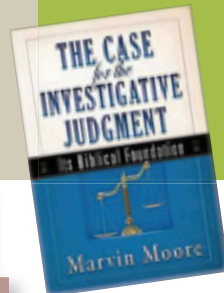




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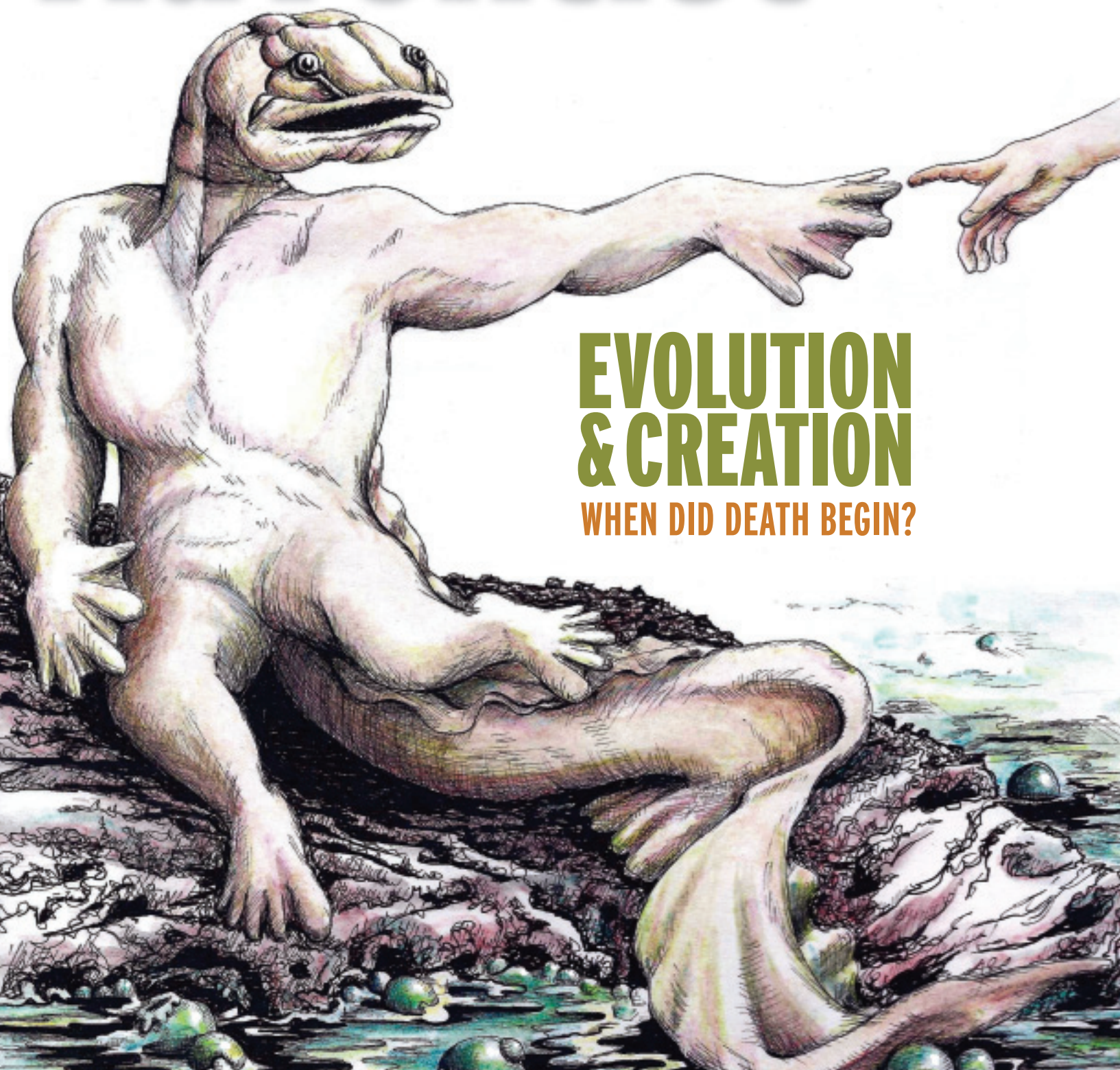
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# Adventist *Today*



**EVOLUTION  
& CREATION**

**WHEN DID DEATH BEGIN?**



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## Counsel for Elder Ted N.C. Wilson

*J. David Newman*

Elder Ted Wilson, in his inaugural sermon as the new General Conference president, relied heavily on Ellen G. White to make his point for revival and reformation in the church. In the spirit of cooperation, I wish to point out what I consider to be foundational statements made by Ellen White that Elder Wilson may wish to ponder. Along with Elder Wilson, I long to see revival and reformation spread like wildfire among our members.

“If we would humble ourselves before God, and be kind and courteous and tenderhearted and pitiful, there would be one hundred conversions to the truth where now there is only one. But, though professing to be converted, we carry around with us a bundle of self that we regard as altogether too precious to be given up. It is our privilege to lay this burden at the feet of Christ and in its place take the character and similitude of Christ. The Saviour is waiting for us to do this.”<sup>1</sup>

It is really so simple. Do not let the Savior wait one moment longer. As we humble ourselves before God, his love will shine out more and more from us. We have been taught so long that the last warning message to give to the world revolves around the Sabbath and the mark of the beast that we have forgotten the part that love plays.

“Those who wait for the Bridegroom’s coming are to say to the people, ‘Behold your God.’ The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory.

In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them”<sup>2</sup>

How does this take place? It begins by making Jesus the center of everything we do and say. Because we have a special message for the world, we have neglected to focus on the most important part of that message.

“Hanging upon the cross Christ was the gospel. Now we have a message, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.’ Will not our church members keep their eyes fixed on a crucified and risen Saviour, in whom their hopes of eternal life are centered? This is our message, our argument, our doctrine, our warning to the impenitent, our encouragement for the sorrowing, the hope for every believer.”<sup>3</sup>

“Of all professing Christians, Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in uplifting Christ before the world. The proclamation of the third angel’s message calls for the presentation of the Sabbath truth. This truth, with others included in the message, is to be proclaimed; but the great center of attraction, Christ Jesus, must not be left out”<sup>4</sup>

Sadly, the world does not see us as being foremost in “uplifting Christ before the world.” They know us more by our doctrines—like the Sabbath—than by our love for Jesus. If revival and reformation is to come to our church, then Christ must be the focus of everything we are and do, not the special truths of the Adventist church.

*Continued on page 31*

**“Of all  
professing  
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the world.”**

—Ellen G. White

## Ervin Taylor Retires

Ervin Taylor has served as the executive editor and then publisher of *Adventist Today* since the July-August 2001 issue. This volunteer position has not been easy. *Adventist Today* finances have been a roller coaster from the beginning, and Dr. Taylor has been at the forefront in raising money and writing provocative and stimulating editorials and articles. As of Sept. 1, 2010, he is going to take life a little easier. While he will no longer be involved in the day-to-day operations, he will still write his blog on the *Adventist Today* website, and we will see him from time to time in the magazine as well. Thank you, Ervin, for your hard work and dedication.



## General Conference Issue

The preview of the General Conference session included many fascinating articles (Summer 2010). Of particular interest were the “If I Were the Next GC President...” articles, with many intriguing and challenging ideas presented. However, I think a golden opportunity was missed. I would like to hear the concerns of an additional group of people. I would like to hear what an Asian would do as GC president. I would like to hear what an African would do as GC president. I would like to hear what a South American would do as GC president. Those, like myself, who are from a narrow culture and only speak one language, need every avenue to broaden our horizons and become more inclusive, as well as to learn the priorities of the rest of the world.

**TIM BLACKWELDER**  
Walla Walla, Washington

This afternoon I hungrily re-read and absorbed the Summer 2010 issue of *Adventist Today* from cover to cover during a return flight from Mexico City, having completed a week of music ministry there. I couldn’t—and

didn’t—wait to land before drafting this letter.

It was with great relief and renewed hope that I poured over this particular issue. Before leaving for Mexico, I was privileged to once again minister in music at the General Conference Session. It was with great interest that I listened to Elder [Ted N.C.] Wilson’s inaugural sermon on the last Sabbath of the Session. Suffice it to say that I feel now more than ever the increasing relevance not only of your summer issue, but the entire ministry of *Adventist Today*.

I commend *Adventist Today* for its continued and uncompromising call for prayerful, humble, inclusive, intellectual, scholarly, and compassionate dialogue in spiritual matters. I encourage each reader to dutifully consider the example of *Adventist Today* in respectful but bold and unapologetic examination in matters of doctrine, theology, and ministry while simultaneously examining the social and cultural considerations of mounting relevance to our church.

This is the same revolutionary voice our pioneers adopted in examining their contemporary status quo. Though they may too have been labeled and criticized, we must press forward in similar fashion. We should never allow anyone to make us feel our voice is a “step backward,” for it is with this voice that we must continue to personally and collectively hold accountable our leaders, elected or otherwise. I praise God for *Adventist Today*, because I firmly believe the voice demonstrated by your ministry is the strongest path by which we may truly “move forward.”

**PRESTON HAWES**  
Baltimore, Maryland

Even the most casual observer will note a certain lack of congruence between

what the seven who responded to the statement “If I Were the Next GC President...” wrote (Summer 2010) and what Ted Wilson himself said he will do now that he is the elected General Conference (GC) president. In both his postelection remarks and his Sabbath lecture, he set forth his presuppositions, his beliefs, and his intentions for the organization he leads.

The temptation is to compare specific points set forth by the imaginary presidents with those of the one who was elected to fill the post, such as: elect a person of color to be GC president; focus on basic values, encourage theological growth; turn the focus of the church outward; work toward a simpler understanding of faith; apologize for inappropriate behavior and model reconciliation; address the complex issues in fundamental belief No. 1, including the apparent contradictions found in the two creation accounts; consider a less rigid stance toward ambiguous and difficult issues; ask the hard questions; follow Christ’s methods; have an effective Christ-centered response to society’s ills; recover what our church leaders pledged in 1973 and again 1974; practice individual and corporate responsibility; empower young leaders; redefine success; strengthen local churches; and rediscover present truth.

GC President Ted Wilson’s statements had little in common with the thoughts, concerns, and suggestions expressed by the seven essayists, nor is there evidence that their thoughts influenced his in any way. Had one not known otherwise, an uninformed observer might well conclude that the essayists and Wilson were addressing two separate and divergent groups. This leads one to ponder whether it is the writers who are



out of touch with the Adventist church and its needs and possibilities, or is it that Wilson knows something they don't? Time will tell. (There is another viable option; let the one who has ears to hear, hear.)

**LAWRENCE G. DOWNING**  
Los Angeles, California

### **David Dennis Responds to *Fatal Accounts* Letter**

This is a response to a letter you published in the Spring 2010 issue under the title *Fatal Accounts* from a Karin L. McLarty. Ms. McLarty states that the “circumstances surrounding the termination of Mr. Dennis, and the allegations made against him, are a matter of public record.” She further bitterly complains that *Adventist Today* provided a platform for me to tell my side of the story, “while never hinting that another side exists.” If she refers to the Adventist “public,” she is, of course, absolutely correct because allegations against me were spread throughout the Adventist world. This other side of the story, awash with trumped charges and gossip, got worldwide exposure.

A General Conference (GC)-employed attorney prepared the lurid account on behalf of my indicated accuser. The GC hearing by select GC administrators and their close friends denied me access to a lawyer, and I was prohibited from cross-examining my accuser. My wife testified at this staged hearing but was loudly called a liar! The panel, under pressure, pronounced me guilty. I requested arbitration as provided by church policy. This request was denied! I sought legal assistance and filed a suit against the GC. During the discovery phase, defense attorneys took nine grueling days of depositions from me, my wife, my son, and my daughter. Then, at considerable

expense and through legal maneuvers over a protracted seven-year period, they precluded my attorney from taking depositions from my accuser and the GC “persecutors,” nor did they ever provide any of the requested documentation. Years later they continue to refer to this as a “victory.” The GC had every opportunity to present its case against me in court and to make it, indeed, “public record.” They went to great lengths just to circumvent the public record!

