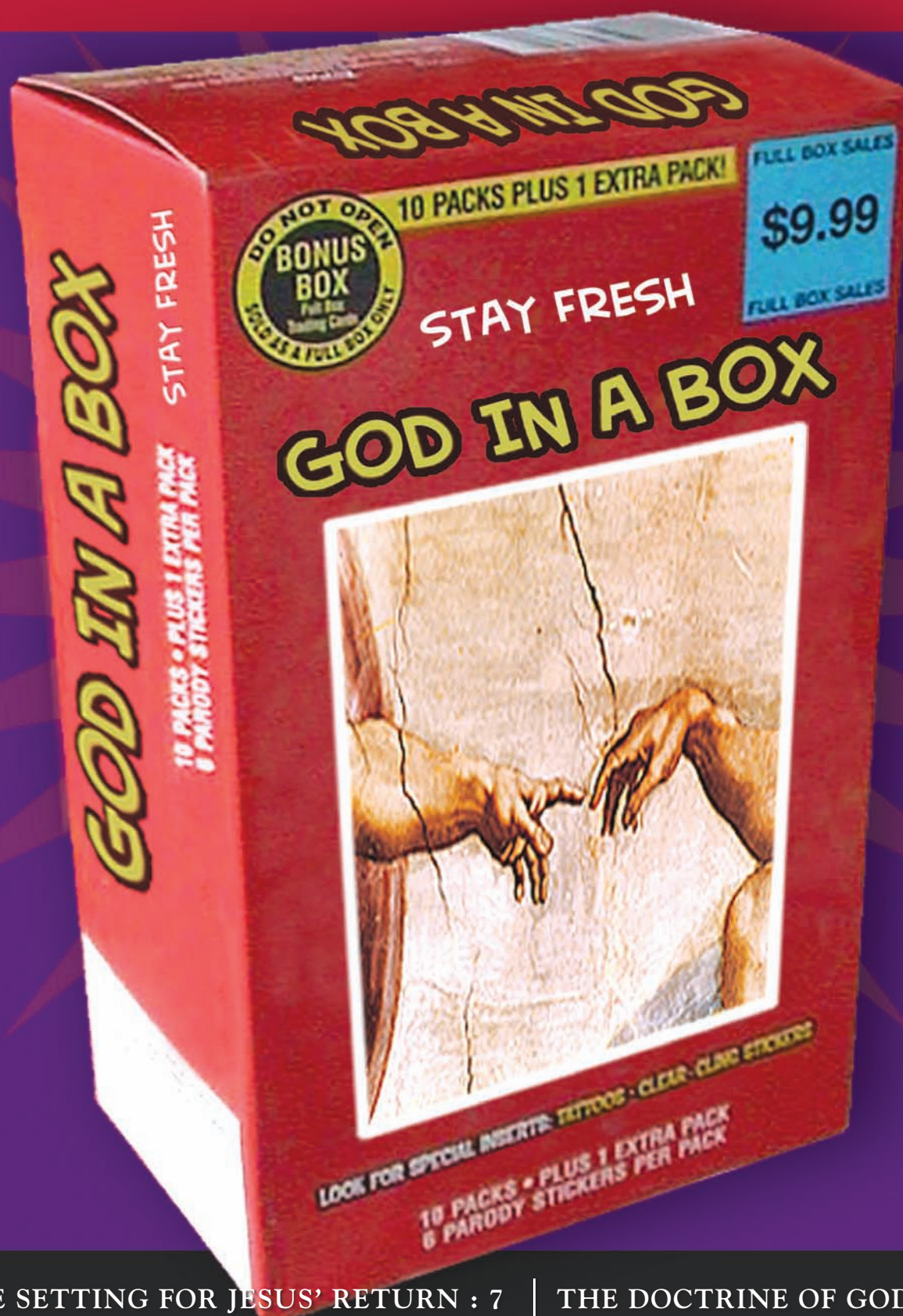


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Editorial | John McLarty

Speaking of God

Some years ago I read Martin Weber's book *Who's Got the Truth?*, where he analyzes the work of several Adventist theologians. These theologians strongly disagree with one another on various points, but each has brought a life-sweetening understanding of God to thousands — perhaps tens of thousands — of readers and listeners.

» So how shall we speak of God? We recount the parts of the Bible story that connect most strongly with our own soul hunger and mental culture.

Weber analyzes each theologian in the light of the “real truth” about God—which just happens to coincide with Weber's own beliefs. The tacit answer to the book's title is clear: the one with the truth is Weber! The question then arises, if even these brilliant theologians can't come to a shared vision of God, how dare any of us presume to speak about God?

One reason theologians differ is the variety within the Bible itself. While most of us hunger for coherence, it is impossible to draw a straight line or even a smooth curved line that connects all the dots of biblical data. So in our attempts to come up with a single, comprehensible story line, we have to massage the biblical data. We are forced to discount or radically reinterpret certain passages that don't fit our elegant theories.

A second reason theologians differ is that the process of selection and emphasis is inescapably subjective. Who we are affects what we see in Scripture. God is either similar to an idealized version of ourselves and our community, or God is the opposite of what we see in the mirror. Either way, our reading of Scripture and our vision of God will be strongly shaped by our own character and personality.

One ancient tradition in Christian theology emphasizes how humans differ from God. We are greedy; he is generous. We are hateful; he is loving. We are corrupt; he is pure. We are fickle; he is constant. Key passages for this view are Isaiah 40, with its exalted vision of God, and Romans 3, with its grim anthropology.

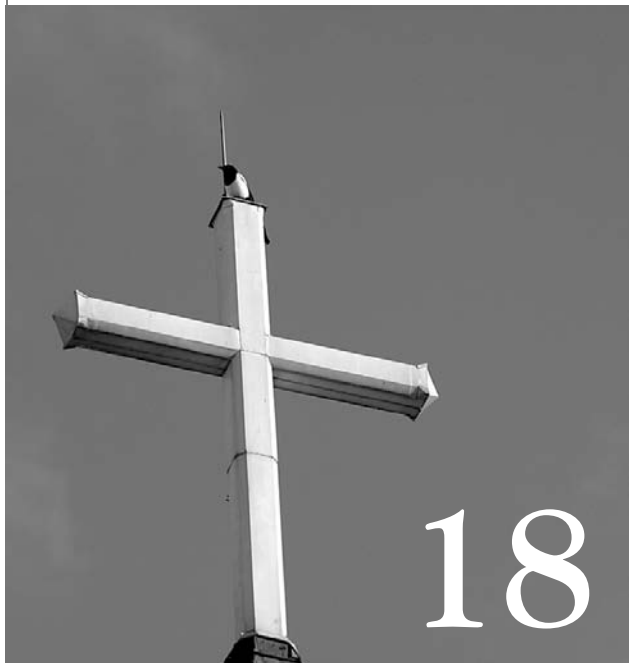
Another ancient tradition emphasizes the closeness of God and humanity. We were made in God's image. God is like the best of human fathers, shepherds, and kings. God is like nursing mothers and mother hens. Instead of focusing on the separation caused by sin, this approach focuses on the promise and possibility of union with God. We are destined to become God's friends and reign with him.

A person can't sing two songs at once. Theologians can't very well present two contrary theories of the nature of reality simultaneously. Effective preachers anchor their preaching in a single dominant theme. And that theme is connected with the experience and mindset of the preacher.

So how shall we speak of God? We recount the parts of the Bible story that connect most strongly with our own soul-hunger and mental culture.

Easy, memorable stories will inspire us in worship and be useful in presenting to others a healing vision of God. The job of preachers and all believers is to learn to tell the story of God in simple, comprehensible ways. But having found a story that “works,” you ought to honor the passages of Scripture that are apparently irreconcilable with your story. Don't explain them away. Instead recognize that these passages, at the very least, remind us that our understanding is limited, if not flawed.

The best way to speak of God is to bear witness to what you have come to understand through study, reflection, and action. If you will give voice to your very own understanding of God, you will discover the joy that comes from being an agent of spiritual birth. Through your eyes someone else will finally see God. When this happens, remember that the power of your storytelling is not proof of its absolute correctness. It is evidence of goodness of God. And that is the point of speaking.



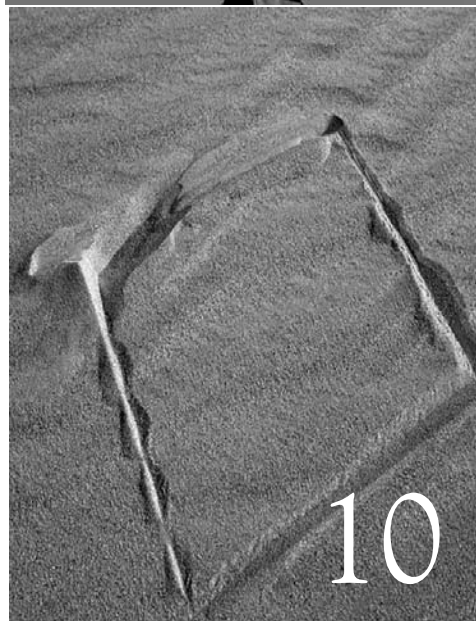
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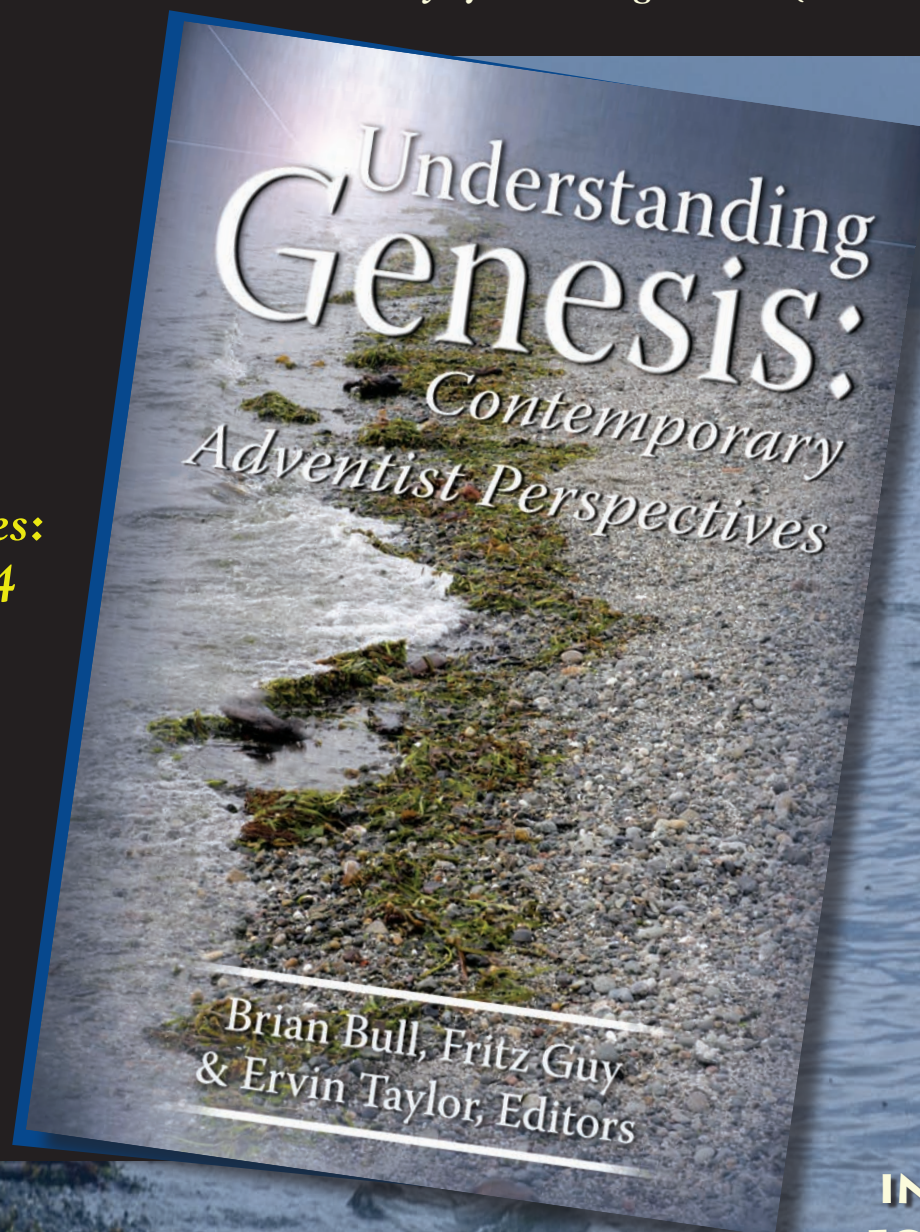
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letters