Did the GC have a motive for removing me as the director of auditing? To answer that question, you will wish to read my open letter to then-GC president, Neal C. Wilson, dated April 29, 1989. Alternatively, read selections from that letter in the book *Who Watches? Who Cares?* in a chapter entitled “Evergreen at Shady Grove” (page 201), under the section heading “Auditor’s Lament.” They had the motive and, indeed, acted accordingly because shortly thereafter Robert S. Folkenberg became president at the 1990 GC Session in Indianapolis. Under pressure from North American Union presidents, he convinced the nominating committee to remove my name as a nominee for director of the General Conference Auditing Service, by referring to my open letter to Elder Wilson as “immoral.” However, the deletion of my name was rejected by the delegates at the plenary session, and I was subsequently re-elected as director of auditing. Further, you will recall an incident where donor money was laundered through the Columbia Union’s Worthy Student Fund in order to pay salaries to the wives of Elder Folkenberg and the late Alfred McClure, who was the North American Division president. The wives were not denominationally employed. Again, I refer to the book

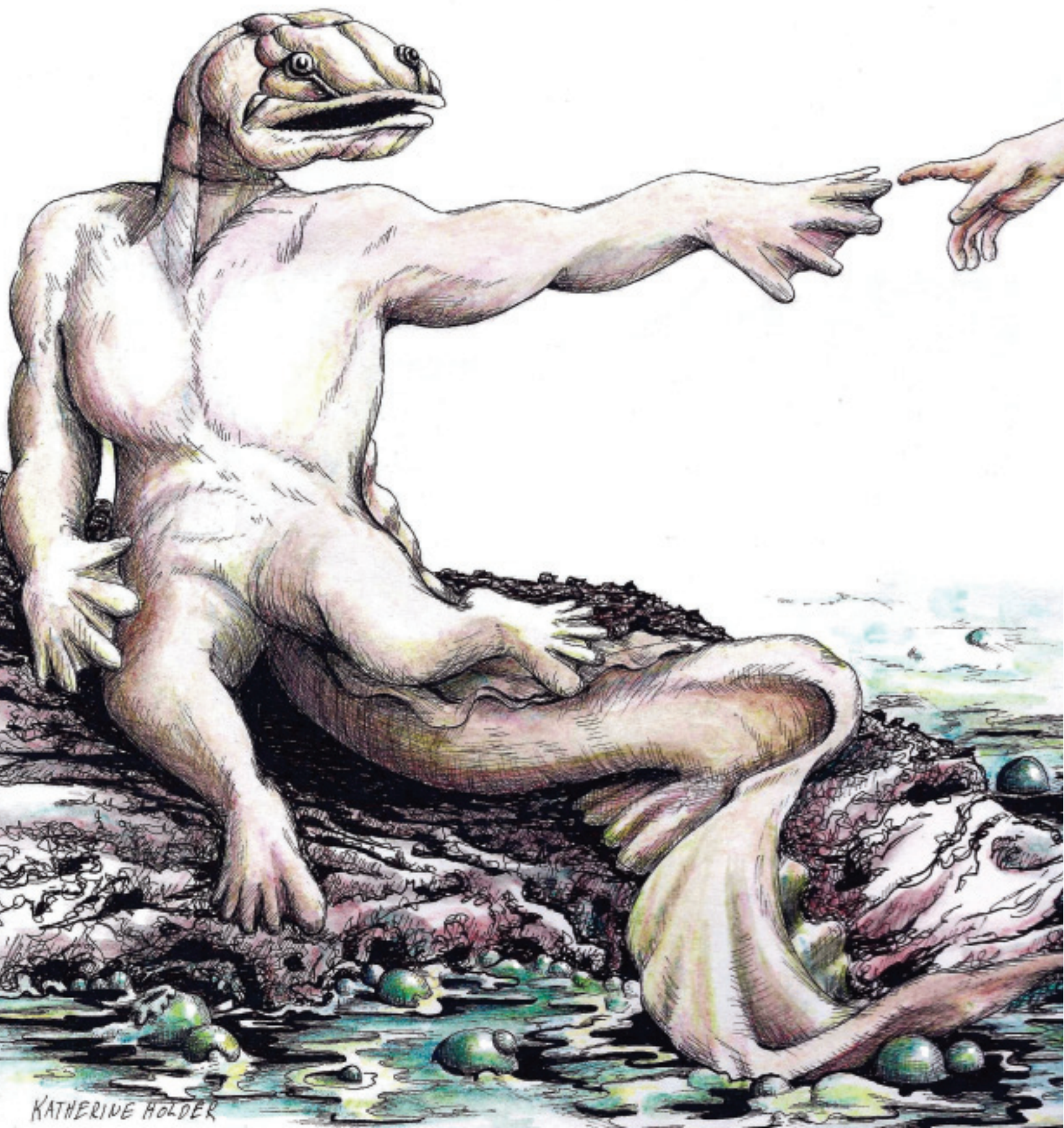
*Who Watches? Who Cares?* in the chapter “Filthy Lucre” (page 248), under the section headed Mold Breaker, where my involvement was addressed. These are but two examples of incidences that did not endear me to the GC leadership. What administrators could not do through the electoral process, they accomplished through a manufactured sex scandal.

Finally, Ms. McLarty recommends a “thorough and fair investigation.” That is exactly what a supportive entity for the church, Members for Church Accountability (MCA), sought when they appealed directly to Elder Folkenberg with a petition signed by 1,500 members seeking to establish an independent commission to investigate the allegations against the GC as addressed in my lawsuit. That appeal was denied, but Folkenberg promised in writing an independent “blue ribbon commission” after the litigation was settled. Elder Folkenberg was forced to resign as president prior to the completion of the lawsuit. Therefore, MCA appealed to the new GC president, Dr. Jan Paulsen, to honor the commitment of his predecessor to establish an independent commission to investigate my allegations. MCA’s request was forthwith denied by the new world leader of the church. So much for “a thorough and fair investigation”!

**DAVID D. DENNIS**  
Mount Airy, Maryland

#### *Editor’s Note:*

*The book Fatal Accounts is now out of print. Publication of a revised edition is being considered by Adventist Today.*





# DEATH BEFORE SIN?—NO

BY J. DAVID NEWMAN

Within the Adventist Church, there is a growing chorus of voices proclaiming that macroevolution is consistent with the Bible and especially the book of Genesis. These voices state that science has overwhelmingly shown that life on this earth is hundreds of thousands of years old and that one can no longer accept a short chronology—that is, a creation of this earth only a few thousands of years ago.

This article will not discuss the pros and cons of this debate. Instead, it will focus on the core issue: how does death fit into what God originally said when he created this world, “And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good” (Gen. 1:31, ASV)?

What does “very good” mean? According to Christian evolutionists, death was part of God’s strategy from the beginning, as evolution cannot take place without endless dying and suffering. It also means that earthquakes and tornadoes and mudslides have all been part of God’s creating activity down through the millennia. So Christian evolutionists say that death is natural and normal, while the Bible says that death is an enemy.

“For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. ... The last enemy to be destroyed is death” (1 Cor. 15:22, 26, NIV). And it will not exist in the new earth (Rev. 21:4).

The Bible is very clear that there was a time in this world’s history when death did not exist. “The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die’” (Gen. 2:16-17, NIV).

This passage is saying that Adam would live forever if he abstained from eating from this tree. He would never die. Paul,

when writing to the church at Rome about how we are saved, says this: “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come” (Rom. 5:12-14, NIV).

Paul makes it clear that death did not exist before Adam sinned. Several verses on, Paul reiterates his point: “For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:17, NIV).

If death were taking place in the world before Adam, and if Adam was simply the end result of the evolution of human beings, why would death be an enemy? And why would it need to be destroyed?

## Interpreting the Evidence

Both evolutionists and creationists look at the same facts, the same evidence. The issue is how do we interpret the evidence, whether from science or from the Bible?

This subject is very important, because it impacts how we look at Jesus, at the cross, and at the whole question of sin. If science explains where we come from, then the same science tells us that people do not come back from the dead, and that Jesus may have lived and died on a cross but could never have come back to life again. The same people who believe in Christian evolution also believe what the Bible says about the end of this age—that

one day death will no longer exist—even though that is not what science says. So why accept what science says for the beginning of this world but not accept what science says for the end of this world?

There is a second huge issue in this debate, and that is the question of evil. If God used evolution to create this world, which involves death and destruction, is that evil or not? Is evil only what humans do? Is it evil for a lion to tear apart an antelope to satisfy its hunger? As humans evolved, were they innocent, not evil? When did sin come into existence? The Bible says clearly, as

conquering Canaan. Just over the next hill live the Gibeonites. They do not want to be conquered by the Israelites, so they resort to a deceptive stratagem. They send ambassadors pretending that they have come from a far-away country and desire to make a treaty with the Israelites.

The Bible says “they resorted to a ruse: They went as a delegation whose donkeys were loaded with worn-out sacks and old wineskins, cracked and mended. The men put worn and patched sandals on their feet and wore old clothes. All the bread of their food supply was dry and moldy” (Josh. 9:4-5, NIV).

## Christian evolutionists accept the assumption of uniformitarianism. I challenge that assumption.

we have seen, that sin came into being when Adam and Eve took the forbidden fruit. The Bible says they were the first humans. Evolution says they were simply the culmination of the evolving of humans.

### My Assumptions

The real issue is one we seldom ever discuss: the assumptions or presuppositions with which we come to the evidence. Assumptions can lead us to all kinds of false conclusions. Here are my assumptions.

First, I believe there is a God who created this world and this universe. I cannot prove this assumption, but neither can anyone disprove it. That is what makes deciding which assumptions to believe so difficult.

Second, I believe that I need special revelation (the Bible) to help me understand general revelation (this world, science). Without special revelation, I would not know I am a sinner. Without special revelation, I would not know I need a Savior and that I am saved by believing in Jesus and by letting his blood wash away my sins.

Third, I believe that there is good and that there is evil. I believe that the good comes from God and that evil comes from Satan. The Bible describes a war in heaven and the rebellion of Satan against God (Rev. 12:7-12). As a result, Satan tries to discredit God every way that he can and has introduced the carnage in nature that we see today, whether the killing of life or the natural disasters in this world. He has tried to confuse us as we interpret nature to find God or to cry against God.

The book of Joshua tells a story that illustrates the importance of special revelation over general revelation. The Israelites are

The Israelites concluded by the visible evidence that these men were telling the truth. Three days later, they found that they were their neighbors and they had made the wrong assumption about the evidence presented to them. There is a very telling verse tucked away in this chapter. It says, “But they did not ask counsel of the LORD” (Josh. 9:14, NKJV).

I believe that I must use the Bible to correctly interpret the scientific evidence. But immediately someone will ask: “How do you know that you are interpreting the Bible correctly? Hasn’t the church—such as in the days of Galileo—interpreted the Bible wrongly?” This is a very good question. That is why I am dealing with the issue of death as the foundational issue. It is very hard to interpret the Bible in any way that suggests that death existed before Adam and Eve took the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.<sup>1</sup>

If Adam and Eve were not historical figures, then we have no information on how we became sinners. If human beings gradually evolved from the Neolithic man to Homo sapiens, at what stage did they become sinners? If other humans existed along with Adam and Eve, how did they become sinners? Who, then, did Christ save?

### Their Assumptions

Christian evolutionists operate under their own assumptions, as well. One of their foundational assumptions is that of uniformitarianism. This assumption means that we can learn about the past by using the laws of the universe as we know them today. It assumes that no laws have changed. But what if we challenge this assumption, this presupposition? If some of the fundamental laws regarding our earth have changed, then we can only interpret the



past back to the time when these laws changed. Beyond that we have no tools with which to examine the past.

Here is one example of a fundamental law that I believe has changed: the second law of thermodynamics, more commonly known as the law of entropy. This law states that disorder never produces order but order turns into disorder—that everything is slowly running down until it reaches equilibrium, so that in some distant future there will no life left in the universe.

You only have to look at your house to see the proof of this law. It doesn't take any effort for it to become dirty and untidy. It takes much effort to keep it clean and tidy. It doesn't take any effort for the paint to chip and get dirty, but it takes lots of effort to restore the paint.

I believe this law—along with other laws that lead to decay and death—did not exist before sin entered the universe. Let's take a look at Scripture to see when God changed fundamental laws under which our Earth operates.

Adam and Eve have disobeyed God. They have eaten from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God spells out some of the consequences of their disobedience. "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field."

Thorns and thistles did not exist prior to the curse, just as death did not exist. This means that some laws had to change. God gave new laws that would guide the life-to-death cycle in the human, animal, and plant worlds. All animals were vegetarians, but now some could prey on other animals for their food. This meant a change in how they processed food. Microevolution comes into play. And Satan can use all of his skills to help evil develop.

But this was only the beginning of the changes. God pronounced another curse. After Cain murdered his brother, Abel, God held him to account. God said to him: "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth" (Gen. 4:10-12, NIV).

The first curse was on the ground. A literal translation says, "You are more cursed than the earth." Cain had been a farmer. He had brought fruit and grain as a sacrifice to God against the command of God. Now God is telling Cain that he is going to have a much tougher time farming. More changes are coming to the environment.

But there is an even bigger curse to come. Genesis tells us


that God did not create the world to experience rain. We read in Genesis: "When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up; the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no man to work the ground, but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground" (Gen. 2:4-6, NIV).

It was not until the time of the great Flood in Noah's day that rain began to fall. "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, on the seventeenth day of the second month—on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights" (Gen. 7:11-12, NIV).

Here was another change in the fundamental laws that govern our planet. New weather laws came into play.

There is a further reason why I believe rain did not fall before the Flood. After Noah and his family exited the ark onto dry land, God made a covenant with them. "And God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth' (Gen. 9:12-13, NIV).

Rainbows occur only when it rains. If there had been rain before the Flood, then there would have been rainbows—and nothing special about them. Now there is rain, and the refraction of the sun on the water gives us the rainbow. God used it as a symbol of his promise never to destroy the world by a flood again. What made this symbol so significant was the fact that they had never seen it before.

Christian evolutionists accept the assumption of uniformitarianism. I challenge that assumption. If uniformitarianism is correct, then the whole plan of salvation as outlined in the Bible becomes suspect. But if fundamental laws did change—and they would have had to for sin to enter this world—then there is no conflict between science and the Bible. 

*J. David Newman is senior pastor of New Hope Adventist Church in Fulton, Maryland, and is editor of Adventist Today.*

<sup>1</sup> John Walton in *The Lost World of Genesis One* says that death did not exist for humans before the fall, but it did exist for all other aspects of God's creation (pp. 99-101). Denis Alexander in *Creation or Evolution—Do We Have to Choose?* says that the death that God told Adam and Eve they would experience if they disobeyed him was spiritual death, not physical death (pp. 244-253). William Dembski in *The End of Christianity* believes that just as justification is imputed back through time before the cross (before salvation became effective), so death can be imputed back before Adam and Eve sinned (see p. 10). His entire book is devoted to this understanding. Hugh Ross in *Creation as Science* says there have been multiple creations with death involved and agrees with Walton that death involved only humans not other aspects of creation (pp. 78-79).

# DEATH BEFORE SIN?—YES

BY ERVIN TAYLOR

Essentially all of the historic, mainline Christian Protestant denominations, the Roman Catholic communion, and (with exceptions among some segments of their laity) the Eastern Orthodox traditions view biological evolution over billions of years of geologic time as the means, or one of the means, which God employed to create living forms on planet Earth, with, for some, the exception of the human species. This general approach or understanding, with a number of permutations, is often referred to variously as theistic evolution, progressive creation, continuing creation, or most recently, evolutionary creation.

In contrast, the younger Protestant fundamentalist Christian faith traditions, and fundamentalist elements within many of the conservative evangelical and Pentecostal groups of churches, actively reject—sometimes with great vigor and vitriol—such an understanding. The positions many of these groups advocate are typically referred to by historians and others as Young Earth Creationism (YEC) and/or Young Life Creationism (YLC).

YLC advocates typically insist that all living creatures, from bacteria to mammals, were created by God over a period of seven literal, contiguous 24-hour days less than about 10,000 years ago. YLC believers typically often also argue that a literal, Noachian worldwide Flood as described in Genesis occurred a few thousand years after this very recent creation. They argue that this worldwide catastrophe produced all, most, or much of the geological column studied by geologists. Corporate and traditional Seventh-day Adventism has aligned itself with this Protestant fundamentalist tradition in understanding how the Genesis narratives are to be interpreted.

It is important to understand that the terms “fundamentalist” and “fundamentalism” are not used as pejoratives in this discussion. They are being employed exclusively as *descriptive* terms to refer to any individual or group within the Christian tradition, beginning in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, that held or holds to the view that a non-negotiable commitment to five doctrinal propositions is absolutely essential to defining an authentic or “true” New Testament Christianity. The first of these allegedly fundamental and thus “fundamentalist” Christian doctrinal precepts is that, because the text of the Bible has been inspired by God, all Scripture is thereby *inerrant*, i.e., no statement

contained in Scripture contains any substantive errors. The other four fundamental precepts involve beliefs concerning Jesus—his virgin birth, substitutionary atonement, literal bodily resurrection, and the literal reality of his miracles.

The implication of the belief in the inerrancy of all Biblical texts is that they are to be regarded as being free of any substantive error of fact, *irrespective of their subject matter*. Thus, the mantle of inerrancy has been bestowed by fundamentalists on Biblical statements that not only speak to devotional, religious, spiritual, and/or theological topics and themes, but also to subject matter that today would be considered to impinge directly on modern historical or scientifically based understandings. In the context of this discussion, this includes topics such as the age of the Earth and living organisms upon it and the process by which God created them.

There appears to be a strong correlation between adopting inerrancy as a principal of Biblical interpretation and holding that all Biblical texts should also be interpreted *literally* unless there is some very obvious and compelling reason for not doing this. Thus there is a general understanding that classical fundamentalists adhere to the view that correctly interpreting the Biblical texts also means taking them both in a literalistic sense and as inerrant.

## Death and Darwinian Evolution

There is a theological theme cited by a number of fundamentalist adherents—including many traditional and institutionally affiliated Adventist authors—as, they state, one of the principal reasons for their opposition to biological evolution occurring over “deep time” in geological history. This is the role that *physical death* plays in the currently prevailing scientific model of how biological evolution is considered to operate. The fossil record, on its face, reflects a massive amount of death and extinction before the appearance of humans. There is a modern scientific understanding that that some 98 percent of all species of organisms known from the fossil record no longer exist. They are all dead. Their species no longer exist. The death of all organisms and extinction of species are great, inescapable facts of both modern and past physical reality.

Most educated individuals know that the current most-favored



scientific model of how biological evolution has occurred bears the name of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century English naturalist, Charles Robert Darwin (1809-1882). It is *Darwinian evolution* that is the most often vilified by Christian fundamentalists as anti-Biblical and anti-Christian. This rejection is based on an understanding that if the Darwinian model provides the correct understanding about how life evolved on this planet, then it would follow that God caused, was complicit in, or at the very least permitted the physical death of millions of creatures over eons of time, with all of the inevitable attendant suffering that this is assumed to entail. This, many fundamentalists insist, is not consistent with the picture of God represented in the Bible—or at least, they will say, the picture of God that Jesus presented.

We thus are confronted with very conflicted understandings. On one hand, physical death over hundreds of millions of years of geologic time is an important component of the Darwinian evolutionary model. The fossil record taken at face value involves massive amounts of death. On the other, there is the view that such a model is totally incompatible with what is viewed as orthodox Christianity, and certainly with traditional Adventism. In light of this conflict, it might be helpful to very briefly outline the concept detailed by Darwin more than a century ago to explain *scientifically* how modifications in biological forms over very long periods of time could be explained, how geological time is documented, and then consider the nature of theologically based objections.

### Micro/Macro Evolution and Geochronology

Although subsequent research since Darwin's time has documented several other mechanisms responsible for biological evolutionary change, the central idea addressed in the Darwinian model of biological evolution involves the understanding of the processes involved in *natural selection*. In his "one long argument" in *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life* (1859), Darwin outlined his understanding of the evolutionary biological process as proceeding primarily in small, incremental steps over long periods driven primarily by the effects of natural selection.

In Darwin's view, natural selection involves differential reproductive success for some populations and species in that they pass on more of their progeny to succeeding generations than other populations and species competing for space, food, and other resources in the same environment. This outcome is viewed as being the result of the fact that populations of organisms which pass on more descendants do this primarily because they are better adapted to their environment. In this

model, differential death rates of better-adapted species explain why these species increase their populations over time and why other species not as well adapted to the same environment will eventually become extinct.

The effects of natural selection in the relatively small changes in both gene frequencies (genotypes) and in the visible structures of various organisms (phenotypes) have been clearly observed in the laboratory and field. These effects are widely referred to as microevolution. My understanding is that this form of Darwinian evolution by natural selection is readily accepted by many fundamentalist Christians who possess some scientific training, including traditional Adventist interpreters of Genesis, since it involves directly observable variations *within species*.

The conventional scientific understanding is that over millions of years, microevolution becomes what is sometimes called macroevolution, the creation of new species of living organisms. This occurs when the gradual or more abrupt changes produced by the mechanism of natural selection, and the other factors involved in biological evolutionary processes, slowly accumulate. When the accumulation of genotypic variation within one species—perhaps as the result of, for example, geographic isolation—results in two populations with clearly distinct genotypic and usually phenotypic expressions, we can then say that a new species has evolved and that what was once one species is now two or more species. Over long periods of time in response to changing environments, this process will produce organisms very different from the original parental population in previous environments. Using modern scientific protocols of scientific taxonomic nomenclature, we would classify such organisms into different genera and families and, as appropriate, other groupings even further up the taxonomic ladder.

The most direct, physical evidence that evolution at whatever level has actually occurred is based on inferences from observations of the characteristics of the ancient life exhibited in the paleontological or fossil record contained in the geologic column. What is critical to the general understanding of the great strength of the scientific evidence supporting the reality that life has evolved over multiple hundreds of millions and billions of years on planet Earth is that beginning in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, an increasingly accurate and precise time scale for the geological and fossil record has been provided by isotopic dating methods.

The accuracy of the age determinations produced by the application of geochronological methods has absolutely nothing to do with whether Darwinian macroevolution is or is not "true." Almost all geochronometric methods, now numbering more

than 20 distinct (or clusters of related) dating techniques, were developed not by geologists or evolutionary biologists, but almost entirely by physicists and chemists. Few of these scientists had little, if any, direct interest, in addressing issues involving the validity of Darwinian or any other kind of biological evolution—pro or con. The temporal framework for the fossil record, totally mischaracterized as an “evolutionary time scale” by YEC/YLC advocates, was developed completely separate of any considerations of the current biological evolutionary model.

### Theological Presuppositions

As is the case in the vast majority of controversial subjects of the type being discussed here, it seems that a clear explication of the assumptions standing behind theological discourse is a necessary

out of the eye” comment of Jesus is very rarely understood as a literal command—even by fundamentalists. In the second instance, I submit that the reason why a given set of texts—in this case texts assumed to be related to how one interprets the Genesis narratives—are interpreted by *Adventist* fundamentalists “more literally” than some others is not based primarily because of a concern with what is appropriate *Biblical* exegesis. I suggest that textual interpretations assumed by Adventist fundamentalists dealing with the doctrine of creation are guided primarily by the perceived need to defend the various elements of a highly structured and unique doctrinal system. This system has been assembled in great detail as a means of defending the classical Adventist theological worldview as expressed in its master story motif—the Great Controversy metanarrative. I will elaborate

## The accuracy of the age determinations produced by the application of geochronological methods has absolutely nothing to do with whether Darwinian macroevolution is or is not “true.”

prerequisite if one wishes to conduct a reasonable dialogue when highly variant conclusions and opinions are being offered.

One of my presuppositions is that while it is certainly appropriate to expect that a Christian adherent would take Biblical texts *seriously*, it does not follow that this individual would be expected to take all Biblical statements *literally*. Let us quickly note that it would appear that even self-identified fundamentalists, as a practical matter, do not take all Biblical texts literally. It would seem that many of them express the awareness that Biblical writers employed a wide range of literary structures and motifs such as metaphors, similes, and the language of appearances in their narratives.

I would therefore suggest that few modern Christian believers, even those who have adopted what we have here defined as a fundamentalist Biblical hermeneutic, actually interpret each and every Biblical text in a literalistic manner. I submit that what actually occurs is that a contemporary reader will decide which Biblical text to interpret with some degree of “literalness” and which to interpret with some other degree of “literalness” on the basis of some modern rationality or in support of some specific theological or doctrinal point of view.

In the first instance, for example, I suspect that the “plucking

on this observation in the last three paragraphs of the next and concluding section.

One alternative to that worldview is another vision of how Adventism could approach the Genesis narratives, but in a nonfundamentalist mode. What would that kind of creationism look like?

### A Nonfundamentalist Creationism: Answers to Objections

In considering one nonfundamentalist Christian perspective of how God created our world and its life forms, let me first briefly elaborate on what I understand to be the most common fundamentalist Christian—and therefore classical Adventist—theological objection to the standard scientific understanding of how the biological world has evolved over geologic time.

I understand that one important reason why there is a negative response to the question “Has Physical Death on Earth Always Existed?” comes from an interpretation of the views expressed in the writings of Paul of Tarsus in the New Testament. I further understand that the traditional understanding is that Paul in a passage in his letter to the Romans is linking the existence of physical death in this world with what is characterized as a



“sinful” act of Adam. On the basis of this statement, it is thus alleged that a phenomenon called human sin must have existed before any physical death could have occurred on planet Earth. Therefore, physical death could not have existed prior to the creation of humans. No physical death equals no Darwinian evolution! In my view, this is truly a breathtaking series of inferences.

There is no question that the first unintentional theologian of the Christian Church believed and wrote that human sin began with the first human and, because of that act, physical death entered the world. I understand that this statement is contained in a document composed as a pastoral homily—really something of a written sermon—that sought to communicate a theological point of view to solve a contemporary problem in the early Christian Church. That problem was conflict between Jews and Gentiles about how to reconcile their theological differences about the relationship between the “Old” and “New” Covenants.

That a theological understanding of a first-century A.D. pastoral theologian should be taken as explaining the origin of death in the physical world is a classic illustration of the result of applying a set of fundamentalist assumptions to the interpretation of a Biblical passage. It apparently matters not at all to the fundamentalist mindset that the passage in Paul’s writings to which they refer has completely and absolutely no conceptual relationship with the whole point of the Genesis narratives. The cliché about “apples and oranges” immediately comes to mind.

Another objection sometimes raised derives from inferences based on statements of Jesus that suggest he believed that Adam and Noah were “real” individuals and thus the incidents described in connection with their lives must have been “real” and “literal” events as well. It seems to me that all Biblical writers refer to and certainly believed that the individuals they referenced as earlier actors in various Biblical narratives were “real people.” There was no differentiation applied when referring to David, Moses, Abraham, Noah, and Adam.

There are some who view the statements of Jesus in an entirely different light than even Biblical writers. It is argued that statements attributed to him are to be evaluated on a different standard. However, I understand that the historic orthodox Christian perspective—at least since the 4<sup>th</sup> century of the Christian era—holds that Jesus was 100 percent God and 100 percent human. If Jesus was *really* 100 percent human, that would seem to indicate, at least to me, that he carried in his consciousness the human cultural perspectives and assumptions of his time and place. And in his time and place, Adam and Eve and Noah were “real” people and the stories told about

them “really happened.” Again, it would seem that this is only a problem for a fundamentalist Christian who believes both in an inerrant Bible and a Jesus who was not really human.

Finally, there is a central point of this discussion that I wish to propose for a reader’s consideration. That point is my contention that *it is views of Ellen White that lie at the heart of why traditional Adventism has been so adamantly opposed to the concept of biological evolution and long geological ages*. It is her understanding of what the Bible says about creation, the Flood, and related matters that has created the problem for the faith tradition she helped to establish. It seems to me that what is at issue is not primarily a case of the holding of different hermeneutical models as applied to the understanding of Biblical materials, but holding different hermeneutical models having to do with the understanding of the appropriate role of Ellen White in relationship to Christian doctrinal matters.

For those who were and are inspired by her words to live fulfilling and meaningful lives of service, she is a prophetic figure. But prophets are human; they can and do make mistakes, and they can and do hold what are, from a strictly factual perspective, erroneous views. In Ellen White’s case, I wish to propose that some of what she remembered about her out-of-body experiences and communicated to others was extremely helpful to those who witnessed her visions and heard about these visions from those who were actually there. She accomplished what she set out to do—keep a “Little Flock” together. But I would suggest that over the long term, there has been created some very negative unintended consequences. Some of the incidental details which she “saw” while in her trance states were solidified into factual assertions concerning, among other topics, details about how God created the world and life forms on it.