READERS RESPOND

LETTERS PRO AND CON

We received the March/April 2006 issue of AT and found both the content and the look exceptional. AT is so fair, printing the letters pro and con. As I recall, this is how the *Review* started under James White, with the pros and the cons printed for readers. This is so respectful, as it credits us with the ability to think for ourselves and not have everything screened and censored. Thanks, too, for keeping us up to date on Andrews. We think that your broadcast of information certainly had an influence on the outcome. Most of all, thanks for being there to ensure that Dr. Ford had the opportunity to speak. We want to continue to support AT and the very important influence it and the organization have on Progressive Adventism and the hope it provides for us who have been on the journey for a long time!

Edwin and Mariellyn Hill - Via the Internet

RENAISSANCE AT MONTEREY

Joan and John Hughson's brief reporting of the Twelfth Spiritual Renaissance Retreat in Monterey (AT March/April) brought back some good, warm memories. While this retreat was my first, it certainly will not be my last! What a neat way to spend New Year's weekend! Every one of the presenters was encouraging and thought provoking; and Des Ford being there (or rather, nearby) was the frosting on the cake! He is certainly among the finest of SDA theologians. As one of the other presenters exclaimed after one of Des's talks, "That wasn't preaching – that was worship!" Thanks to Pastor and Mrs. Hughson, as well as to AT, for all their efforts to make Renaissance successful.

John Tangen - Angwin, California

GETTING THE BIG PICTURE

We enjoy your publication so much. My husband, Ted, is a physician who works at the corporate office of Adventist Health System in Orlando. He is in charge of "Physician Mission," which means trying to get almost 7,000 doctors from all worldwide religions—Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, etc—working together in caring for the patients coming into the 37 AHS hospitals. So we enjoy your publication, which often addresses the "big" picture.

Ted and Jackie Hamilton - Winter Park, Florida

LINDA SHELTON AND 3ABN

I was raised in an Adventist home. I have never seen such an attack (Troubled 3ABN Fires Linda Shelton) on God's people such as you have written in your article. The shaking time is not only here but is started in our own denomination. Sister White said that our problems would not come from the world but from inside our own ranks. God knows the truth, as you write these things and why? I have always felt that Adventists should be building up the world and bringing people to the Cross of Jesus, not to be jealous of a person that is called of God like Danny Shelton. It disheartens me in a way that you will never know. May God continue to bless Linda in her life and especially the 3ABN family who have been called to be the light of the world.

R.F. Nicholls - Via the Internet

McLARTY ON INTELLECTUALISM

In his excellent article on Intellectual Adventism (March/April 2006), John McLarty writes about early Adventist intellectuals finding extra-biblical evidence for a crucial piece of the Sanctuary doctrine—that is, the date October 22, 1844. Some years ago I started looking for the source of the evidence for that "crucial piece" of doctrine. I started with Robert Olson's book *"101 Questions on the Sanctuary and on Ellen White,"* p 17, Ellen White Estate, March, 1981. It referred me to Dr. L. E. Froom's book *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, Vol. 4. Review and Herald 1945. Calendation drawings were noted on pages 790 and 792, showing the Karaite reckoning for the date October 22, 1844. However, no Karaite calendar was shown. Neither was there given any source of the calendar.

I wrote to the book editor of The Review and Herald. Mr. Gerald Wheeler promptly answered me and said: "L. E. Froom's *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers* was published so long ago that we have no records on it and everyone who worked on it is dead, but most likely a Review and Herald artist must have drawn the diagrams and charts.... We have no information about Karaite (sic) calendars or organizations." A Ph.D acquaintance of mine, who used to work at the General Conference, said if I wanted to get a straight answer, I should write to the Biblical Research Institute. I wrote to Dr. Rodriguez, asking him two questions: 1. Would you please send me a copy of an 1844 Karaite calendar? 2. If you don't have a copy of the calendar, please tell me where Dr. Froom got his information for his Karaite calendation? After 3 1/2 months they answered me with a form letter, which read: "At this time our Scholars are very busy and are unable to review your document (I only asked two questions, there was no document) or answer

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I have never seen such an attack (Troubled 3ABN Fires Linda Shelton) on God's people such as you have written in your article. The shaking time is not only here but is started in our own denomination. Sister White said that our problems would not come from the world but from inside our own ranks.

Letters

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Letters policy

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Adventist Today welcomes letters to the editor. Short, timely letters that relate to articles appearing in the journal have the best chance at being published. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. In publishing letters, *AT* does not necessarily endorse the views represented, but believes in giving voice to differing viewpoints. We prefer messages sent by e-mail, addressed to atoday@atoday.com. Please include your complete address and telephone number—even with e-mail messages. Send postal correspondence to Letters to the Editor, *Adventist Today*, P.O. Box 8026, Riverside, CA 92515-8026.

your questions.” They suggested that I contact local authorities.

Perhaps the scholars at BRI would be willing to answer these two questions for an AT reporter?

Roy Olson - Via the Internet

Comment on the editorial by John McLarty, “Mr. President, That’s Wrong” (Vol. 13, No. 6) and Nate Schilt’s Response (Vol. 14, No. 2)

In his scathing criticism of McLarty, Schilt concludes by hoping that there is room in the “progressive” Adventist tent for “even sharply divergent political views.” As one who helped articulate AT’s *raison d’être*, I want to remind Schilt that providing room for such dialogue is not a luxury; it’s a mandate if AT is to abide by its mission of “fairness” and “candor” in following the “canons of journalism.” I celebrate the clear vision on the Iraq war that characterizes these two pieces—one politically liberal, the other politically conservative.

Actually, these two pieces are a small war in themselves—a war of words. And Schilt is the winner in terms of volume (1,000 vs. 700 words) and colorfulness. Schilt’s piece is laced with such terms as anti-war screed, demonization, Leftist geopolitical agenda, uncritical acceptance, false dichotomies, and dogmatism. McLarty is a poor second: Individuals unfettered by law, use of torture and lawless detention, and conflict of ideas.

Beyond word use, of course, the primary issue is substance. There are four salient issues that divide these two AT leaders (the editor, and a member of both the Foundation and Endowment Boards).

IRAQ WAR AND TREATMENT OF DETAINEES

Here the contrasting visions are vivid: McLarty contends for a biblically based internationalism, Schilt for a biblically uninformed Americanism. The original editorial laments that President George Bush and Vice-president Richard Cheney want to revoke the right of Habeas Corpus for Guantanamo detainees and exempt the CIA from a ban on use of torture. McLarty quotes Scripture at length to show ancient Israel’s concern for law, particularly laws that protect the stranger and alien—an impressive array of Pentateuchal passages.

Schilt faults McLarty for beginning with the “false premise that terrorist detainees have preexisting rights grounded in U.S. law...” However, McLarty explicitly speaks of Habeas Corpus rights; this Latin term dates back to late medieval times, and as such is part of Western common law. Schilt appropriately picks up on McLarty’s sweeping criticisms of Bush’s “lawlessness” by indicating that it is perfectly lawful for the president to veto *any* bill—including

one that allows little latitude for CIA methods of punishment. Beyond the arguments’ niceties, the basic disagreement is over the superiority of following international and U.S. law, and allowing the nation’s executive branch considerable war-making powers.

SCRIPTURE USE

Schilt laments the “conscripting of Scripture to warrant a *fatwah* by the church against President Bush.” Further he criticizes McLarty for “decontextualized proof-texting.” However, these accusations are wrong unless we are to discount most all sermons and application of biblical principles to state actions.

Routinely preachers and theologians conscript, if you will, biblical passages and apply them to contemporary situations—in their parishioners’ lives and in the nation. They employ the appropriate practice of *selective retrieval*. Careful biblical scholars openly acknowledge the differences between the ancients’ lives and our own, and they seek for applicable principles. More popular writers such as McLarty would—if questioned—acknowledge such differences, but he makes immediate application. Schilt’s accusation of “proof-texting” is a pejorative term for describing a careless, even malicious, marshalling of Scripture for extrinsic ends. A more scholarly treatment of the topic would acknowledge that counter texts exist, that Israel often engaged in horrible treatment of aliens and enemies. However, an examination of McLarty’s biblical passages shows him anything but guilty of “proof-texting that would make a fundamentalist blush.”

CHURCH/STATE

A fundamental difference concerns whether it is proper for Christians, as Christians, to enter the political arena. Schilt questions McLarty’s “uncritical acceptance of the assumption that political convictions should be an extension of one’s religious faith.” Further, Schilt says that “exhortations for [President Bush] to execute his office in conformity with Christian principles are inconsistent with our form of government.”

True, McLarty does assume that political convictions should be an extension of one’s faith—and appropriately so. If Christians don’t enter the voting booth as Christians, under which ideological flag do they enter—secularists, professionals, political party devotee? If we are whole persons, and our religion is fundamental to who we are, how can we honestly make decisions about our nation apart from our core being? Schilt is absolutely right to distinguish between “personal righteousness and holy living” and the life and actions of nations. However, in every nation some moral values will prevail, and in a democracy it is the right of citizens to vote and

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Date Setting for Jesus' Return

Much as Seventh-day Adventists long for the return of Jesus, they have learned through sad experience to stop trying to predict the date of that great event. Responding to the anxious disciples shortly before his departure, Jesus said that the timing was entirely in his Father's hands; neither he nor the angels could say when (Matthew 24:36). Leaders of the maturing church likewise now leave that to God.