So we come back to the original question with some slight modification: How might a nonfundamentalist Adventist Christian answer the question: “Has physical death on earth always existed?” In my current view, the most probable answer is “Yes,” since the best evidence we now have about how God created the world has been revealed to us in the great advances in science inspired by God, which has occurred over the last 500 years. In addition, God has graciously allowed us to obtain much better understandings of how the divine presence communicates to the human family in all cultures in ways they can best appreciate and understand at the time that the communication occurred. 📖

*Ervin Taylor is emeritus professor of anthropology at the University of California, Riverside, and retiring executive publisher of Adventist Today.*

## My Response to “Death Before Sin?—Yes”

By J. David Newman

“Did death exist before sin entered this world?” was the subject for Dr. Taylor’s and my articles. Death has always existed in the evolutionary model, but the Bible calls death an “enemy” and states that at one time it did not exist. Dr. Taylor spends more than half of his article explaining why the evolutionary model is the only one that fits the scientific data.

When he reaches the Biblical material, he begins by asking how one should interpret the Bible. He points out, rightly, that we don’t take everything literally. But we all take death literally. When he gets to the New Testament texts about death, he agrees that Paul understood what he was writing to mean that death came only after Adam and Eve sinned. But he dismisses him in 300 words out of the 3,000 words in his article. Yet the writings of Paul are where you find the reasons for why death came into this world.

Dr. Taylor says that Paul wrote what was common knowledge in his day but that we cannot take what the apostle says as having any literal application for us today. Totally absent from his article is any reference to sin and the need for a Savior. He does not deal with where sin came from or what will happen at the end of the age. Paul explains that it was because of Adam’s sin that death came into the world and humans needed a Savior.

Our subject was not to prove either evolution or creation but to deal with the meaning of death and how the Bible explains its origin and its remedy. The whole purpose of the Bible is to explain that there is a great controversy going on between God and Satan. Humans defected to Satan, and Jesus came to reclaim as many of these rebels as he could. The Bible then tells us how it will all end. Satan and all evil will be destroyed along with death, and perfect peace and joy will reign throughout the universe.

Dr. Taylor made no attempt to wrestle with this overarching motif of the Bible. It seems that the assumptions with which he comes to the Bible are the opposite of the assumptions with which I come. Unless we can agree on the assumptions with which we approach the text, we are whistling in the dark and there is not the slightest chance of any agreement or even any fruitful dialogue.

## My Response to “Death Before Sin?—No”

By Ervin Taylor

In the two responses to the question posed, we clearly illustrate how difficult it is for members of the same church community—even for two individuals who are *Adventist Today* colleagues—to achieve some general consensus, let alone agreement, on an important point of doctrine when there appears to be such a profound difference of approach to something as foundational as the nature of Scripture.

However, let me first agree with my colleague. It is certainly true, as he states, that the “real issue [which] ... we seldom ever discuss” are the “assumptions or presuppositions with which we come to the evidence.” As an example, Dr. Newman seems to assume that all of the Biblical passages he cites should automatically be considered of absolutely equal weight and relevance to the particular topic at issue. He quotes texts without any attempt to put any of them into a relevant historical or interpretative context or a broader framework. I used to believe that he did not adhere to the key text approach to an understanding of what the Biblical writers were trying to communicate, but the manner in which he here quotes a string of Scriptures is making me less sure of my understanding of his belief on this point.

In his essay, four explicit assumptions are offered: They include: (1) “there is a God who created this world and this universe,” (2) that we need “special revelation (the Bible) to help [us] understand general revelation (this world, science),” (3) that “there is good and ... evil ... that the good comes from God and ... evil comes from Satan ... [who tries] to confuse us as we interpret nature to find God or to cry against God.” And (4) we “must use the Bible to correctly interpret the scientific evidence.”

I am happy to affirm the first assumption as well as the assumption that there is both good and evil in this world and that good comes from God. The question of the ultimate source of evil will have to wait for another time, except for the comment that I would submit that we humans can create great evil all by ourselves. I would also affirm that humans have a great capacity to be easily confused about many things, and we mostly do it to ourselves. I am not sure what the role of any proposed supernatural agent might be.

It would appear that the area of needing “special revelation,” i.e., the Bible “to correctly interpret the scientific evidence” is where much of our most serious disagreement is centered. If we can decide on how to appropriately understand and appreciate the Biblical writers’ assumptions about the topics we are considering and to consider the validity of these assumptions, I would then be quite happy to talk about why and how we might wish to interpret the scientific evidence based on Biblical statements. After all, are not Adventists supposed to believe in “present truth”?



# Where Is the Adventist Church Headed?

*Change is in the air for the Seventh-day Adventist Church!*

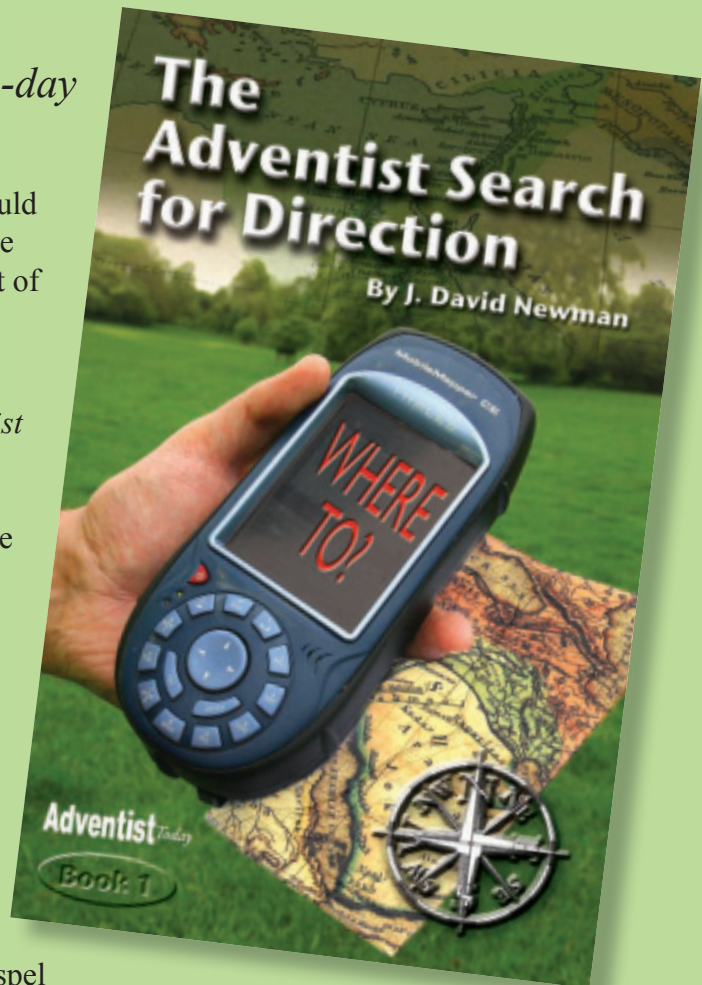
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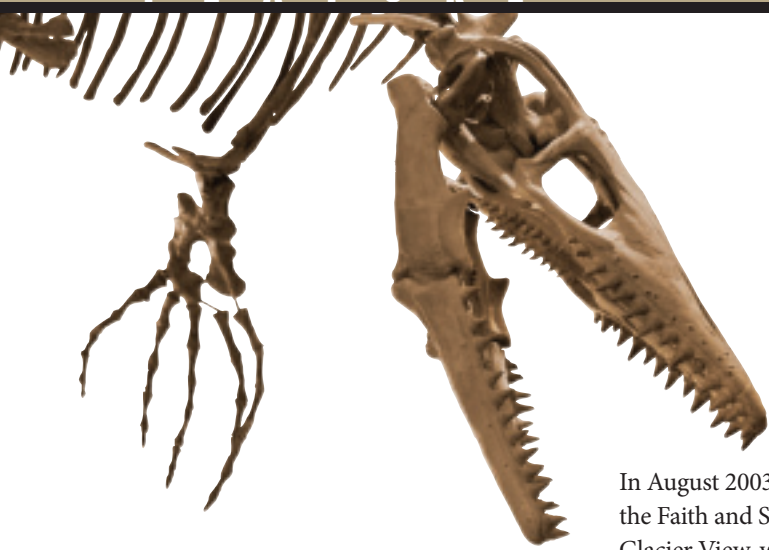


**About the Author:** Dr. Newman is a highly successful pastor whose church has doubled in size and now numbers 700 souls since he became its pastor a few years ago. Son of missionary parents who has lived in many parts of the world and for many years edited *Ministry* magazine for the General Conference, Dr. Newman is considered one of Adventism's most successful pastors and sources of ideas for expanding and growing the church in changing times.

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In August 2003 my husband and I attended the Faith and Science Conference in Glacier View, which was made up of theologians and scientists. When it was over, we descended the mountains with the doleful words ringing in our ears, “There are no trump cards to solve our problems.”

Then it hit me that God has provided some answers. I see some “trump cards” that give room for jump-up-and-down

excess scientific knowledge, I see powerful trump cards in the evidence for Young Earth Creationism. The examples I cite are often snorted at as “anomalies”—exceptions that creationists like to drag up against the overwhelming preponderance of evidence on the other side. But one genuine anomaly has power to dislodge an entire theory.

# Trump Cards for Creationists?

BY BEATRICE S. NEALL

optimism. Not because all of the problems have been solved, but because certain data knock out other data.

Let’s suppose, for instance, that a suspect is on trial for murder. The evidence goes both ways:

- The accused is the elder of his church, with character references from his pastor.
- The suspect had a conflict with the victim over a large sum of money.
- At the time of the murder, the suspect was undergoing open-heart surgery.
- No motivation for the crime can be found.

Obviously point No. 3 is the trump card, making all of the other evidence superfluous.

Now from my vantage point as an amateur, with a mind uncluttered by

## Missing Sediments

For decades Ariel Roth<sup>1</sup> has held out trump cards with explosive implications. Follow him to northeastern Arizona, where the Petrified Forest National Park is located, and you will find the Pliocene Bidahochi Formation lying flat on top of the Upper Triassic Chinle. The missing sediments account for 200 million years of time! Now if the Chinle formation had lain around for about 200 million years waiting for Bidahochi to be deposited on its back, it would have been bombarded by wind, water, waves, earthquakes, volcanos, meteors, and other destructive forces of nature. As a matter of fact, at current rates of erosion it would have washed away completely. But it’s all there, almost as smooth as a skating rink.

How can the absence of erosion be explained? Some speculate that the Chinle might have stood under water for 200 million years. But water doesn’t preserve a smooth surface; look at the continental shelves with canyons as large as the Grand Canyon! Maybe the missing deposits slid off smoothly, like the layers of a cake. (Try it on a cake!) Or perhaps the forces of nature ground them off level, like a road-building grinder. Yeah.

So what is this “anomaly” telling us? It

says that Bidahochi was laid down rapidly on top of Chinle before it got a chance to erode. The implications are stunning. The missing deposits account for the Jurassic, Cretaceous, Paleocene, Eocene, Oligocene, and Miocene epochs. Between the Upper Triassic and the Pliocene, there was no geologic time! The age of the column is shrinking!

Now we come to corollary No. 1: If 200 million years were missing in northeastern Arizona, they were also missing around the globe! Time happens at the same rate all over the world. The missing strata found elsewhere in the world had to be laid down rapidly.

But this is only the beginning. The gaps in Arizona are only several of many such gaps (called *disconformities*) found around the world. On the east coast of Australia sits the Bulli Coal Seam with a 5-million-year gap above it. How could so much soft organic material sit exposed for 5 million years before the next layer was deposited to apply the pressure and heat needed to “coalify” it? Dead Horse Point, Utah, contains two gaps, one representing 12 million and the other 20 million years. In the Rhone Valley, Switzerland, 45 million years are missing. In Brazil, 45 million years. It appears that disconformities are not anomalies; they are nomilies, maybe even commonilies! (I just coined some words!) But here are some blockbusters. The Ogallala Formation (Pliocene), extending from North Dakota to the Texas panhandle, in its southern regions sits smoothly on top of Triassic formations 200 million years older. There go the Jurassic, Cretaceous, and most of the Tertiary periods! Again,

most of the Mesozoic and Cenozoic are wiped out.<sup>2</sup> Watch out! The upper layers are collapsing and threatening the ones below. The age of the column is collapsing like the Twin Towers! Five hundred forty-two million years under pressure!

God has encoded into the column itself the message that the geologic ages are not there!

### Thousands, Not Millions

A recent discovery confirms the absence of millions of years. A huge dinosaur femur from the Jurassic period was found to contain “lifelike tissue that had no business inhabiting a fossilized dinosaur skeleton ... with translucent blood vessels that looked as if they could have come straight from an ostrich at the zoo,” wailed an article in pro-evolutionary *Discover* magazine. “Scientists recognize that soft tissue can survive at most for a few tens of thousands of years, not the 65 million since T. rex walked the Hell Creek Formation in Montana,” the article continued.<sup>3</sup> Dinosaurs must have existed only thousands of years ago!

But then there’s radio-metric dating—the Goliath before which all Israel trembles. Let us consider one method, potassium-argon (K-Ar) dating. This is based on the rate at which potassium “decays” to argon gas; hence, the more argon a sample contains, the older it is. The rocks in the earth would be the same age except that melting (as in volcanos) and cooling releases the argon gas, setting the age of the rock back to zero. After that the decay rate begins again, making it possible to determine how much time has elapsed since the eruption occurred.

Recent samples are hard to date because they contain so little argon.

The accuracy of K-Ar dating can be checked with volcanic eruptions anchored in history. Mt. St. Helens erupted in 1980. Do the lava flows there date to just 30 years? Steven Austin had no trouble finding argon in the samples he analyzed; there was so much that it yielded a date of 300,000 years.<sup>4</sup> But then, he is a creation



scientist; maybe he “cooked the books.” To ensure unbiased results, scientists in New Zealand sent samples of lava flows from Mt. Ngauruhoe occurring in 1949, 1954, and 1975 to Geochron Laboratories in Cambridge, Mass., under the supervision of a specialist in K-Ar dating. They warned him that these were recent samples and might not contain much argon. Geochron Labs had no trouble finding argon; their results dated from 200,000 to 3.5 million years.<sup>5</sup> Ariel Roth cites more anomalies, among them a lava flow in Hawaii historically dated at A.D. 1801, which yielded a date of 1.1 million years.<sup>6</sup> Evidently the melting and rehardening of rocks does not always expel all of the argon. In such cases, volcanic action does not set the clock back to zero.



Now let's consider other difficulties with a long chronology. At the current rate of erosion (6 centimeters per thousand years), the entire North American continent would have eroded away in 10 million years, or 50 times over the lifetime of the Phanerozoic portion of the

column.<sup>7</sup> Why are the continents still here if they are so old?<sup>8</sup> How could they have survived 542 million years of erosion? By conservative estimates, Mount Everest rises at an average of 5 millimeters a year. At this rate it should be 2,500 kilometers high by now! Yet Mt. Everest is only 9 kilometers high. Is that because the mountains are getting worn off by erosion as fast as they are rising? No, because the upthrust matter has not replaced all the sediments above it even once. The young and old portions of the column are well represented over the earth's mountains and continents.<sup>9</sup> The geologic column is still here! *Clearly evolutionists have a problem with too much time!*

Art Chadwick, professor of biology and geology at Southwestern Adventist University, holds a trump card that turns biological evolution on its head. Geneticists like to use the similarity of DNA in all living things to demonstrate how closely humans are related to apes, insects, and even yeast. The implication is that it would be easy for one form to evolve from another. Chadwick gives this evidence a different twist by showing that the immense complexity of structures like neural synapses, brains, and eyes are present even in the trilobites, supposedly the lowest on the evolutionary tree. There is no such thing as development from simple to complex. Extraordinary complexity is present in all living organisms, beginning with the lowest forms of life.<sup>10</sup> And all of the phyla now in existence appear suddenly in the "Cambrian explosion" at the base of the column, without any ancestors. Yet for such complexity to originate through random chance, "deep time" is required. (That's where a lot of improbable things happen.) And if the subsequent biodiversity of life occurred only through undirected blind chance, much more time is necessary than is scheduled by the geologic ages. *Clearly evolutionists have a problem with too little time!*

Biologist Henry Zuill holds another trump card, this one favoring the seven-day creation week. Not only are individual life forms exceedingly complex, but so are the ecosystems that sustain them. To

maintain life, we need everything from *E. coli* bacteria to fruit trees. A man on Mars could not survive unless he brought along all of the essentials for human life. What are the chances that an ecosystem with water, light and darkness, atmosphere, moderate temperature, soil, plants, and animals could all have evolved randomly and independently of each other over long ages to support life on this planet? All of these elements had to come together at once, which is exactly what is described in Genesis chapter 1.

I do not wish to minimize the challenges that still confront Adventist scholars. But I urge that we recognize a hierarchy of evidence, giving due weight to that which "trumps" other evidence. Clearly the long ages read into the geologic column never existed. Contrary evidence, no matter how baffling, should be squared with this fact.

Now I should pray for the rocks to fall on me and hide me from the blasts of the critics. But from the depths, this old fossil would still cry out, "Come on, skeptics, recognize a trump card when you see one!"

*Beatrice Neall is a retired Bible teacher from Union College, currently residing in Ooltewah, TN.*

<sup>1</sup> Ariel A. Roth was for many years director of the Geoscience Research Institute and editor of the journal *Origins*.

<sup>2</sup> Roth, "Those Gaps in the Sedimentary Layers," *Origins*, Vol. 15, No. 2, 1988, pp. 75-83.

(See also "The Scientific Evidence for a Recent Creation," audiotape #ATS-0031 from American Cassette Ministries.)

<sup>3</sup> Barry Yeoman, "Schweitzer's Dangerous Discovery," *Discover*, April 27, 2006, pp. 37-39.

<sup>4</sup> Steven A. Austin, "Excess Argon Within Mineral Concentrates from the New Dacite Lava Dome at Mount St. Helens Volcano," *Creation Ex Nihilo Technical Journal*, Vol. 10, Part 3, 1996.

<sup>5</sup> Andrew Snelling, "Radioactive 'dating' failure: recent New Zealand lava flows yield 'ages' of millions of years," *Creation Ex Nihilo*, Vol. 22, No. 1/ December 1999-February 2000, pp. 18-21.

<sup>6</sup> Roth, *Origins: Linking Science and Scripture* (Hagerstown, MD, 1998), p. 251. (See pp. 251-253, where the author suggests ways in which excess argon can cause anomalously old dates.)

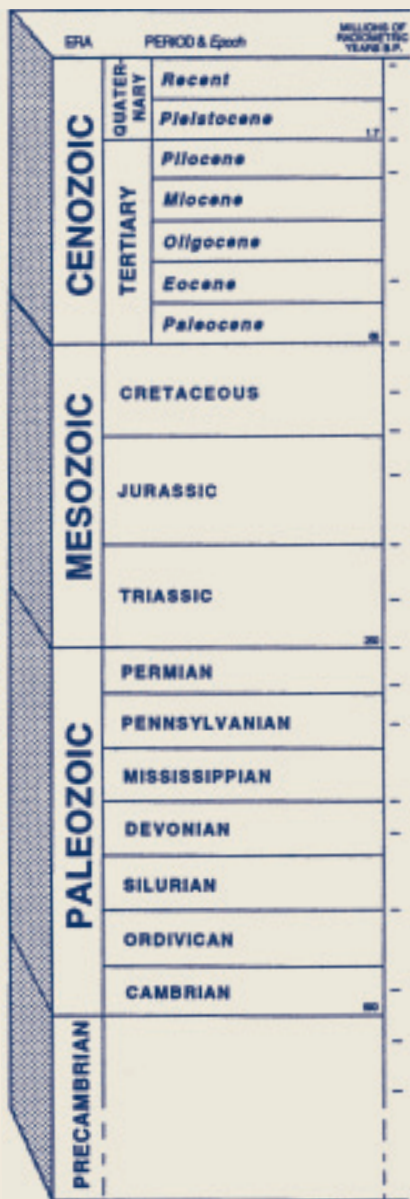
<sup>7</sup> The Phanerozoic (containing fossils) excludes the Precambrian levels of the column. Dates on the chart have been modified somewhat in recent years.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 263.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 269.

<sup>10</sup> Arthur V. Chadwick, <http://origins.swau.edu>.

## THE GEOLOGIC COLUMN



column.<sup>7</sup> Why are the continents still here if they are so old?<sup>8</sup> How could they have survived 542 million years of erosion? By conservative estimates, Mount Everest

# Time for the Laity to Take Over

BY MILT ERHART

*Adventist Today* has published numerous articles discussing the decline of the Adventist Church in North America. While the articles have been uniformly correct in diagnosing the sickness, none has offered a solution that will keep the “church structure” relatively intact while providing a mechanism for growth.

If the Adventist Church in North America is to survive, at least two changes should take place. First, each local conference’s structure should be folded into its respective union conference. The savings to the North American Division (NAD) would be between \$50 million and \$70 million annually. Second, the local church should combine church expense and tithe as one and pay 10 percent to the union conference, plus 8 percent into the retirement fund.

While this may sound radical, it really isn’t. The only new function the union conference would be assuming that it doesn’t already duplicate is providing a resource database for pastors seeking employment. The union conference or NAD could still handle payroll and many human resources issues.

Here is a proposed model for how the new system could work. The local churches would hire and fire their own pastors, along with setting salaries in an approved range of approximately 85 percent to 130 percent of an established denominationwide salary schedule. Local churches would be responsible for the entire funding of their local schools. The 82 percent they do not pass on to the union conference would be used to pay for church and school expenses, including salaries for pastors and teachers.

## Advantages to This Program

First, both lay leaders and pastors would be jointly responsible for a church’s growth or failure. The local church would become the focal point instead of the conference. The union would become a resource center for the churches. In most small conferences, the Sabbath School and Youth departments, which have basically disappeared, would be restored under this model. The local church and its pastor together would set benchmarks and goals the pastor would need to meet to stay employed.

Second, small churches would have some revenue to employ at least part-time pastors. Now they share with neighboring churches that are often great distances away or else simply go without. No doubt large churches would financially support re-establishing churches in core communities where membership had been allowed to evaporate.

Third, it would allow churches to apportion revenue between the ministerial and educational ministries. Currently the real cost of running elementary schools gets masked due to conference subsidies.

It is easy in our bureaucracy-heavy church to forget that the early Christian church was established by fishermen and carpenters. The original Adventist Church was started primarily by farmers and shopkeepers.

Our unnecessarily employed religious hierarchy consumes funds that could be used to put Adventist education within reach of many loyal parents. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) keeps its title revenue locally and uses unpaid laity to fuel the denomination’s phenomenal growth. My LDS friends can send their children to Brigham Young University for less than the cost of tuition at the University of Utah, which is only a fraction of what our universities charge. When a conference official visits your church, just remember that his salary is the reason Adventist education is so expensive.

## Instances of Laity Taking Over

Two years ago it became evident to several of us in our congregation that unless we stepped up to the plate, our church was in danger of collapsing. In the last two years we have completed the biggest lay refurbishing project in more than 50 years and saved the congregation at least \$150,000. While doing this project, we established a theme: “Catch the Spirit.”

In 2009 we had two community concerts, both filling the 600-seat church—a very rare experience. One of concert singers spoke to me afterward and said she was thinking of coming back to church. Then she introduced me to her children and grandchild, who had come to hear her.

In 2010 we are planning a community garden and expanding our community concert series. We are talking about a weekly community gym night. Those of us who led out in the project have had numerous members tell us how they appreciate our leadership and work to involve the entire church in our project.

This experience has brought renewed energy to our church. It was accomplished without significant ministerial involvement and raised the spirits of a previously discouraged congregation. The new Pathfinder leader told the board that for the first time since belonging to the church, he now thinks there is hope for the future. We believe that church growth can best be achieved by opening our doors and grounds to the community without first asking them to believe a set of doctrines. Other churches may prefer the traditional evangelism methods.

For too long we have assumed that the conference hierarchy know best. It is time for the laity to take back their church before it completely disappears.

*Milt Erhart writes from Boise, Idaho.*

# Contemporary CHRISTIAN MUSIC

By Nancy Canwell

Her comment took me back a few decades. Recently our family was visiting an Adventist church in a neighboring town, and I was impressed with the song service. The youth leader played guitar while several teens led the singing. Words to songs were on a screen along with beautiful scenic backgrounds.

After the music, the pastor got up and asked everyone to stand and greet someone near them. An elderly woman sitting in front of us turned around and shook my hand. “I sure enjoyed your song service,” I told her.

“Really?” she acted surprised. And then with a concerned look on her face, she said: “I don’t know about this new type of praise music. . . . I’m afraid that the church is changing.”

“Well, I certainly hope it is!” I replied in a cheerful tone.

She was stunned. “You do?”

“Yes, I do.” I said. “If we’re going to keep our young people in the church, we need to make some changes. And being open to different styles of music is one of them.” She mumbled something, turned around, and sat down.

## The Past

Her comments took me back to the ’70s when my youth group, Adventist Youth in Action (AYA), was on fire for God. Unfortunately, we received a fair bit of criticism. We used guitars. We replaced hymnals in the youth room with songbooks that had praise choruses. Adults said our music had “too much of a beat.” Some of the elders felt we were acting Pentecostal when we joined hands and raised them during the chorus of *Side by Side*. And

many felt we showed too much emotion. But when I look back on my teen years, that style of music helped solidify my faith. It made God more real to me and provided a deeply meaningful way for me to express my love for him.

Now I have a daughter the same age that I was during those AYA years, and once again Christian music has changed dramatically. This time, it has been my turn to adjust. This became clear to my husband and me when we attended a four-day music event called Creation Fest, where the entire spectrum of contemporary Christian music is played. After one particular concert, our daughter came running up the hill from the mosh pit and said, “Mom! What did you think about that?!” I was honest when I answered, “Well, honey, it seemed a bit rocky to me.” With a disappointed and earnest look, she replied, “But Mom, didn’t you see all those kids crying? There wasn’t a dry eye around me. Everyone was so moved by those songs.”

That’s when I, as a parent, had to have an open mind. Who’s to say that kids today have to be touched by the same music that touched me in the ’70s? Or you in your generation? And how can we condemn Christian bands that are obviously reaching kids with the lyrics of their songs and personal testimonies? How can we adults say that their music is of the devil—or that anything with a beat can’t be from God? If we so desperately

want to keep our youth in the church, maybe we need to listen better to what meets their needs. Maybe there’s a middle ground where we can all find worship.