For some zealous Adventist church members like Dr. Richard G. Ruhling, a physician and a self-styled "Bible researcher," that is not enough. He had made several predictions through the past decades of a general nature ("within five years"), but recently he set an actual date. He sent e-mails to *Adventist Today* and hosted several Web sites to call attention to his calculations that since Noah's Flood came 2006 years after the creation of the world, this current year, 2006 A.D., should be ripe for the coming of Jesus. On April 17 he wrote, "This may be the last issue of *End-time News Digest*. . . . Since I believe there's less than a month till Christ's "knock," we must spend our time sharing light with those who have no clue to what's about to happen." Ruhling had arrived at the date of May 12-13 (Friday sunset to Saturday

sunset) as the time for a "mega-quake" (earthquake) that would initiate the apocalyptic events described in the Book of Revelation. He recommended that people who were impressed with his prediction should get together for prayer on Friday night, May 12, in anticipation of the great event.

Ruhling was treading on ground that would stop even the angels. However certain he was of his many lines of "evidence" regarding this proposed date, however, he hedged by saying to those who followed his advice: "If nothing happens, you did what you could and spent a profitable night in prayer."

Nothing happened except the night of prayer.

Two days later Ruhling sent the message, "I was wrong in my expectations of an earthquake. . . and I hope what I shared did not result in a regrettable situation for you. Please forgive me." But he still hedged, "It's possible that God would choose the end of the week instead of the beginning of the week." And in case that didn't materialize, he suggested that perhaps seven years more would be needed. In other words, despite the most tangible evidence possible that he was wrong in his date-setting, he remains unconvinced and unrepentant.

James Stirling is senior associate editor for Adventist Today and has long been interested in chronologies and dates.

Letters *Continued from page 6*

act. U.S. citizens have the constitutional right to religious liberty, and we believers have a Christian responsibility to make our nation more moral, according to our varying ethical lights.

MORAL CONCLUSIONS

Because some of our Christian convictions vary, our moral conclusions will sometimes differ. McLarty, in conclusion, argues: "By using torture and lawless detentions, we lose our moral standing. If we win the war against Al-Qaida by becoming lawless like Al-Qaida, it would be better to lose the war." Really, better to lose the war? I don't see that McLarty's basic rationale logically leads to this conclusion. Schilt is right to see the difference between the U.S.—however its current war making is construed—and "those who teach that ultimate self-fulfillment and service to God consist of becoming a human bomb to destroy innocent life."

Deciding who is right in the McLarty-Schilt debate is a very important issue. However, my more formal point is that the free press in Adventism is the place for such discussion. Thank you, John

McLarty and Nate Schilt, for gracing the pages of AT with your stimulating writing.

Jim Walters - Claremont, CA

PATRICK RESPONDS TO FANSELAU

I thank *Adventist Today* for the privilege of responding to Brother R.W. Fanselau; frank dialogue is essential for growth in understanding of each other and the faith we cherish.

During the 1950s I read the significant submission that Robert Wieland and Donald Short made to the General Conference on Righteousness by Faith; since that time I have endeavored to understand Wieland's writings on this and related topics. About 1961 I became an enthusiastic reader of the writings of Herbert Douglass. During 1998, as a visiting professor at La Sierra University, it was my privilege to host Dr. Douglass's presentations to some of my classes. We also participated in a fruitful Sabbath afternoon discussion sponsored by

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Gerald "Gerry" D. Karst

An Interview with Seventh-day Adventist General Conference Vice President Gerald "Gerry" D. Karst

Adventist Today previously reported (May/June 2006) a series of bizarre events in March 2006 associated with first, in rapid succession, the forced resignation of Andrews University president, Dr. Neils-Erik Andreasen, and then his "unfiring." One of the individuals at the center of these events was SDA General Conference vice president Gerald D. Karst, who serves as the chairman of the Board of Trustees of Andrews University. Elder Karst, a native of Canada, had been selected as one of the nine General Conference vice presidents in 2000, after serving previously as the assistant to the GC President. He holds a master of divinity degree from Andrews University.

Adventist Today also previously reported in detail [Vol. 10, Issue 5; Vol. 11, Issue 4; Vol. 12, Issue 4] two General Conference sponsored International Faith and Science Conferences and the North American Division Faith and Science Conference, held between 2002 and 2004. In contrast to the spirit of open communication and diverse perspectives in evidence at at least one of the sessions, the final conference held in Denver, Colorado, was used as a venue to construct a statement that was widely regarded by many scientists and theologians as retrogressive and counterproductive. Although Elder Karst did not attend any of the Faith and Science sessions, he was appointed to serve as the chair of a body established to carry out the recommendations of the Denver conference, the Faith and Science Council.

Elder Karst graciously accepted the invitation of *Adventist Today* to respond briefly to questions in an in-person interview while he was visiting Loma Linda University, in part to convene the first meeting of the Faith and Science Council. *Adventist Today* posed questions both with regard, first, to his participation in the firing and reinstatement of Dr. Andreasen and, second, what he views as the purpose of the Faith and Science Council.

On the Requested Resignation and Reinstatement of Andrews University President:

Adventists Today Question: "Adventist Today has been told that you as board chair had not been given explicit authorization by the Andrews University Board of Trustees to ask for the resignation of Dr. Andreasen. Would you care to comment on that statement?"

Elder Karst was clear and very forthcoming in stating that there had been no board vote asking for Dr. Andreasen to resign. He stated that he and the Vice Chair of the board talked with Dr. Andreasen and told him the "direction that the board discussion was going." Andreasen asked if that meant that the board wanted his resignation, and Elder Karst said, "I think that is the direction things seem to be moving" and, on this basis, Andreasen prepared a resignation letter.

Adventists Today Question: "Several sources have reported to Adventist Today that the principal reason Dr. Andreasen was asked to stay on as president was because of the potential loss of at least two planned gifts to the University collectively worth more than 30 million dollars. Can you confirm the essential accuracy of this report?"

Elder Karst did not deny the possibility that this was an important factor. He said it is quite possible that to some board members this was the most important issue. In Elder Karst's view, Dr. Andreasen's fund-raising ability and the fear that some large donations would not be forthcoming without him may have, in some board members' view, been very important. However, Elder Karst stated that, from his own perspective, the main reason for the reinstatement vote of the board involved a range of reasons, "the entire package" as it were, in that Dr. Andreasen brought to the job his "extraordinary" ability in fund-raising, many international connections, and an excellent relationship with the community.

Adventist Today had previously contacted Rebecca May, the Director of University Relations at Andrews University, by telephone and asked her the same question that was asked of Elder Karst. She stated that donor support is a confidential matter, and therefore she would not comment, and thus could not confirm or deny the accuracy of the report.

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On the Purpose of the General Conference Faith and Science Council:

Adventists Today Question: *We have heard from a number of Adventist scientists and theologians that with perhaps three exceptions, individuals chosen as members of the Faith and Science Council do not reflect the wide range of views on origins represented among Adventist scientists and theologians today. The council membership overwhelmingly reflects extremely conservative and even fundamentalist perspectives in the church. Why has the church chosen to ignore the views of over half its scientists in the formation of this Council?*

Elder Karst responded that the selection of the members was in the hands of the General Conference Fall Council representatives. The

purpose of the Faith and Science Council is to prepare materials for the general church member, not scholars. In his view, the purpose of these materials is to “affirm the church’s understandings of origins.”

Adventists Today Question: *It is the impression of many that the essential role of the Faith and Science Council is to provide apologetic materials for traditional Adventist understandings of origins. Is this a correct interpretation of its role?*

Elder Karst appeared not to be uncomfortable with the term “apologetic.” After a discussion that emphasized that it was a descriptive and not pejorative word, he did not object to this characterization.

News | James Stirling

Adventist Colleges Register Enrollment Gains

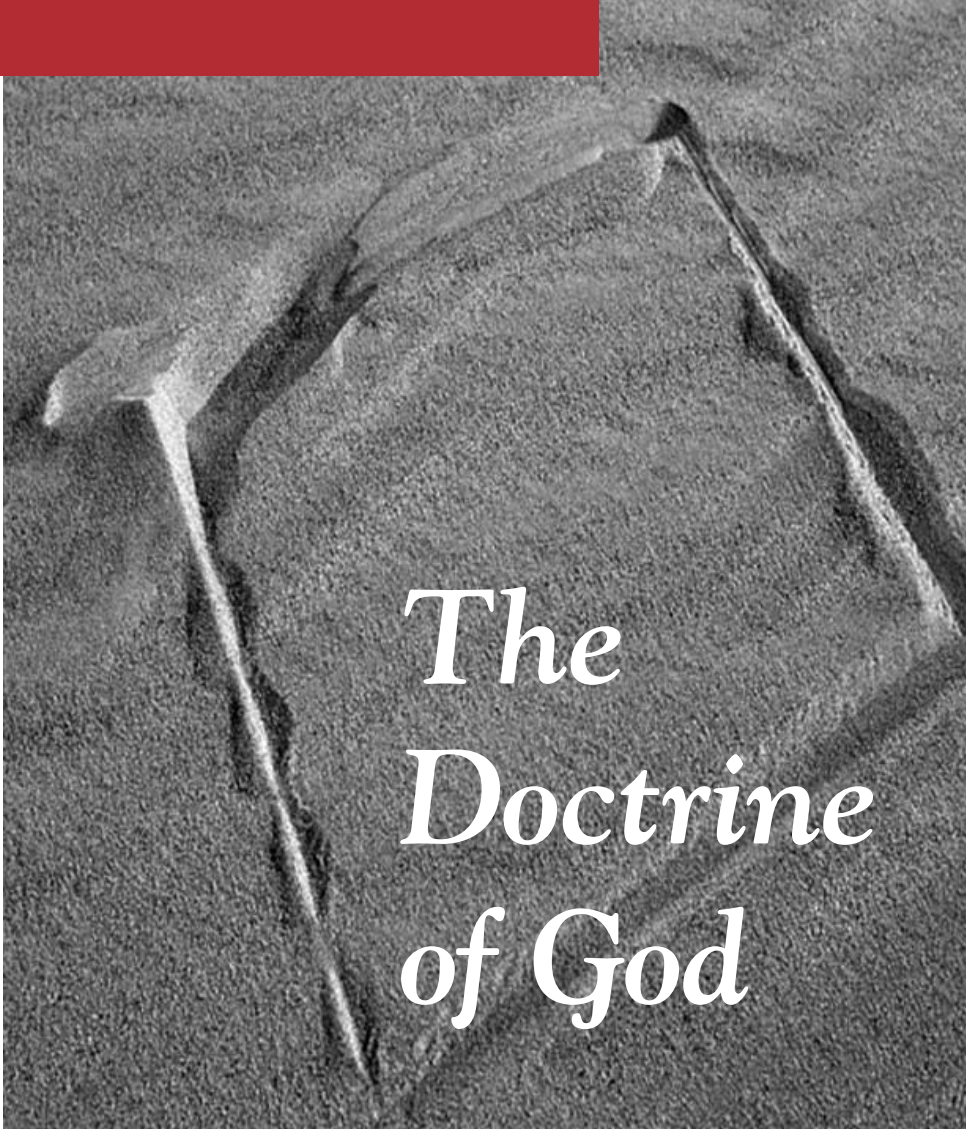
Adventist college-and-university enrollment figures for the beginning of a school term are the occasion for anxious questioning by staff, students, and alumni. Data for the current term, registered in the fall of 2005 and compiled by Dr. Gerald Kovalski, head of the North American Division Department of Education, for the most part allay the fears and give cause for rejoicing. As shown in the accompanying table, overall the 14 colleges and universities showed a total of almost 20,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) students. An increase of 584 students over the previous year represented a three-percent gain. Registering the highest total was Loma Linda University, with 3,406. Others exceeding 2,000 included Andrews University, with 2,315, and Southern Adventist University, with 2,141 (showing a gain of six percent from the previous year).

Some institutions, though smaller, registered healthy gains from the previous year, like Florida Hospital College, gaining 255 students—about 24 percent above the previous year—and Kettering College of Medical Arts, with a gain of 73 students, or 13 percent. Other colleges with modest gains included Atlantic Union College, with almost six percent, and La Sierra University and Southwest Adventist University, each with three percent gains. Four of the schools experienced small losses—Canadian University College, with a loss of eight percent; Columbia Union College, five percent; Union College, four percent; and Oakwood College, two percent.

Overall, the gains and losses from one year to the next have been small. Adventist schools of higher education are essentially holding their own in enrollments.

COMPARATIVE FALL ENROLLMENT REPORT 2001 - 2002 - 2003 - 2004 - 2005

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY	HEADCOUNT					FTE				
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Andrews University	2,721	2,729	2,995	3,017	3,087	2,111	2,224	2,256	2,242	2,315
Atlantic Union College	719	727	608	482	482	552	571	494	415	439
Canadian University College	423	446	445	429	399	367	393	394	375	345
Columbia Union College	1,073	1,162	1,183	1,116	1,047	750	852	867	849	805
Florida Hospital College	749	1,053	1,401	1,793	1,952	492	680	892	1,060	1,315
Kettering College of Medical Arts	0	598	653	719	813	0	455	513	552	625
La Sierra University	1,566	1,758	1,940	1,924	1,941	1,341	1,511	1,633	1,619	1,676
Loma Linda University	3,336	3,471	3,648	4,010	3,906	2,951	2,947	3,089	3,336	3,406
Oakwood College	1,778	1,783	1,787	1,753	1,736	1,637	1,615	1,629	1,621	1,582
Pacific Union College	1,607	1,691	1,662	1,659	1,638	1,545	1,378	1,521	1,500	1,512
Southern Adventist University	2,200	2,290	2,377	2,391	2,522	1,908	1,991	2,007	2,015	2,141
Southwestern Adventist University	1,191	1,107	917	894	902	950	727	799	775	798
Union College	922	951	902	936	930	824	852	829	884	849
Walla Walla College	1,823	1,865	1,918	1,968	1,942	1,635	1,721	1,796	1,798	1,817
Totals (for 14 institutions)	20,108	21,631	22,436	23,091	23,297	17,063	17,917	18,719	19,041	19,625
Griggs University	0	0	0	0	195	0	0	0	0	93
Totals (including Griggs)					23,492					19,718



The Doctrine of God

The classical model of God pictures him and the world as two wholly separate circles that do not intersect.

Classical theism, the reigning doctrine of God in Christendom, affirms that God is void of body, parts, passions, even compassion, wholly simple, wholly immutable, independent, immaterial, the supreme cause and never the effect. What creatures have, God does not. I challenge this doctrine, on five grounds.

First, I find it unbiblical. Now, in so saying, I realize the Bible is not a book on metaphysics. God's salvific revelation occurs in history, not nature. Nevertheless, I feel Scripture implies a metaphysic wholly other than that found in classical theism. Granted, many biblical passages speak of God as immutable. But wait a second; many others do in fact speak of God as changing (e.g., Hosea 11:8, Amos 7:3, Jeremiah 18:8, Exodus 32:14). Indeed, the prophets function so as to alter the operations of YHWH's will. Malachi 3:5-7 is often taken to be an affirmation of a wholly immutable God ("I, the Lord, change not"). But this is followed up by saying, "Return to me, that I might return to you." Taken together, these passages mean, at least to me, that God enjoys a fixity of purpose, and in that fixity,

Feature | Blair Reynolds

does not vary. But rather than denying change, such fixity insists upon it. Hence, if we change in such-and-such a way, then God, too, will change in an appropriate manner. And the biblical metaphors for God are all anthropomorphic in nature. God shares the creaturely characteristics of will, memory, emotion, anger, disappointment, etc. Quarrel all you want with these metaphors, as but a mere concession to our feeble intellects. Still, the fact remains they mean God undergoes changing affective states analogous to pleasure and displeasure in ourselves. If these metaphors do not fit the reality of God, then they are useless and should be dropped. The Incarnation, if it is at all revelatory of God, reveals his general *modus operandi* with creation. God is incarnate throughout the entire universe, which functions as his body. And the biblical predication of God is generally relative predication. It's hard to be a creator, without a creation; a king, without subjects; a father, without children; a lover, without someone to love.

Second, there is the matter of epistemology. Knowledge, I think, demands two things. No. 1, we must generalize from the familiar to the unfamiliar. No. 2, to have knowledge—real knowledge—we must have empathy, a knowing from "within." Now, if there is one "within" I am most familiar with, it is human experience. So, I think that unless there is a genuine analogy, a true likeness, between ourselves and all the rest of reality, from the atom up to God, then we haven't got an inkling as to what is going on. Now, one major characteristic of human existence is that we are continually changing, evolving. The traditional notion of the "self" as something permanent is a myth. Rather, the "self" is best thought of as a name for a society of perishing occasions. Moment to moment, we are different persons. No thinker thinks twice. God, then, I see as the most changeable that there is, the supreme effect as well as cause. And in so saying, I am not overlooking the fact that there is consistency in God. There is an absolute or abstract dimension to God. It is what God always does. God always seeks to maximize beauty, is always omniscient, empathic, loving. But there is also the matter of the relative nature of God, God in the concrete, God as continually changing. We must, however, be careful not to focus just on the common thread running through various occasions, overlooking their key differences. Well may God always seek to maximize beauty; but what is beautiful in one context or era may not be in another. Well may God always be omniscient; but as new things happen, God's knowledge is increased, if for no other reason

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than that he has moved from knowing X as merely potential to knowing X as a definite, decided matter of fact. Another major characteristic of human existence is that we are social, relational beings who arise out of our relationships. Reality is like a spider's web; you tweak it here and it jiggles there. God, then, is indeed the supreme effect as well as cause. As much as God creates the universe, the universe creates God.

Third, there is the matter of meaning, value, significance. If God is wholly immutable, as classical theism argues, then, saint or sinner, it's all the same to him, he remains blissfully indifferent. If nothing can make any real difference in God, then his love and wisdom can make no difference in his decision-making process. But who can put any real faith in such a cold, dehumanizing God? And if God could be just as happy, whole, and complete, without a universe as with one, then why did he bother to create it in the first place? How would we be anything other than meaningless and insignificant to him? And how could we think of God as loving? Love means, at a minimum, to derive part of the content of your being from the loved object. And how could God deliver us from the evil of evils, that the past fades? We acquire satisfactions, only to lose them. So, why bother to do anything, when it's all going to go up in smoke soon enough? If God is wholly immutable, he is, then, helpless to deliver us from this evil. On the other hand, if God is supreme effect, if we can pass our experiences over into God, then everything is of significance, because everything is preserved and enjoyed in God's memory forever.

Fourth, there is the matter of divine transcendence. Classical theism sought to affirm transcendence, but at the price of immanence. God, in Thomism, exists wholly outside of creation, wholly unrelated to anything going on. Hence, we are left with the tragic situation of a world that never really gets into the life of God, because he is not about to react to it, and a God who never really gets into the world, because he would then be affected, conditioned, by it. The universe, then, has meaning only in the negative sense of a kind of holding tank to be escaped from if we are to attain to what is of ultimate value. Thus Christianity becomes a static, world-negating religion. And then, is God truly transcendent? The classical model of God pictures him and the world as two wholly separate circles that do not intersect. The world of time, change, materiality, contrasted over and against the divine world of immaterial, changeless simplicity. Well then, what do we call the whole of reality, the whole shooting match? Meta-God? Because by that it would seem that God is but one limited aspect of some larger, more inclusive whole or reality that includes him and then some. Put another way, classical theism argued that no reality can stand over and against God, on an equal footing, so as to

exclude him. But, ironically, that is exactly what classical theism ended up doing: The whole world of materiality and change is, at best, an anti-God principle, the complete and total antithesis of God's own nature. I think a better solution is to say that God is the chief exemplification of all metaphysical principles. Loosely put, what holds for creatures also holds for God, but to the nth degree. And this huge quantitative difference makes for a qualitative one as well. Everything in the universe is a part of everything else, is incarnate throughout; but only to a very limited degree. We, for example, directly interact with little more than our own brain cells. In sharp contrast, God's body, the universe, is wholly internal to him. Hence, God enjoys an unsurpassably direct and immediate empathic response to any and all creaturely feeling. We are total strangers to sensitivity on such a grand scale.

» ...God's body, the universe, is wholly internal to him. Hence, God enjoys an unsurpassably direct and immediate empathic response to any and all creaturely feeling. We are total strangers to sensitivity on such a grand scale.

Fifth, and finally, there is the matter of what is sometimes called the "monopolar prejudice" of classical theism. Now, it sure seems to me that the church fathers, and many Christians today, set up checklists of seemingly contradictory divine attributes, such as being-becoming, and cause-effect. Then they go down the list, ascribing only one side to God, the side that squares best with certain Hellenic notions that the "really real" is wholly simple, immaterial, and passionless. To me, this is lopsided. Nothing real can be described by reference to only one side or pole, and each pole represents a virtue. If it is good to be independent and not deterred by others, it is also good to be deeply moved and affected by the feelings of others. I think that creation is God's own eternal evolution from unconsciousness into self-consciousness and self-actualization. We should rejoice in the fact that we have a genuine significance in the life of God.

Blair Reynolds holds a doctorate in theology and has done graduate work in psychology. He writes from Fairbanks, Alaska.

God is Love *(Part 2 of Intellectual Adventism)*

At the heart of Intellectual Adventism (IA) is a small cluster of essential convictions and practices. In this article, I will explore IA's first conviction, "God is love." In the next, I will examine IA's premier practice, Sabbath keeping.