## The Present

Just what does contemporary Christian music mean to today’s teens? Here’s what some of them have told me:

• **Hannah:** “My freshman year at high school was definitely a tough one for me, and I don’t think I could have made it without my style of encouraging Christian music. Every time I felt like I was about to break down or just felt so far away from God, I would turn on my favorite songs and they would always bring me back to that special place with God. Once, when I was having a hard time feeling like I didn’t fit in, I turned on one of my favorites. Even though I didn’t feel like I had many friends at that moment, I felt God close and vowed to trust him and his plans no matter how hard life gets.”

• **Joel:** “I personally have had the privilege of leading worship for tens of thousands of teenagers and young adults all over the continent. This basically means I lead them in music with a very contemporary style—but with lyrical content that points them toward a strong, intimate relationship with the Father. It is an absolutely flooring moment for me to see young kids, sometimes 10 or 11 years old, connect with God in way that they have never been able to do





before—literally on their faces on the ground as they realize that they need his love. I've watched hardened kids with their arms stretched out toward heaven, singing songs of surrender. I've seen 12- and 13-year-old girls who are struggling with anorexia, cutting, or abuse at home bawling their eyes out at an altar as they come to understand that they are beautiful in the eyes of God."

• **Lachelle:** "Worship leading is my passion and, as of now, my calling for the next few years. I have had many incredible opportunities to play, sing, and worship in a variety of settings. I believe that contemporary Christian music is an amazing way for the youth of this generation to meet God and for other generations to experience him in a new way. It is relevant, interesting, uplifting, and inspiring. The words are personal, and the music inspires a relationship with a God who deeply cares for his children. Above all else, I have been in many situations where contemporary Christian music has led others to Christ, which I believe is the purpose of everything we do here on Earth."

• **Kylon:** "When I sit down in the studio and come up with a new beat on my drum kit, or when I write a new song that attempts to describe my Creator, I feel close to God. That beat is the heartbeat of God played through me, and those lyrics are the words of God spoken through me to minister to others. We were made in God's image. He is the Creator. The ability to create was not meant to be ignored, but to be celebrated! So when I write new music that I feel is relevant to the world I live in today, I hope it will stir up a new passion

for Christ in others. And when I hear similar music from other artists, I feel a connection to my Creator. When I express my love to him by creating music that will lead me and others closer to him, I feel the connection."

• **Emily:** "Maybe it's the generation gap, but listening to contemporary Christian music for the first time brought me close to God in a way I had never felt before. The songs were simple, and a lot of them came straight from Scripture. More importantly, the songs had life in them. The people I know who enjoy this style of music sing from the soul, with true passion. They have a real relationship with God, and it shines through them when they sing. I have made this music a huge part of my worship and devotional time with Jesus."

### The Future

Last night I was at yet another concert with our daughter. It was called the "Rock and Road Worship Tour." During the song *I Can Only Imagine* by the band Mercy Me, I saw movement out of the corner of my eye. When I turned to look, there was my 16-year-old daughter. Her eyes were closed, her face lifted toward heaven. Her right arm was raised in praise to her God as she sang the song. It was an emotional moment for me as a mom. An image that I'll always keep in my heart.

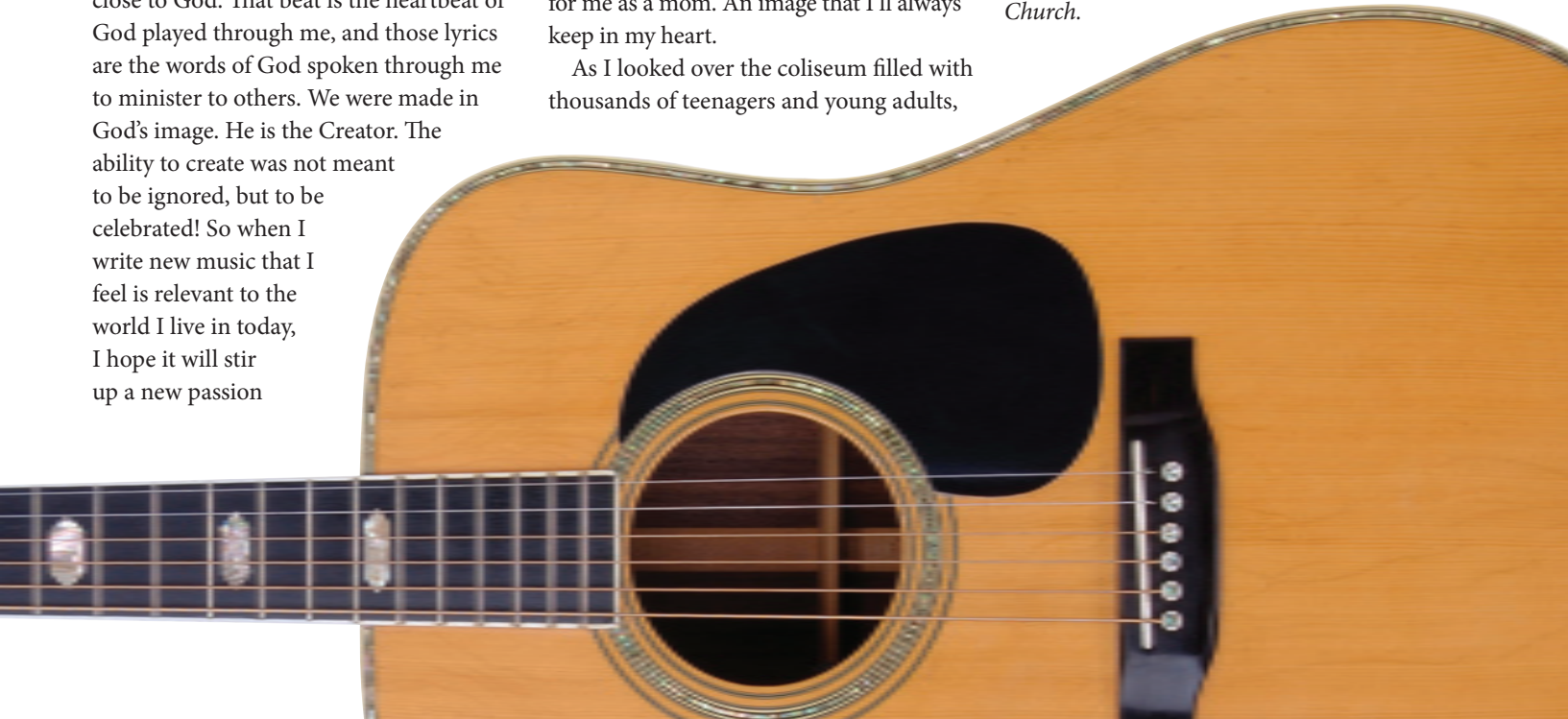
As I looked over the coliseum filled with thousands of teenagers and young adults,

I thought to myself, "These kids could be anywhere else than here tonight. They could be in a bar, at a party, in the back seat of a car, or at the movies. But they chose to come here. Something here reaches them." I say we'd better find out what it is, take hold of it, and use it in our local churches.

My good friend and worship leader, Joel, asked if we adults would run with the torch that God is passing to the next generation. He asked if those in leadership would dare to take risks and step boldly into the unknown—and watch God move. It might not be in the same way that he moved in our lives when we were teens, or even in the last decade. As Joel said, "God is much more concerned with his glory than our comfort zones. After all, in the end it's his show, not ours."

"Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute, praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD" (Psalm 150:3-6, NIV). 📖

*Nancy Canwell is a pastor, freelance writer, and speaker. Her last position was youth pastor at the Walla Walla University Church.*





## An Adventist Clapham?

By Alden Thompson

At our house we recently finished reading two fascinating books by Eric Metaxas, one of them sobering, the other exciting. The sobering one was *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy*.<sup>1</sup> In it Metaxas details how Germany, in the aftermath of the humiliating World War I Versailles treaty, spiraled deeper and deeper into the spell cast by Adolph Hitler.

One of the more troubling parts was the picture of a steady stream of Prussian generals resigning their positions as they became aware of Hitler's deadly goals, but refusing to confront their leader because of their keen sense of honor. A certain nobility, to be sure, marks those who simply step quietly aside when they can no longer support their leader. But in Germany, this time-honored and noble tradition meant the squandering of multiple opportunities to expose the demonic nature of Hitler's regime. As Hitler increased his grip on the country, any who opposed him usually paid with their lives.

### Restoring "Manners" to a Society

The other Metaxas book is entitled *Amazing Grace: William Wilberforce and the Heroic Campaign to End Slavery*.<sup>2</sup> It tells how a remarkable cluster of committed Christians, known as the Clapham Circle and led by William Wilberforce, not only mounted a successful campaign to end slavery in the British empire, but also were actively involved in a host of activities to transform public "manners." At one point, Wilberforce himself was officially linked

with 69 groups dedicated to various kinds of social reforms.<sup>3</sup>

Metaxas notes that most of us would be surprised by the actual quality of life in Britain in the 18<sup>th</sup> century: "brutal, decadent, violent, and vulgar." In addition to slavery, he lists a daunting catalog of societal evils: "epidemic alcoholism, child prostitution, child labor, frequent public executions for petty crimes, public dissections and burnings of executed criminals, and unspeakable public cruelty to animals."<sup>4</sup>

I will return to the vision of the Clapham Circle, but first a sharper focus on the slavery issue. In contrast with the United States, where the slaves were very much visible within the host country, very few of the approximately 3 million Africans pressed into British slavery ever set foot in Britain itself. They were sent directly to the British sugar plantations in the West Indies, which made it more difficult to rouse the public conscience to the evils of the slave trade. And when Wilberforce and his colleagues first set out to address the slavery issue, the initial outcry was startling. Lord Melbourne, for example, was outraged that Wilberforce would dare inflict his Christian values on society at large. Metaxas quotes his infamous outburst: "Things have come to a pretty pass," he fumed, "when one should permit one's religion to invade public life."<sup>5</sup>

Given such resistance at the beginning of the abolition movement, it's not surprising that it would take a full 20 years—with numerous defeats along the

way—before the Parliament finally voted to abolish the slave trade in 1807. Yet even that vote ended only the slave trade, not slavery itself. Some 800,000 human beings were still in bondage to their West Indian masters. The final vote for full liberation came 26 years later, on July 26, 1833. Wilberforce's great dream had been realized. He died three days later.

The liberation took place on July 31, 1834. An historian's description of the fateful date in history is a moving one: "On the last night of slavery, the negroes in our West Indian islands went up on to the hill-tops to watch the sun rise, bringing them freedom as its first rays struck the waters."<sup>6</sup>

### Seeking to Transform Culture

But now let's return to the Clapham Circle. The name comes from a small community outside of London, where a cluster of committed Christians lived in close proximity and dreamed dreams about how they could transform their culture and the world. Quite literally they followed the counsel of Hebrews 10:23-25, seeking ways to "provoke one another to love and good deeds." It worked.

One of the triggers for the reforming work of the Clapham Circle was embodied in a 1760 royal proclamation with the quaint title: "The Proclamation for the Encouragement of Piety and Virtue and for the Preventing of Vice, Profaneness and Immorality." Typically the public greeted such proclamations with a shrug and a smile at best, and life went on as usual. But Wilberforce got an

idea from an old book that found its way into his hands, *History of the Society for the Reformation of Manners in the Year*

*The name Clapham Circle comes from a small community outside of London, where a cluster of committed Christians lived in close proximity and dreamed dreams about how they could transform their culture and the world.*

1692. What he discovered was that when William and Mary acceded to the British throne in 1692, their proclamation made a difference because the royal couple had formed a “Proclamation Society,” which was given real clout to put into effect what the proclamation had announced.

So Wilberforce persuaded King George

III to re-issue his 1760 proclamation in 1787, 27 years later. Then Wilberforce and friends set out to form proclamation societies throughout Britain; these groups included leading people from society, politics, and business. The Clapham Circle organized more specific groups for special projects, often with rather precise titles. An example: “Friendly Female Society for the Relief of Poor, Infirm, Aged Widows and Single Women, of Good Character, Who Have Seen Better Days.”<sup>7</sup>

In a sense, Wilberforce was ahead of his time, for he was convinced that punishing smaller crimes prevents larger ones. The famous “Broken Windows” essay by John Q. Wilson and George Kelling, published in 1982 in *Atlantic Monthly*, argued the same point. Their theory was demonstrated in New York City, where implementation transformed the city from having one of the highest crime rates in the country to having one of the lowest. Instead of ignoring small crimes—such as subway fare beating and aggressive panhandling—in the interest of pursuing more serious ones, the city aggressively went after the small crimes first.

Some 200 years before Wilson and Kelling, Wilberforce intuitively sensed the same principle. And by tenaciously following through on that one idea, he transformed the culture. In Metaxas’ words, it was “the lever by which little Wilberforce replaced an entire world of brutality and misery with another of civility and hope, one that we now refer to as the Victorian era.”<sup>8</sup>

So what does all that mean for

Adventists? It means that by God’s grace we could break out of our sectarian isolation and make a difference in the world. Because Adventism has been a counter-cultural movement, it has been easy for us to live unto ourselves. Recently a devout Adventist businessman described the attractive Adventist church in his community as an island, existing in splendid isolation from the community itself. “In terms of involvement with the community,” he noted, “nobody knows it’s there.”

Jesus calls his children to be the salt of the earth, the light of the world.<sup>9</sup> The Claphamites showed that it could be done. And it is already happening here and there in Adventism. Could it become as contagious as a smile that brightens the corner where we are and then spreads everywhere from there? The trenchant lines attributed to anthropologist Margaret Mead are ones that we should be able to adopt with enthusiasm: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”<sup>10</sup>

If those citizens are committed Christians, watch out!

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Nelson, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> HarperOne, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> *Amazing Grace*, xvii.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, p. xix.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, p. 277, a quote from G.M. Trevelyan

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, p. 253.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, p. 79.