The First Conviction

"God is love" is the most fundamental of all Adventist convictions. Of course, this was not the organizing principle of early Adventism. Our particular history began in an enthusiasm for the return of Jesus and, more specifically, in the conviction that through Bible prophecy one could discover the secret knowledge of the date of the Second Coming. In the last 50 years, mainstream Adventism has moved somewhat away from this intense focus on end-time events, except in our public evangelism, where end-time enthusiasm is intentionally stoked. But while mainstream Adventism retains a chastened but still significant fascination with chronological issues—the dates of creation, the judgment and the second coming—IA deliberately denigrates beliefs about time. Instead, IA focuses on questions of purpose, meaning, justice, and personal and social health. It is far more

interested in helping people build healthy lives now in the light of eternity than in getting people ready for the not-now, but-soon Close of Probation.

For Intellectual Adventists, "end-time scenarios" have become little more than curiosities, relics of our family history. They have no confidence in any prediction of earthly events based on the cryptic symbols of Revelation. Intellectual Adventists note that there appears to be a correlation between excessive attention to end-time theories and fear-based spiritual life, unhealthy social relationships, and unstable personalities. Intellectual Adventists believe a clear vision of "the God who loves" is a vastly superior base for spiritual and social health than the chaotic speculations of apocalyptic interpretation.

Ellen White

Given the historic focus of Adventism on theories about last-day events, how did IA end up with God's love as its most fundamental conviction? The first answer is Ellen White. She is obviously the most influential theological voice in Adventism. While her youthful writing is full of fearfulness and spiritual anxiety, her more mature writing has a very different tone.

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In modern Adventism her most highly regarded works are *The Conflict of the Ages* series, a five-volume narrative commentary on the Bible, and *Steps to Christ*, a handbook of basic Christian spirituality. The first sentence of the first book in *The Conflict* series is “God is love.” The last sentence of the last book is “God is love.” Between these two declarations, White attempts to show that love has been the constant, overarching motivation for every act of God. Even his acts of greatest severity—Noah’s flood, the genocide of the Canaanites, the execution of Uzzah—are interpreted as expressions of divine “tough love.”

In *Steps to Christ*, White insists that spiritual life begins not with our quest for God but rather with his affectionate regard for us. The first chapter, titled, “God’s Love for Man,” begins, “Nature and revelation alike testify of God’s love.... The sunshine and the rain, that gladden and refresh the earth, the hills and seas and plains, all speak to us of the Creator’s love.”

In recent decades the church has become more widely aware of White’s extensive use of assistants and copied material in her literary production. But even if it could be demonstrated that someone other than White was responsible for the emphasis on love evident in her most widely read works, the fact remains that the central works of the Adventist canon unambiguously present “God is love” as the most fundamental of all theological assertions.

Ellen White’s Interpreters

As formative as White’s writings have been, her interpreters have also been crucial. Three of the most prominent in the last half of the twentieth century were Desmond Ford, Graham Maxwell, and Morris Venden. All three worked on Adventist campuses, the seedbed of IA.

Graham Maxwell, perhaps, has done the most to systematize the doctrine of God’s love. He spoke of his repeated “trips” through the Bible with various groups, searching for the God of love. His

hamartology (doctrine of sin) is deficient. He dealt with sin exclusively as self-destructive choices and never addressed the questions of justice that arise from the other-destructiveness of sin (the perpetrator of child abuse, for example, is not the only victim). But generations of Adventists have found their hearts warmed by his portrait of God as a gracious, kindly, gentleman physician working to persuade people of the toxicity of sin and seeking to win their friendship. Maxwell’s God likes people. He is a healer, not a judge; a friend, not an authority; understanding rather than exacting. People’s eternal destiny is not determined by a sovereign decision by God, but by God finally allowing people to receive the natural consequences of their own sovereign choices. In stark contrast to the stern, threatening God of traditional end-time scenarios, Maxwell described a God whom we have no need to fear, a God who could be trusted.

Morris Venden conducted weeks of prayer at Adventist colleges all over the world, urging students to give up their futile attempts to be “good enough.” He invited them to build a relationship with God by spending an hour a day in Bible reading. While some criticized his emphasis on Bible study as a new legalism, thousands (tens of thousands?) found liberation through his insistence that God was concerned with relationship rather than behavior. One striking illustration of his challenge to the older Adventist picture of God as an implacable judge was his sermon “Seven Mountains on the Way to Hell.” God so wanted people to be saved that he placed seven enormous mountains across the “broad road” to hell. A person had to climb over all seven to be lost. And the mountains were huge. Like Maxwell, Venden worked to counter the dark image of God that had permeated the Adventism of many of the students. He offered a prescription for spiritual life that was doable, but more importantly he pictured a God who wasn’t nitpicking. God was in the saving business, not the condemning business. Salvation was easy, not hard. And this truth was anchored in God’s character and intentions, not in human achievement and performance.

Desmond Ford used the legal model of salvation to forcefully counteract the apocalyptic uncertainty of classic Adventism. The final outcome was not in doubt. God had already triumphed in Christ. And “in Christ” believers themselves had already been judged *and approved*! If God loved us so much that he gave us his Son, how could we imagine he would not give us all things? While much has been made of Ford’s rejection of the historic Adventist interpretation of Daniel 8:14, many—even some of his critics—acknowledge that the church was weary from the crushing legalism associated with the

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Steve Pawluk

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Lenses and Issues

The pastor, with red face and booming voice, commanded us *never* to return to his church. We four academy students had committed the sin of accompanying the singing of our gospel hymn, during the worship service, with an acoustic guitar.

»» What are the lenses through which we examine issues, as Christians, as Seventh-day Adventists, and as leaders?

We never returned.

I clearly recall being instructed, as a new pastor, that I must require baptismal candidates to remove their wedding rings as they entered the baptismal waters, although they were allowed to put them back on after baptism. We were not going to baptize jewelry.

I remember voting, along with the rest of our church board, to disfellowship members of our congregation who divorced for reasons not enumerated in the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*. Instead of offering our church as sanctuary, we sent them out to fend for themselves.

We didn't intend to be malicious. These actions were taken in loyalty to Christ and to Seventh-day Adventist standards. But people were damaged.

I've served as an administrator for more than a decade, now, and have pastored and taught for an additional two decades. I hope that I am learning how to make better decisions. Recent earnest discussions about the student dress code at the institution where I serve caused me to consider how we think about policies and regulations. What are the lenses through which we examine issues, as Christians, as Seventh-day Adventists, and as leaders? I offer the following, not as the best or only set of lenses, but to encourage readers to consider thoughtfully their own on any given issue.

1. How important is this matter?

Any issue can be turned into a "federal case" by zealous argument, but the author of 1 Corinthians 15:3 clearly instructs us that there is only one

thing that is of "first importance." If Christ's death and resurrection is of *first* importance, then other matters must assume lesser importance. It also seems reasonable to insist that these less important matters must support, and not detract, from that which is of primary importance. A hierarchy of values is also proposed in 1 Corinthians 13:13, which asserts that a liberal spirit and charitable actions are of greater value than other characteristics and behaviors.

This sense of proportion can be a challenge for punctilious believers. Paul counsels newly ordained Timothy not to allow his ministry to be derailed by focusing on things that "promote controversies" instead of love (1 Timothy 1:4,5). He admonishes young Pastor Titus to "avoid foolish controversies and...quarrels about the law" as "unprofitable and useless" (Titus 3:9). Evidently not everything theological or regulatory rises to the level of a fundamental belief or a moral imperative.

One striking example of theological flexibility occurred when Ellen White requested W.W. Prescott to revise a portion of *The Great Controversy*, even though his interpretation of symbolic Babylon differed from what she believed. In discussion with Prescott about this, A. G. Daniels declared that "...a great victory will be gained if we get a liberal spirit so that we will treat brethren who differ with us on the interpretation of the Testimonies in the same Christian way we treat them when they differ on the interpretation of the Bible.... I do not ask people to accept my views, but I would like the confidence of brothers where we differ in interpretation. If we can engender that spirit, it will be a great help; and I believe we have to teach it right in our schools" (*Spectrum* vol. 10, No. 1, May 1979, pp. 43, 54).

2. Will my decision tend to include or exclude individuals from the grace of God and the refuge of the church?

The Gospels portray Jesus' inclusiveness as radically extreme. The disciples stopped someone from performing miracles "because he is not one of us" and Jesus' response was to declare that those who are not intentionally against him, he considers as being for him.

The early Christian church struggled with inclusiveness too, as an increasing number of Gentile converts saw no sense in keeping the 613 cultural halakha that the Jewish Christians believed

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were vital for the protection of God's law, as well as demonstrating their faithfulness. After lengthy debate, the Jerusalem Council set aside all but four of the regulations to make it "easy" for new believers to be included as Christians. The church is evidently not, like the United States Marine Corps, reserved for "the few, the proud," but for all who wish to be included, even, sometimes, if the church must adjust its culture in order to become more accessible.

3. Is it possible that my belief or conviction could be wrong?

This is a difficult lens to apply. Most of us were taught to "dare to be a Daniel." But we must acknowledge that God is God and we are not. Genuine Christian humility requires us to recognize that our understanding is shaped by our personalities, experiences, upbringing, cultural backgrounds, and many other influences that shape our perceptions of what God prefers.

Even the "greatest" prophet, John the Baptist, misunderstood Jesus' ministry and mission. He announced Jesus as one who, with winnowing fork in hand, would baptize with fire. Jesus clarified his mission by stating that he had not come to judge or condemn and that he would not break even a bruised reed. John doubted the messiahship of Jesus when he did not perform in the way John had expected and,

under the influence of the Spirit, had prophesied.

It was the spiritually mature Paul who recognized that, although he no longer thought like a child, his conceptions were murky. It was the zealous, but thoroughly wrong, Saul who confidently enforced his denomination's standards throughout the whole region.

Ellen White, when she had her own writings quoted to her to correct her, said, "My mind has been greatly stirred in regard to the idea, 'Why, Sister White has said so and so, and Sister White has said so and so; and therefore we are going right up to it.' God wants us all to have common sense, and He wants us to reason from common sense. Circumstances alter conditions. Circumstances change the relation of things" (*Review and Herald*, April 24, 1975, p. 7).

4. Does this issue focus my attention primarily on myself, or will it help me to focus on serving others?

Matthew 23 provides a compelling warning about religion that carefully grooms one's own appearance. Sanctified self-centeredness is still self-centeredness. Scripture calls the follower of Christ to adopt Jesus' own mission statement: "The Spirit of the Lord is on

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Lenses and Issues

» One cannot help but notice the outward focus on the basic human need for freedom, as opposed to what one might term a standards-based center. The question, “Am I good enough?” easily decays into legalism. The question, “How can I help others be free?” supports our healthy development as members of the saving body of Christ.



me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18, 19).

One cannot help but notice the outward focus on the basic human need for freedom, as opposed to what one might term a standards-based center. The question, “Am I good enough?” easily decays into legalism. The question, “How can I help others be free?” supports our healthy development as members of the saving body of Christ.

5. *Is it in harmony with our mission?*

As an administrator of Southern Adventist University, I also use the lens of our institution's mission: the pursuit of truth, wholeness, and a life of service. *Pursuit of truth* celebrates the fact that education and learning about God and his will is a lifelong endeavor. We value a spirit of teachability. Ellen White observed that “whenever the people of God are growing in grace, they will be constantly obtaining a clearer understanding of His word. They will discern new light and beauty in its sacred truths.... But as real spiritual life declines, it has ever been the tendency to cease to advance the knowledge of truth. Men rest satisfied with the light already received from God's word, and discourage any further investigation of Scriptures. They become conservative, and seek to avoid discussion” (*Gospel Workers*, pp. 297, 298).

Wholeness reminds us to live life in healthy balance, supporting relationship-affirming decisions and policies that build up individuals and strengthen our community. *A life of service* seeks to foster a practical outward focus.

Conclusion

So, these are the lenses that I find helpful. How might they have changed the illustrations at the

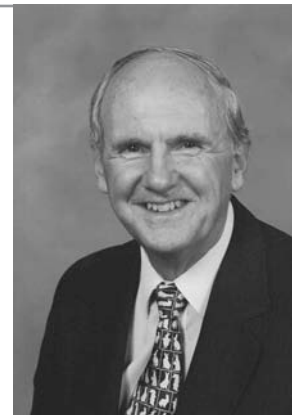
beginning of this article? The principle of frugal modesty, presumably expressed by the removal of a wedding ring, would have seemed of lesser eternal importance than a public declaration of the sanctity of the marriage relationship, symbolized by the pure gold band. I would have baptized the symbol (and marriage) as well as the couple. When it seemed they were ready to learn more, I might have addressed the issue of frugal modesty in areas that could make a significant difference to the advancement of the gospel—for example, in terms of the funds expended on our homes, automobiles, and vacations.

In the case of divorced church members, I might have recognized that damaged self-esteem and loneliness are often sufficient consequences of divorce (and perhaps one of the basic reasons that God asks us not to divorce) and that recently divorced persons, whether for “just cause” or not, need to be *in* the church, so that they might find healing and learn better ways to develop lasting relationships. We could have offered them a time-out from church leadership during recovery, but worked diligently to keep them as close to the body of Christ as possible.

Emphasizing inclusion and healing, and placing people in close proximity to believers through whom Jesus can minister, seems to be of much greater importance than guarding the reputation of the church. We need to build up people, not sort them. The Seventh-day Adventist Church strives to hold high the standards—the rallying points of the gospel. Holding high the standards of inclusive grace and Christian charity will carry on the work that Jesus did when he came to earth to be one of us.

Steve Pawluk is Senior Vice President for Academic Administration at Southern Adventist University, Collegedale, Tennessee.

Peter Edgar Hare (1933-2006): American Scientist and Committed Adventist Layman



Peter Edgar Hare

The American scientific community, and particularly geochemistry, lost one of its major figures when Peter Edgar Hare died on May 5, 2006, after a long battle with Lyme disease.

In his passing, the Seventh-day Adventist Church lost a loyal member who dedicated his whole career to educate other members of that faith community. He sought to enlarge their vision about earth history beyond what that community had inherited from its 19th century founders and their necessarily limited worldview. He believed that nature and revelation are both God's books. If there seems to be a conflict, it is because we are misinterpreting either one or the other, or both. In the meantime, one must live with unanswered questions.

Ed or Peter Hare was born on April 14, 1933, in Maymyo, Burma, to missionary parents. He received his B.S. in chemistry from Pacific Union College in 1954, and a year later earned the MSc. degree in physical chemistry from University of California at Berkeley. While teaching at PUC, he read Alfred M. Rehwinkel's book, *The Flood*. It was a turning point in his life, and his last year of teaching at PUC he went two days a week to Berkeley to take undergraduate geology courses.

In 1958 he joined Heinz Lowenstam's group at the California Institute of Technology, where he earned his Ph.D. in organic geochemistry in 1962. His dissertation, subsequently published in *Science* in 1963, was on the amino acids and proteins from carbonate minerals found in the shells of modern and fossil California mussel. Both radiocarbon dating and the technique he pioneered indicated the age of many of the shells he studied were to be dated in a range of several tens of thousands of years and later, using techniques that Ed pioneered, significantly longer ages.

His work at Cal Tech attracted the attention of Phillip Abelson, who was then Director of the Carnegie Institution of Washington's Geophysical Laboratory and who would go on to become the Editor of the journal *Science*. The two corresponded for several years, with Ed eventually joining the scientific staff of the Geophysical Laboratory, where he worked for 35 years.

Before joining that laboratory, Ed had been an early member of the then newly organized General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist's Geoscience Research Institute


(GRI). When it was decided by church authorities that the primary purpose of GRI would be apologetic and not scientific, Ed realized that his intellectual honesty prevented him from remaining a GRI staff member.

Ed Hare is widely regarded as the father of amino acid geochronology. In 1968 he and Abelson described the discovery of left- and right-handed amino acids in fossil shells, the phenomena that they exploited to date ancient fossils. His work for the remainder of his career centered around the fate of amino acids in geological archives, with a strong focus on the utility of amino acid racemization to date marine and other types of shell derived from a wide range of geological and archaeological environments. Hare's laboratory became the training ground for young scientists from paleontology, Quaternary geology, geochemistry, archaeology, and biochemistry.

A brilliant instrumentalist, Ed pioneered increasingly sensitive detection systems, and in the late 1970s designed and built a portable amino acid analyzer that he took to the Arctic (Svalbard), dating samples the same day they were collected. In 1979, he published a landmark methods paper on new techniques for measuring the left- and right-handed amino acids, with co-author and inventor Emanuel Gil-Av from the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel. A conference, "Perspectives in Amino Acid and Protein Geochemistry" was held in Ed's honor in 1998, at which some 100 scientists from around the world presented their latest research in those fields where Ed had been involved. His influence on the growing field of biogeochemistry, and particularly the fate of proteins over geological time scales, was large.

Ed is survived by his wife, Patti, daughter Carol Pack, son Calvin, three grandchildren, and a brother, Leonard. He and Patti some time ago established the P.E. Hare Scholarship Fund at PUC. Those wishing to honor his memory are invited to help this fund support additional PUC chemistry students (PUC Advancement Office, One Angwin Ave, Angwin, CA 94508) or gifts may be given to *Adventist Today* in his memory.

Adventist Today will be publishing a volume dedicated to the memory of Ed, with an expected publication date in the fall of 2006. When the book is published, there will be a memorial service and celebration of his contributions to science and his church.



Can a Quaker Bring Adventists Back to Their Pacific Roots?

Does the Adventist's "conscientious cooperation" concept permit him to deliver ammo to front-line riflemen, as long as he himself doesn't carry a weapon? Does the Quaker's position better fulfill Christ's beatitude, "Blessed are the peacemakers"?

Suppose the military draft returns to America. Imagine three men of draftable age—a Lutheran, an Adventist and a Quaker—standing in registration line. They start to talk.

The Lutheran says that since his country needs the enemy killed, his job is to go and kill for his country.

The Adventist says he's a conscientious *cooperator*. His job is to go and do anything to assist—short of squeezing the trigger. "Killing is *his* job," he says, pointing toward the Lutheran.

The Quaker says he's a conscientious *objector*, a pacifist. His job is not only to refuse to assist in killing, but also to wage peace aggressively and tirelessly across all borders.

Does the Adventist's "conscientious *cooperation*" concept permit him to deliver ammo to front-line riflemen, as long as he himself doesn't carry a weapon? Does the Quaker's position better fulfill Christ's beatitude, "Blessed are the peacemakers"? Such questions ran through my head as I listened to Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, a Quaker.

On April 1, 2006, I enjoyed Sabbath lunch with him and had a discussion afterward that lasted to 4 p.m. At 5 p.m. I heard him speak at Carlos Balarezo's Faith, Reason and Community Forum that meets monthly during the school year at the Worship Company Christian Fellowship (Adventist) in Loma Linda, California.

Daniel—agree or disagree—is someone to be

heard. He holds a doctorate in biblical studies and serves as a theology professor at Roman Catholic Loyola Marymount University (LMU) in Los Angeles. Author of several books, he directs LMU's Peace Studies Program. The title of his lecture: "Jonah, Jesus, and Other Good Coyotes [Border Runners]: The Biblical Call to Peacemaking."

Back in high school he first realized that his own people, the Quakers, were willing to stand. "They were willing to pay the price for what was right." What was right was activist pacifism. And that was the thrust of his lecture: God calls all Christians everywhere to engage in strenuous, aggressive, even violative, peacemaking efforts across all borders. He gave three main Biblical examples:

Jesus pointed out (Luke 4:14-28) to his hometown synagogue that when a leprosy epidemic swept the land, not one Israelite was cleansed. "God's people," the chosen race, was not spared. The only one cleansed was Naaman the Syrian, a gentile, an outsider. Jesus was running their borders big time, crossing their "cherished boundaries" of racism, self-righteousness, and holier-than-thou prejudice. "Good coyote" Jesus was getting right in their face. That's why, "all the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this."

"When Jesus makes clear God's love is for all, there is trouble," Daniel said. "Jesus flagrantly violated their treasured borders—*our* treasured borders." At first Jonah resisted God's call to cross

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borders and engage in activist peacemaking with the enemy Assyrians in Nineveh. But later, “Jonah was a coyote, a border runner” for God.

“The author of Ruth was a coyote border runner.” This irenic story, set in the bloody years of the Judges, argues eloquently that peaceful coexistence was possible and desirable.

Daniel admitted that “peace activism” was a “minority viewpoint” amid the Old Testament scenes of God-ordered carnage, including genocide, such as the Baal-Peor incident (Numbers 25 and 31). But he was not about to let the “majority viewpoint” be the only viewpoint.

After the lecture, I joined the group surrounding him. His radical position still sounded strange. I asked, “Would you call yourself a ‘60s antiwar activist?” He answered, “I would call myself a Christian committed to nonviolence—in the Quaker tradition.” I persisted: “Nixon was a Quaker.” He said, “Nixon was an unfortunate Quaker. He abandoned his Quakerism.”

Back at home, the more I ruminated on Daniel’s “peace testimony,” the more incongruous the “conscientious cooperator” concept became. Aren’t “noncombatants” who assist combatants just as accountable before God? How did Adventists arrive at such a position? To find out, I consulted a historian of Adventists, did my own sleuthing, and compiled this timeline:

1861-1865 American Civil War. Adventists disagree among themselves over the draft.

1862 *Review* editor James White argues in favor of participating in the war “in case of drafting, [since] the government assumes the responsibility of the violation of the law of God.”

1863 Prophet Ellen White writes, “God’s people ... cannot engage in this perplexing war”

1865 James White, in the *Review*: “As voluntary enlistment into the service of war is contrary to the principles of faith and practice ..., they [Adventist congregations] cannot retain those within their communion who so enlist. Enoch Hayes was therefore excluded from the membership of the Battle Creek church, by a unanimous vote of the church, March 4, 1865.” Seventh-day Adventist General Conference (GC) resolves: “[W]e are compelled to decline all participation in acts of war”

1876 GC resolves: “... that the bearing of arms, or engaging in war, is a direct violation of [biblical] teachings”

1886 In Basel, Ellen White commends three Swiss Adventists who were participating in military drill “because the laws of their nation required this.”