<sup>9</sup> Matt. 5:13-15.

<sup>10</sup> According to the Institute for Intercultural Studies, the quote cannot be traced to a published source in spite of its wide attribution to Margaret Mead.

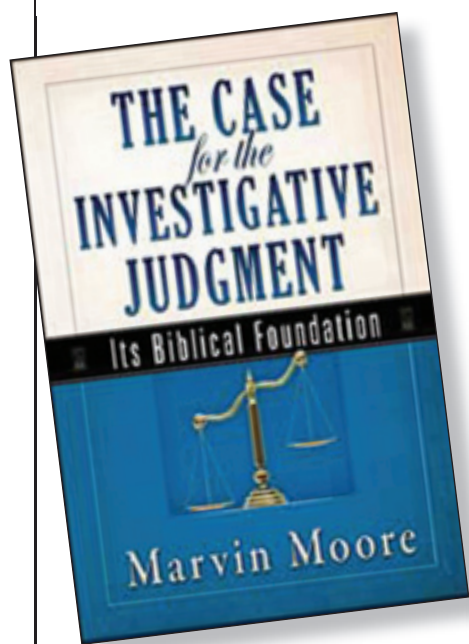


## ***The Case for the Investigative Judgment Found Wanting***

by Desmond Ford

*The Case for the Investigative Judgment: Its Biblical Foundation*, by Marvin Moore, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2010.

**Editors: We print Desmond Ford's review of Marvin Moore's latest book with a twist: Moore reviews Ford's review.**



Hot off the press—Pacific Press—comes *The Case for the Investigative Judgment*, by *Signs of the Times* Editor Marvin Moore. It will make some people cheer and others sigh. With his usual courtesy, Marvin sent me a copy.

### **Not a Theologian**

Elder Moore is a Christian gentleman of absolute integrity. Probably there is not a more loyal Adventist on the globe. But his book is an anachronism that will be rejected by most Bible scholars, be they Adventist or non-Adventist. On page 27 the author confesses, “I am not a professional theologian.” I am sure that in God’s reckoning, the simple faith of the least of his children weighs more than the

learned tomes of professional theologians. But in literary ventures like this one, ignoring the conclusions of men who have spent, in their individual lifetimes, decades studying the original Bible languages and all other areas pertinent to accurate exegesis is literary suicide.

The book’s bibliography cites just three non-Adventist sources and so contrasts with the Adventist classic *The Great Controversy*, which draws from scores outside our ranks. Moore’s work contrasts also with well-known polemic works by Adventists, such as the voluminous tomes by Le Roy Froom and *Questions on Doctrine* (see “Question 44”). Look, for example, at the lengthy lists of non-Adventist scholars cited in *The Conditionalist Faith of our Fathers*, who agree with our position on the nature of man, death, and the wages of sin. There are hundreds of them, but Moore cannot find one to support his peculiar case. He seems unaware that such a doctrine as the investigative judgment has long been recognized as “a face-saving device” by scholars within and without the church. For decades it has made us a laughing-stock with other evangelical groups. How obvious it has always been to them that the Day of Atonement sacrifices and the entrance into the presence of God pointed to Calvary and not to 1844!

This new offering from Pacific Press, if ever admitted into seminary libraries, will be viewed as an oddity and an example of ecclesiastical jingoism. Those same libraries may have Kai Arasola’s work *The End of Historicism*, and though written by a well-known Adventist scholar it would be considered as worthy only of praise. Moore gives no evidence that he has ever truly weighed the evidence in this work, and this devastates the very foundation on which his case is built. Arasola’s book is not in his bibliography.

### **A Doctrine No Longer Revered**

Then there is the verdict of Seventh-day Adventist history. For well over half a century, the majority of Adventist scholars have refused to write an academic work supporting 1844 and the investigative judgment. When I did an M.A. degree at Potomac University near the end of the 1950s, I found the investigative judgment doctrine was a matter for humor, not reverence. Since then my personal contact with many of the most respected academicians in our ranks has demonstrated the same. When a student asked one Andrews University professor about the reality of the investigative judgment, he answered by saying it was on a par with the man in the moon.

Even a clock that is stopped tells the truth twice a day, and it would be unfair to suggest that there are no virtues in this book. There are many more than two. Pages 27-31 are excellent in the clarity with which the New Testament gospel is presented. And in many other places the writing is clearly that of a man who knows and loves Christ and would cheerfully die for him.

The investigative judgment teaching rests on more than 20 assumptions, all of which have been disproved. Just to remove one of these from the doctrinal structure makes all the rest tumble. See my *Glacier View* manuscript, page 287 and following; *Daniel 8:14, the Day of Atonement, and the Investigative Judgment*, p. 174; and *For the Sake of the Gospel*, page 42 and following. For me, to itemize and critique these assumptions as found in Marvin’s book would require a book larger than his. Therefore I must limit myself to a few cardinal issues.

### **Year-Day Principle**

Turning to the chief Achilles’ heel in this book, I quote from page 253: “Are

Ford and Cottrell correct? I will begin by agreeing that the Bible doesn't directly *state* the year-day principle anywhere. Neither of the texts I quoted above actually *states* it."

The chief pillar to which Moore clings for his faith in this pillar of historicism is Daniel 9:24. He is emphatic that the Hebrew word translated "weeks" means just that and not "sevens." However, the revised *SDA Bible Commentary* says the year-day principle is *not* present in Daniel 9:24-27!

I touch on this issue in my recent book *For the Sake of the Gospel*. I quote: "The word translated 'weeks' in the KJV and some other versions is literally 'sevens' and, like the words 'dozen' or 'score,' can apply to a variety of things. The Hebrew word there used is never used for a seven-day period, although the singular term can be so used. In 90 out of the 94 cases in which the OT used the word *shabua* in the sense of seven days, there are added the explanatory and additional words 'of days,' for *shabua* on its own merely means a heptad (a group or series of seven). Here in Daniel 9:24, the Hebrew is in the masculine, whereas the plural form elsewhere is always feminine. The placing of this special word as first in the text is to draw attention to its special significance.

"The 'seventy sevens' (see the NIV and many other versions) is to remind readers of the Jubilee that came every seven times seven years. Symbolically, the number alludes to a period of 10 Jubilees ushering in the Messianic era, which would bring the spiritual equivalent of all the Jubilee blessings of freedom from debt, captivity, and exile. See Luke 4:16-19.

"Recent interpreters of Daniel speak of chronography. It is a stylized scheme of history for interpreting the records of history without being too bound to chronological data. It is similar to the

cosmology, anthropology, and genealogy of the Old Testament. A similar scheme is found in Matthew chapter one, where the genealogy is not precise (omitting several generations) in order to give a symbolic pattern (based on the number forty-two, the number of stations in the Exodus, and the total of the meaning of David's Hebrew name).

"Adventists have insisted that the word translated 'determined' in the KJV actually means 'cut off.' It is true that the Hebrew term signifies 'cut,' but its usage among the Jews gave the meaning of 'decree' or 'determine.' See any detailed Bible commentary on Daniel, such as the *International Critical Commentary*.

"Because Daniel 9:24-27 is an apotelesmatic prophecy pointing to several crises, including that under Antiochus Epiphanes and also both advents of Christ, chronography alone was suitable here rather than an exact chronology. See my book *In the Heart of Daniel*, which is an exposition of Daniel 9:24-27.

"The traditional dates used by Adventists in connection with the prophecy of Daniel 9 are either completely false or very much uncertain. The years A.D. 27, 31, and 34 fall in the latter category. Almost universally, A.D. 31 as the date for the Crucifixion has been relinquished. ... See the article 'A Basis for New Testament Chronology' in the *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5, pp. 235-266.

"But there is nothing at all in favor of 457 B.C. A reading of Ezra 7 establishes that this was a Temple decree, not one given for the initial rebuilding of the city. That had been given by Cyrus and is referred to over and over in the Old Testament. See also Isa. 44:26-28; 45:13; 2 Chron. 36:23; and Ezra 1:1-4.

"Haggai 1:4 and other Old Testament

passages show that Jerusalem had been inhabited decades before the decree of Ezra 7. After the decree of Cyrus in 539 B.C., fifty thousand of the exiles returned to Jerusalem and set about re-establishing it. See the book of Zechariah."<sup>1</sup>

Before writing the foregoing, I had contacted Professor Alan R. Millard, Rankin Reader in Hebrew and Ancient Semitic Languages, University of Liverpool, England. He had written the Commentary on Daniel for *The International Bible Commentary* (editor F. F. Bruce). There he had stated the following as he dealt with Daniel 9:24: "'Weeks' is an interpretative translation; Heb. gives literally 'in sevens, seventy,' the word 'in sevens' being a masculine form as in verse 26, whereas the feminine normally stands for 'weeks.' The masculine recurs in 10:2-3, but qualified as 'in sevens, days.' To understand 'weeks' here without reserve is unwarranted."

I wanted to know if this was still Professor Millard's position. And he wrote me categorically that it was.

A heading on page 259 of Moore's book announces triumphantly regarding the year-day principle, "It Works!"

But, most emphatically, it does not.

Here is a very simple approach for solving the matters in controversy. When I wrote George McCready Price in the 1950s about the year-day principle, he gave a similar argument to that of Moore. "It works," he wrote me. But once more I insist, it does not.

## Papal Supremacy

The matter can be proved or disproved any Sabbath morning if one does a little historical research on the period of papal supremacy in European history. There is no historian in the whole wide world, respected by his peers, who believes that the papacy was supreme in Europe for

1,260 years. It was not.

While 1798 was a significant date in papal history, the same cannot be said for 538. To review the events of this year as they affected the papacy is to discover that it was not a zenith but a nadir—a year of humiliation without any vestige of glory.

In Schaff's *History of the Christian*

*Moore does not ignore the arguments drawn from Hebrews by those who reject the investigative judgment. His first words in Part 1 of his discussion on Hebrews tell us that for many years he had puzzled and prayed over these problems.*

*Church*, we read the following: "Vigilius, a pliant creature of Theodora, ascended the papal chair under the military protection of Belisarius (538-554). ... His administration was an unprincipled vacillation between the dignity and duties of his office and subservience to an alien theological and political influence. ... In Constantinople, where he resided several

years at the instance of the emperor, he suffered much personal persecution, but without the spirit of martyrdom, and without its glory. For example, at least according to Western accounts, he was violently torn from the altar, upon which he was holding with both hands so firmly that the posts of the canopy fell in above him; he was dragged through the streets with a rope around his neck, and cast into a common prison."<sup>2</sup>

All church historians stress the subservience of the papacy to the emperors, not just for a few decades, but over a period of centuries. All attempts to reverse matters failed until we reach the eleventh century; only with the coming of Heldebrand did lasting papal supremacy begin. But within three centuries, its course was again downward.

Too often Adventist discussions on the course of history ignore the fact that the Christian religion in the east, with its capital at Constantinople, has enjoyed independence from the papacy for most of the time since the fourth century. The council of Chalcedon in 451 placed Constantinople on equality with Rome.<sup>3</sup>

All historians tell the same story. In Roberts' *History of Modern Europe*, we read what happened when the political center of the empire shifted to Constantinople: "The Eastern emperors consistently resented any movement that would add to the prestige of Rome. They were jealous of their old capital, and tried to repress the Popes. Justinian, for instance, forced the Pope of the day to come to his court and there insulted him. Constans 11 imprisoned and banished another Pope, and various emperors strove to maintain this policy until Pope Sergius, in 692. ... At length the rivalry developed to such an extent that the Eastern emperors encouraged the formation of a separate Church in their

own lands, and, after a great struggle in the eighth century, the Eastern Church became separate from the West."<sup>4</sup>

Here is a question well worth asking: "Why do historicists always focus on Western Europe in interpreting prophecy as though there were not millions living elsewhere?"

I submit that Moore's argumentation for the investigative judgment stands or falls on this very simple matter: Is it true that the Papacy had supremacy for 1,260 years? Spend a couple of hours with encyclopedias, and the debate for you will be over. The year-day principle is not Biblical, and therefore neither is 1844 as the beginning of the antitypical Day of Atonement.

## Setting Prophetic Dates

There is another very simple approach. With a New Testament in one's hand, could one come anywhere near an 1844 investigative judgment? This inspired volume assumes that a near end for the world would have come had the church been faithful to its commission. Thus Christ declared that his disciples would see the end, and Paul spoke of those in his flock who would witness the second Advent. See the repeated use of "you" in Matthew 24, and read 2 Thessalonians beginning with chapter 4 verse 16. The New Testament like the Old, using Semitic idiom, often spoke of contingent matters as certain.<sup>5</sup>

Christ emphatically forbade any attempt to establish prophetic dates from Scripture. See Acts 1:7: "It is not for you to know the times or dates." Why is it that Adventists ignore this word from our Lord? The same New Testament tells us that the last days began in apostolic times (Acts 2:16; Heb. 9:26; 1:1; 1 John 2:18; Matt. 10:23; 24:34; 16:28; Mark 13:30; 1 Cor. 7:29, 31; Rom. 13:12; 1 Pet. 4:7; and



Rev. 1:1, 3; 2:24-25; 3:3, 10-11, 20; 22:7, 10, 20). If Adventists really understood what is now known about inaugurated and consummated eschatology, historicism could never prosper.

## The Book of Hebrews

Moore does not ignore the arguments drawn from Hebrews by those who reject the investigative judgment. His first words in Part 1 of his discussion on Hebrews tell us that for many years he had puzzled and prayed over these problems. Then he valiantly offers his solutions. At this point I remind myself that of all persons I should have tremendous sympathy for my friend, for I have travelled the same course spending decades trying to solve the investigative judgment questions, particularly those posed by the Book of Hebrews.