1898 Spanish-American War. GC President George A. Irwin declares, “[W]e have no business whatever to become aroused and stirred by the spirit [of war] that is abroad in the land.” *Review* editorial decries “spirit of militarism” in American churches that train “Christian cadets.”

1914-1918 WWI. In Germany, Ludwig R. Conradi and other Adventist leaders publish *The Christian and War*, which asserts, “[T]he Bible teaches ... that taking part in war is not a transgression of the sixth commandment” And: “[W]e will also bear arms on Saturday.”

1917 U.S. enters war. GC declares, “[W]e have been noncombatants throughout our history.” F. M. Wilcox says Adventists are “seeking to assist the government in every way possible, aside from ... actually bearing arms.”

1923. European Adventist leaders, meeting in Gland, Switzerland, grant “to each of our church members absolute liberty to serve their country [in war], at all times and in all places”

1928. In Moscow the Adventist Sixth Congress asserts: “Adventists are obliged ... to serve the state in the army” “Anyone who teaches otherwise and incites others to void state duties [places] himself outside the Seventh-day Adventist organization.”

1934. GC pamphlet *Our Youth in Time of War* by J. P. Neff denounces pacifists as “antimilitarists” who advocate “peace at any price.”

1935. GC recommends that all Adventist academies and colleges start pre-induction military training of medical cadets.

1939-1945 WWII. *Review*: “Refusing to be called conscientious objectors, Seventh-day Adventists desire to be known as conscientious cooperators.”

1940. Adventist leader Carlisle B. Haynes: As “noncombatants we do not oppose war”

1943. GC insists that “throughout their history Seventh-day Adventists have been noncombatants”

1947. Nobel peace prize awarded to Quakers for their peace efforts during and after WWII.

1950. *Time* magazine quotes GC official Carlisle B. Haynes: “We despise the term ‘conscientious objector’”

1950-1953. Korean War.

1954. GC states that “... loyalty to government requires [Adventists] to serve the state in any noncombatant capacity” GC adds noncombatancy teaching to *Church Manual*.

1957-1975. During Vietnam War, many Adventists claim conscientious objector or pacifist status. GC removes noncombatancy teaching from *Church Manual*.

1972. GC decides noncombatancy stand “is not a rigid position”

1973. Adventists enlist in Vietnam War as combatants in unprecedented numbers. Quakers establish Department of Peace Studies at Bradford University in Yorkshire, UK.

1990. GC vice-president Calvin Rock informs Adventist congregations that “Adventists at [military] bases, forts and camps around the world ... pledge to continue their noble and necessary service”

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Slow on the Uptake

This piece is part current affairs, part history, part repetition. The current affairs part was triggered by a quote from an article discussing the rising interest

among believers in “common prayer,” a simplified but disciplined use of set prayers at regular intervals throughout the day. The topic itself is worth a column. But here I simply focus on a quote that addresses the general challenge of introducing new concepts to students:

» We do change, of course
—but is the safest and most stable
change slow and subtle?
Maybe.

“I used to teach with the conviction that if my students didn’t understand what I was saying, they would come and ask questions. Now I see that’s not how it is. No, if they don’t understand, they go away.... It’s when they do understand something [that] they start to ask questions.”¹

The quote suddenly made sense of a difficult teaching situation I was facing. But as I reflected further, I realized it was a truth I had discovered once before, 25 years ago (1980-81), during my year as an exchange teacher at Marienhöhe Seminary in Germany. But I had forgotten. So here is a touch of history.

Being rather in awe of the fabled German intellect, I had begun teaching the ministerial students in August of 1980 with the assumption that they would quickly grasp key concepts and be able to move through new material at a good clip.

Sure enough, body language and attention levels told me that this was old stuff. So I summarized quickly and moved on. I had argued that the Bible was often more like a “casebook” than a strict “code book,” and that obedience should not simply be unthinking and automatic, but should include thoughtful choices.



But it wasn’t until February that the lights came on, triggered by a question from one of the brightest students in class. Suddenly I realized that what I thought had been perfectly clear was just then coming into focus. I had read their body language as if they were Americans and had gotten it wrong. This wasn’t stuff they already knew; their body language was saying they didn’t have a clue.

Later that spring when I used the same material at a German youth retreat, the leader was quite upset. In his view, I had left the students with no anchor. In a culture where obedience is highly valued, a “casebook” approach can be deadly, at least initially. Even though everyone is selective in responding to the commands in Scripture—no one “obeys” everything in the Bible—to say that out loud or to put it into print can sound dangerous and disrespectful....

Slow Change: Safe or Deadly?

Could it be, I am now asking myself, that what I once thought was a difference between my students in Germany and those in America may not be a valid distinction after all? Are there similarities in the ways we manifest resistance to “change”?

And the crucial question follows close behind: We do change, of course—but is the safest and most stable change slow and subtle?

Maybe. But slow and subtle change can also be deadly. C. S. Lewis reminds us of that in *The Screwtape Letters*, his masterpiece of backwards theology, where the “truth” comes from Screwtape, a head demon, as he teaches nephew Wormwood how to lure a human away from the “Enemy” (God):

“Like all young tempters, you are anxious to be able to report spectacular wickedness. But do remember, the only thing that matters is the extent to which you separate the man from the Enemy. It does not matter how small the sins are, provided that their cumulative effect is to edge the man away

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from the light and out into the Nothing. Murder is no better than cards if cards can do the trick. Indeed, the safest road to Hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts.”²

It’s not hard to cite examples of gradual change, both good and bad. Equally ready at hand are plenty of examples of sudden change for good and sudden change for evil. Either process can be helpful or dangerous. What is clear, however, is that *intentional* change comes hard. At our house, we have our own private translation of Proverbs 22:6, born of a growing awareness of how difficult it is to make changes now that we are more ancient. Here’s a “gender-accurate” version (still echoing the KJV original): “Train up children in the way they should go and when they are old, they won’t be able to get away from it.” Even with desperate longing and herculean efforts, change comes hard and may not last.

But tenacious religious conviction can make the difference. A devout German woman told us her experience when as a young adult she heard God’s command to keep the Sabbath. All her life Saturday had been the preparation day and Sunday a sacred day of rest. Suddenly Saturday was sacred and Sunday a day for work. But it took a full seven years before the change felt right.

In that connection it is important for Adventists to hear Ellen White’s ringing endorsement of the need for change: “That which God gives His servants to speak today would not perhaps have been present truth twenty years ago, but it is God’s message for this time.”³ The church will need all that help and more in places where respect for authority is highly valued. I once heard an Adventist missionary with many years of experience in Europe and Asia describe how a group of devout pastors in Asia responded to a fresh perspective on a biblical passage. Coming up to him they exclaimed, “What you say is true. But we can’t tell this to our people because it’s not what the church teaches.”

Nudging a whole church toward *intentional* change is, of course, a daunting challenge, and it becomes more difficult with the passage of time. A number of months ago—here comes the repetition—I addressed that issue in *Adventist Today* from the perspective of the New Testament, noting that even after the resurrection, God was incredibly patient in leading the church to accept Gentiles as equals before him. The Jerusalem conference of Acts 15 finally declared full equality for Gentiles—but that happened some 20 years after the resurrection, and even then Peter was capable of backsliding (cf. Galatians 2:11-14).⁴

In Adventism a striking example of doctrinal change involves our acceptance of Trinitarian

theology and the full divinity of Christ. Ellen White’s *The Desire of Ages* (1898) played a key role. George Knight quotes M. L. Andreasen: “I remember how astonished we were when *The Desire of Ages* was first published, for it contained some things that we considered unbelievable, among others the doctrine of the Trinity which was not then generally accepted by the Adventists.”⁵ Though the Trinity has been fully anchored in Adventism since our first official statement of belief in 1931, persistent voices on the edges of Adventism still urge us to return to our old ways.

To add a sobering personal note, however, I must admit that the “official” Adventist position on the Trinity and the nature of Christ didn’t come clear to me experientially until my second year at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary (1966-67). I grew up reading *The Desire of Ages* and attending Adventist schools; I earned a theology degree from Walla Walla College and used all the right language about Jesus: Son of God, divine, Savior. But driven by an urgent inner question (“If the Father loves me, why do I need a mediator?”), I embarked on a serious search for truth. That’s when John 14-17 led me to the exhilarating discovery that God himself had taken human flesh to bring us salvation. It was a transforming moment of joy for me.

Why did it take so long? I don’t know. Maybe the mental image of Jesus pleading to the Father on my behalf was the culprit. But whatever the explanation, I have good reason to be patient. Yet I still forget and want to push my church along faster than it is able or willing to move. Maybe that’s why I have written on this topic more than once. You may need the message. I suspect I need it more than you do.

References

¹ Arthur Paul Boers, “Learning the Ancient Rhythms of Prayer,” *Christianity Today*, January 8, 2001, 44-45.

² C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (1942) 12:5.

³ From MS 8a 1888, address to ministers on October 21, 1888, with apparent reference to a telegram from the “absent and ailing” president [G. I. Butler] who urged the delegates to “stand by the landmarks.” – M. E. Olson, *Thirteen Crisis Years* (1981), 282.

⁴ “On Being Patient,” *Adventist Today* 13:3 (May-June 2005), 12-13.

⁵ George Knight, *In Search of Identity* (RH 2000), 116, citing MLA MS, Nov. 30, 1948.

Dr. Alden Thompson is a member of the religion faculty at Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington.

It’s not hard to cite examples of gradual change, both good and bad. Equally ready at hand are plenty of examples of sudden change for good and sudden change for evil. Either process can be helpful or dangerous. What is clear, however, is that *intentional* change comes hard.

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God is Love (Part 2 of Intellectual Adventism)

» For intellectual Adventists who spend their lives as scientists, to assert that God is love is a triumph of will over spiritual entropy. It means accepting as an axiom a statement for which their world demands proof. Worship is an act of defiance as well as adoration. Their defiance is not primarily of secular opponents of faith, but of the skeptical impulses that live in the intellectual believer.

traditional interpretation of Daniel 8:14. Whatever the theory, belief in the sanctuary doctrine, in practice, has been highly correlated with anxiety and self-loathing—hardly what a loving father would want for his children.

These three men—Maxwell, Venden, Ford—strongly disagreed with each other. They used widely divergent metaphors and meta-narratives in describing divine realities. Their disciples could be condescending, dismissive, and even hostile in their disputations. But the cumulative effect of these three (along with others less famous) was to shift the center of Adventist spirituality. The old legalism of securing salvation through being “good enough” was thoroughly discredited. “God is love” became far more central in the preaching and the personal religion of mainstream Adventism. And in IA it became the unchallenged first principle.

Why Make Such a Big Deal?

Some critics on the right can’t understand why intellectual Adventists make such a fuss over God’s love. Surely everyone knows that, these critics argue, so why make such a big deal about it? We should get on with the business of telling the world the special beliefs of Adventism—the sanctuary message, the Mark of the Beast, the date of creation.

In fact, not everyone does know God is love. Many who can voice the words find difficulty in believing it in ways that form their personalities and shape their relationships. If the church is going to help people experience the freedom

and healing Jesus taught and modeled, it must constantly give attention to keeping this reality central in proclamation and reflection. The church cannot encourage spiritual health for members or inquirers through an emphasis on last-day events. Apocalyptic imagery is unsettling and anxiety-producing. And while most people need an occasional affront to their inertia, too much of the apocalyptic will produce spiritual trauma.

For intellectuals, saying *God is love* is no mild claim. They tend to be keenly aware of the suffering in the world. Beyond human cruelty and evil there is the suffering that appears to be engineered into the very fabric of the biosphere—parasitism, disease, aging, predation, genetic defects. These do not appear to be mere blemishes on an otherwise perfectly harmonious creation. These are inextricable elements of the totality of the natural world. The universe appears to be indifferent to the happenings on earth. How can a God of love be the creator of a world of pain and indifference?

Intellectuals tend to be appreciative of the power of science to make sense of things. Yet there is no scientific way to even ask the question, *Is God loving?* For intellectual Adventists who spend their lives as scientists, to assert that God is love is a triumph of will over spiritual entropy. It means accepting as an axiom a statement for which their world demands proof. Worship is an act of defiance as well as adoration. Their defiance is not primarily of secular opponents of faith, but of the skeptical impulses that live in the intellectual believer.

Of course, there are human reasons for believing God is love. This claim connects with our deepest sense of purpose and meaning. Saying and believing God is love is akin to writing symphonies and painting pictures. It is participation in a truth that cannot be “defended” or proven. It is a truth to which we can give testimony, but about which we dare not pontificate. It is beautiful.

God is love. It is our deepest conviction. To reflect its reality in our life and work is our highest ideal. When we deeply believe it, it gives us the sweetest satisfaction.

John McLarty has served as editor of Adventist Today since 1998 and is pastor of North Hill SDA Church in Federal Way, Washington.

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of the writings of Herbert Douglass. During 1998, as a visiting professor at La Sierra University, it was my privilege to host Dr. Douglass's presentations to some of my classes. We also participated in a fruitful Sabbath afternoon discussion sponsored by the University Church, and in 1999 I published a review of his *magnum opus*, *Messenger of the Lord*. I have known Desmond Ford since we were students together in 1950 and am rather well acquainted with his writings. I mention these connections to indicate that it is not a spur-of-the-moment impression that leads me to disagree with the main thrust of Brother Fanselau's letter.

Some of the data that sustain my viewpoint is referenced in the 13,380-word paper on the *Adventist Today* website entitled "Twenty-five Years After Glacier View." James Stirling's summary of that paper in the November/December issue of *Adventist Today*, together with a forthcoming article in *Spectrum*, survey some of the evidence that I invite Brother Fanselau to consider.

To summarize: the Adventist/Evangelical dialogues of the 1950s were largely fruitful but have been grossly misunderstood; note my review of Leroy Moore's volume in *Adventist Today*, May/June 2006. Wieland, Short and Douglass helped to raise crucial issues that Adventism needed to address, as did many others, including M.L. Andreassen and Robert Brinsmead. Desmond Ford, as chair of the Theology Department at Avondale College during much of the 1960s and 1970s, probably did more than any other person to guide Adventism toward the understandings endorsed by the Palmdale Conference (1976) and the Righteousness by Faith Consultation (1979). "The Dynamics of Salvation" statement published in *Adventist Review* on 31 July 1980 is the most thoughtful,

» If Christians don't enter the voting booth as Christians, under which ideological flag do they enter—secularists, professionals, political party devotee? If we are whole persons, and our religion is fundamental to who we are, how can we honestly make decisions about our nation apart from our core being?

comprehensive, and constructive statement on the subject ever voted by a representative gathering of Adventist thought leaders.

The church's response to Ford's assessment of its sanctuary teaching is best interpreted in the light of the two Consensus Statements voted at Glacier View during August 1980, available online with contextual comment in *Spectrum*, November 1980. Materials that I have written that are available on www.sdanet.org/atissue try to offer a balanced overview of the questions relating to Ellen White that were so bewildering for most Adventists at the time, particularly until the International Prophetic Guidance Workshop of 1982.

While I do not see the matters under discussion through Brother Fanselau's glasses, I am truly glad he has entered the discussion by sharing his convictions.

Arthur Patrick - Avondale College, Australia

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Can A Quaker Bring Adventists Back to Their Pacific Roots?

1990-1991 Persian Gulf War. US military officers recruit students on Adventist campuses. In Gulf conflict 2,000 Adventists serve as combatants.

2002. Associate Editor Bill Knott in *Review*: "Many ... young Adventists who died in Vietnam [chose to carry] weapons" "[I]n the regular infantry and Marines ... many [Adventist] men ... chose to carry weapons" And: The church offered "support to those who chose to carry weapons"

2002 GC all-Adventist press conference: Q: "[A]re we ready [to restate] our historic positions on noncombatancy and conscientious objection?" GC President Jan Paulsen: "It may well be that the church needs to look again at ... our position on that"

Q: "Now we have the prospect of war, where we have Adventist Americans bombing Adventist Iraqis. ... How do we behave ourselves in the new political world?" Paulsen: "I do not believe it is the way for us to go to withdraw from every public responsibility...."

2003. In U.S., thousands of Adventists enlist for war in Iraq. Most bear arms.

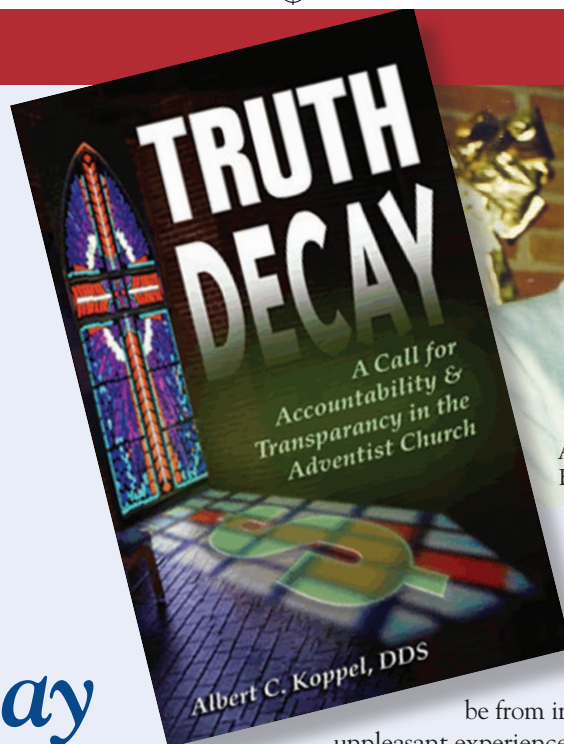
Conclusion: Quaker pacifism started out as activist and stayed activist up to the present, whereas Adventist pacifism started out as passivist and never became activist. The Quaker "peace testimony" has remained constant, whereas Adventist policy has changed dramatically: At first, it disfellowshipped those, such as Enoch Hayes, who enlisted and bore arms. Now anyone may enlist and bear arms while retaining membership in good and regular standing and receiving full church support.

While Daniel Smith-Christopher recognizes that it is unlikely that Adventists will return to their pacifist roots, he continues to run the Quaker-Adventist border, dialoging with Adventists—always the "good coyote" serving "good coyote" Jesus Christ.

Max Gordon Phillips is a science and medical writer living in Southern California.

By Edwin A. Schwisow

Adventist Dentist Examines Church's Truth Decay



Albert and Betty Koppel

For more than 30 years, Dr. Albert Koppel's expertise as a dentist was one of the most ubiquitous—and least recognized—services advertised in the *Adventist Review*. Almost every copy dated between 1953 and 1985 displayed denominational leader whose confidently whites testified to Dr. Koppel's abilities as a dentist.

Some said they thought of him as the “official unofficial dentist” of the General Conference and then-nearby Review & Herald Publishing Association. His relationship with church leaders was close and fraternal—his Hungarian-born German father had taught him to esteem God's ministers.

After Dr. Koppel and his physician-wife Betty retired in the mid-'80s, they left Takoma Park, Maryland, but their regard for the church did not falter. Albert and his father gave the church property that was valued at nearly \$13 million.

And it was primarily during the 18 years immediately after retirement that events took place in Dr. Koppel's life compelling him to begin a second career as an author. In June 2005, he published the book “*Truth Decay: A Call for Accountability and Transparency in the Adventist Church*,” with a 2,000-copy first printing (now nearing depletion). The book primarily chronicles the troubled history of the Koppel family's relationship with the church over the management and disposition of the valuable property they had given and the church's failure to respond to inquiries and keep promises made to family members.

“Writing and publishing this book was never envisioned as a moneymaking enterprise,” says Dr. Koppel, who invested some \$10,000 in the publishing and printing of the book, which he sells for \$6, postpaid.

“One insightful purchaser—an accountant—enclosed a check for \$10, with a note that said, ‘You can't publish a book like this for \$5.95.’”

For Dr. Koppel, far more important than earning money is getting out the message—a message that calls on the church to raise its level of integrity and ethics in dealing with its membership, especially in financial transactions through its Trust Services program.

And he has reason to believe his message is beginning to get through. “I expected that the majority of the responses to this book would be from individuals who also had encountered unpleasant experiences in working with local conferences and Trust Services,” he says. “Although we had a substantial number of such responses, what surprised me was the encouragement and commendation we have received from every level of the SDA church structure.... One union conference president congratulated us for ‘not keeping quiet.’” Affirming responses have come from as far away as India, Africa, South America, Germany, and Switzerland, showing that this problem is worldwide.

At the 2005 General Conference in St. Louis (where he launched the book at the *Adventist Today* booth), he was astounded that delegates rose and called for change of the very kind asked for in *Truth Decay*.

Dr. Koppel realizes that the battle for greater accountability and transparency in the church has only begun, because long-standing traditions of secrecy cannot be erased overnight. He looks to the Adventist independent press to help him press the battle.

“Until the church has a freedom of information policy and becomes user-friendly, with integrity officers whose salaries are not paid by the church,” he says, “publications like *Adventist Today* stand as the de facto conscience of the organization.”

Dr. Koppel signed scores of copies of *Truth Decay* at the *Adventist Today* booth at the General Conference Session, and remaining copies of the first printing are being jointly marketed by the author (e-mail akoppel@bellsouth.net) and *Adventist Today*.

The Koppels now make their home in North Carolina and can be reached at Fletcher Park Inn, 150 Tulip Trail, Hendersonville, North Carolina 28792. *Adventist Today* thanks the Koppels for their vote of confidence and for their role as Lifetime Advisors (see page 2 for the full list of current members of the Board of Advisors).

Edwin A. Schwisow serves as development director of Adventist Today.