On page 291 of Moore's book we read, "if by *ta hagia* the author meant exclusively the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary, then obviously Jesus must have begun just a Most Holy Place/Day of Atonement ministry in A.D. 31." Yes, obviously. But Marvin concludes that *ta hagia* can only mean "sanctuary." However Hebrews 9:8, 12, 25 clearly affirm that the annual *Yom Kippur* found its fulfillment in the generation of its readers, and in Leviticus 16, "holy place" is used six times where the second apartment is meant. Marvin's argumentation would read strangely to most Greek scholars.

Hebrews 9, alone in the Bible, interprets the meaning of the Day of Atonement, the two apartments, and the cleansing of the sanctuary. We have habitually misinterpreted the chapter. For example, take verses 21 and onward, which declare that the purifying of the antitypical sanctuary of heaven had already happened by Christ's atonement

on the cross. Adventists usually apply it to a future cleansing centuries afterward, whereas the passage clearly means one that has been accomplished. Moore understands Hebrews 10:19 and its following verses as applying to the inauguration of Christ's heavenly ministry, not the antitypical Yom Kippur. But the preceding verses have the Day of Atonement in focus.

The book we are reviewing contends on page 294 "that Christ began a Holy Place ministry in the heavenly sanctuary when he ascended in A.D. 31." *But nowhere does Hebrews even hint of any such preliminary ministry.* Constantly the author of Hebrews presents Christ as the antitypical High Priest, who by his death fulfilled the primary Day of Atonement offering and by his ascension entered into the very presence of God that had been typified by the sanctuary's second apartment (see Heb. 6:19; 9:8, 12, 25; 10:19-20). Thus our Lord throughout this book is presented as the One who alone could discharge the distinctive high priestly work of atonement.

As a boy of 15, I re-read Hebrews 9 and saw that it was applying the Day of Atonement not to 1844, but to the cross and Christ's ascension into heaven. I submit that anyone of average intelligence reading this chapter in any modern version will conclude (*provided they are not burdened with a case to prove*):

(1) That the Day of Atonement is applied to what Christ had already done before this letter was written.

(2) that the two apartments symbolized the Old and New Testament eras respectively.

(3) That the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary (the removal of sin's scandal) took place at the cross.

I confess to being reminded (as I read my friend's argumentation on Hebrews) of the blacksmith's sign, "All kinds of

twisting and turning done here." But not for a moment am I suggesting that there is the slightest hint of dishonesty in any of Moore's presentation. Often it is just a matter of missing information, as on page 305 where recent understanding about inaugurated and consummated eschatology seems missing. And, while I heartily disagree with my friend's conclusions, I can throw no stones because for many years I too did all I could to "prove" the investigative judgment doctrine.

Many look to the *Darcom* series of books to substantiate their faith in the investigative judgment. In an appendix in *Daniel and the Coming King*, I gave evidence why such confidence is unfounded. Recently a much-esteemed Adventist researcher (an ordained pastor of many years experience) did a more searching examination than mine and found that only three and a half percent of the series dealt with the Glacier View issues and that these pages were filled with notes of uncertainty. When this study is published, it will be the "wound unto death" for the traditional interpretation of Daniel 8:14.

On his second-to-last page, Moore has a splendid statement. Here it is: "There is no such thing as total objectivity. We all come at the evidence with our biases, with our minds about half made up, and we set out to prove what we already think is right. And usually we can find evidence to support our presuppositions." Touché!

*Desmond Ford is a retired Adventist theologian.*

<sup>1</sup> Desmond Ford, *For the Sake of the Gospel*, pp. 58-59.

<sup>2</sup> Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. 3, p. 327.

<sup>3</sup> For more on this, see Kenneth Scott Latourette's *A History of Christianity*, pp. 278, 291.

<sup>4</sup> Stephen Roberts, *History of Modern Europe*, p. 18.

<sup>5</sup> See Jonah 3:4 and Acts 3:19-21.

## My Response to Desmond Ford's Critique

By Marvin Moore

When I submitted my book on the investigative judgment to Pacific Press, I expected that following its publication I would receive both praise and criticism—and I have. Fair enough. As I said in the first chapter, “I do expect the critics to respond to what I’ve written, ... and I hope to learn from them.”

### The Basic Issue

I will begin my response to Ford's comments by stating what I believe is the bottom-line issue in this entire debate: Will the eschatological judgment the Bible speaks of occur *prior* to Christ's second coming or *at* his coming? Apparently, for Ford, the judgment that is repeatedly spoken of in Scripture (e.g.: Eccl. 12:14; Matt. 12:36, 37; Rom. 14:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:10) will take place *at* Christ's second coming, not before. He states in his Glacier View manuscript that the judgment when God “make[s] public His righteous decisions ... transpires in the split second division of the living at the advent and subsequent resurrections” (p. 476).

However, I point out in my book that Daniel 7 clearly describes a judgment that will precede the second coming by some time. After describing the judgment in verses 9-10, Daniel shows the Son of Man (Jesus) approaching the Ancient of Days, and he is “given authority, glory and sovereign power” (verse 14). This is not Christ's second coming. It's a description of an event in heaven *prior* to his return that will grant him the authority to take over the kingdoms of our world *at* his return. Revelation provides at least two indications that the judgment in heaven precedes the second coming. The first one, chapter 14:6-7, states that “the hour of [God's] judgment *has* come” at the very time the gospel is still being preached, which is obviously prior to Christ's return. Second, in the seven last

plagues that immediately precede Christ's second coming, an angel praises God for his judgments (Rev. 16:5-7). Clearly, that judgment has already occurred, prior to Christ's return.

In his Glacier View manuscript, Ford argues that the purpose of this judgment is to condemn the little horn, not to examine the lives of God's people. However, the saints are vindicated in this judgment (verse 22). Elsewhere Scripture clearly teaches that the saints will appear in the judgment (Matt. 12:36, 37; Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10), though not in person, to answer for their deeds, both good and bad. So unless one wishes to posit two judgments in heaven—one in Daniel 7 and the other one everywhere else in Scripture—then we have to conclude that Daniel's judgment will involve the saints as well as the little horn.

I find the concept of a preAdvent judgment that reviews the lives of God's professed people to be very scriptural. Everything else in the Adventist teaching about the investigative judgment—sanctuary, day of atonement, year-day principle, etc.—follows on from this.

Ford says that the years A.D. 27, 31, and 34 used in connection with Daniel 9 are “either completely false or very much uncertain. Almost universally, A.D. 31 as the date for the Crucifixion has been relinquished.” I am very aware of the uncertainty of 31 as the year for Christ's crucifixion, and I don't argue for its certainty in my book. I do point out that chronological evidence for Paul's life supports but does not prove the year 34 for the stoning of Stephen. However, the year 27 for Christ's baptism is about as certain as any date can be for any event in the New Testament. And there are exactly 483 years (69 weeks) from 457 B.C. to A.D. 27.

Ford says that “there is nothing at all in favor of 457 B.C.” However, experts in the

dating of ancient events provide four lines of evidence to substantiate that the seventh year of Artaxerxes (Ezra 7:8) was in fact 457. They are: (1) the dual dating of the Elaphantine papyri; (2) Ptolemy's Canon; (3) a compilation of dates from cuneiform tablets by Parker and Dubberstein; and (4) the dual eclipse text in the Berlin Museum that establishes the year 465 B.C. for the murder of Artaxerxes.

### The Decree to Rebuild Jerusalem

In my book I deal with all of the major issues relative to the Adventist teaching on the investigative judgment. Ford comments on just two of these, which is understandable, given the limited space available in a magazine book review.

Ford argues that “a reading of Ezra 7 establishes that this [Artaxerxes' decree] was a Temple decree, not one given for the initial rebuilding of the city.” I agree that Artaxerxes' decree as recorded in Ezra 7 does not mention the rebuilding of Jerusalem. However, I provide significant evidence that rebuilding probably *was* a part of the decree, even though Ezra did not cite it. Ezra cited the decree by Cyrus twice (1:2-4; 6:3-5), and they are much different from each other. This means that in neither instance did Ezra cite Cyrus' entire decree. Thus, it's reasonable to conclude that in citing Artaxerxes' decree in chapter 7, Ezra left out the part about rebuilding Jerusalem. Chapter 4, which I analyze in detail in my book, provides significant evidence that Artaxerxes' decree *did* authorize the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

It's also helpful to note that the words *restore* and *build* in Daniel 9:25 refer to two distinct authorizations that Artaxerxes gave to the Jews. *Restore* is not a synonym of *build*. The word *restore* has to do with the restoration of independent Jewish governance, and that was a part of the decree recorded in Ezra 7. The

king authorized the Jews to appoint magistrates and judges, to administer justice, and even to execute criminals.

## The Year-Day Principle

One of the issues Ford discusses in his critique of my book is the year-day principle. He argues that the Hebrew word *shabua* in Daniel 9:24-25 means “seventy sevens” (NIV) rather than “seventy weeks” (KJV). He says that *shabua* occurs 94 times in the Old Testament, 90 of which include the addition of the word *yamim*, which means “days,” and he says that this addition of *yamim* is necessary in order for *shabua* to mean “weeks” rather than “sevens.”

The words “week” or “weeks” occur 19 times in the KJV of the Old Testament, 6 times in Daniel and 13 elsewhere (see *Strong’s Concordance*), and each time they are from the word *shabua*. These are the only occurrences of *shabua* in the Old Testament. I asked Ford in an email to give me some examples of his 94 uses of *shabua*, and he told me to look up the word “seven” in *Strong’s Concordance* and I would “find scores of uses of ‘seven’ [*shabua*] followed by ‘days’ [*yamim*].” However, the Hebrew word for “seven” is *sheba* (*Strong’s* number 7651), not *shabua* (*Strong’s* number 7620). Ford is correct that *sheba* occurs scores of times with the word *yamim*, but in these instances it always means “seven days,” and it is so translated in our English Bibles. It never means “seven weeks.” In 17 of the 19 occurrences of “weeks” in the KJV, it occurs without *yamim*. *Yamim* simply is not necessary in order for *shabua* to mean “weeks.”

*Shabua* is accompanied by *yamim* twice in Daniel 10:2-3. However, the reason is not because *yamim* is necessary in order for *shabua* to mean “weeks.” There are several instances in the Old Testament where a word for a period of time

such as week, month, or year occurs in conjunction with *yamim*. This is simply an idiom that means “the entire time.” For example, in Genesis 29:14 *yearach yamim* (“month-days”) means “the full month,” “the whole month”; and in Leviticus 25:29 *shanat yamim* (“year-days”) means “the entire year” (see also Gen. 41:1; 2 Kings 115:13). And this is how most versions translate *shabua yamim* in Daniel 10:2-3 (RSV: “full weeks”; KJV, NKJV: “whole weeks”; NASB: “entire weeks”).

The term “seven weeks” occurs twice in the KJV (Deut. 16:9; Dan. 9:25), and in each instance the Hebrew says *sheba shabua*. The NIV translators translated *sheba shabua* in Deuteronomy 16:9 as “seven weeks,” but in Daniel 9:25 they translated the same two Hebrew words as “seven sevens.” I assume they did this for interpretive reasons, because “seven weeks” would have been a perfectly appropriate translation.

## Hebrews

As for Hebrews, I simply disagree with Ford on the role that the Day of Atonement plays in the book. Ford sees the Day of Atonement as the primary theme of the Hebrews, especially chapters 8-10. However, the evidence in these chapters points to a significantly different theme, namely, the superiority of the new covenant over the old covenant. The heavenly Day of Atonement does show up at least three times in these chapters (9:7, 25; 10:1-4), or four, depending on how one interprets *ta hagia* in 9:12. I make what I consider to be a significant case that *ta hagia* does not refer to the Day of Atonement in verse 12.

Ford cites several texts in Hebrews, which state that Jesus is at the Father’s right hand, beside his throne. And since God’s throne is symbolized by the Ark of the Covenant in the type, Ford argues

that this is a clear indication that Jesus entered heaven’s Most Holy Place in A.D. 31, not 1844. And since the Day of Atonement was the only time the earthly high priest ministered in the Most Holy Place, Ford concludes that any mention of Christ in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary must be Most Holy Place ministry, not what Adventists refer to as his Holy Place ministry.

In my book I point out that the earthly sanctuary includes symbols for God the Father (the Ark of the Covenant) in the Most Holy Place, Jesus Christ (the table of showbread) in the Holy Place, and the Holy Spirit (the lamp stand) also in the Holy Place. Thus, all three members of the Trinity are represented in the two apartments. My conclusion is that these apartments in the earthly sanctuary symbolize heaven’s one throne room, and therefore when Christ took his place beside or on (Rev. 3:21) his Father’s throne, he was as much in heaven’s Holy Place as he was in heaven’s Most Holy Place. Therefore, any ministry that Christ began in A.D. 31 could as well be a Holy Place (daily) ministry as a Most Holy Place (Day of Atonement) ministry.

The complete title of my book is *The Case for the Investigative Judgment: Its Biblical Foundation*. I examined the various aspects of the Adventist teaching about the investigative judgment from Scripture, and where necessary, from history, and I believe my conclusions are reasonable. Others may interpret certain passages in a different way than I do, but this happens all the time among interpreters of the Bible. My question is this: Have I demonstrated a reasonable Biblical basis for the Adventist teaching? Ford and the experts he cites say “No.” I and the experts I cite say “Yes.” *Marvin Moore is editor of Signs of the Times magazine.*



## 7 QUESTIONS FOR...CINDY TUTSCH

By Marcel Schwantes, Online Editor



Cindy Tutsch, DMin, is an associate director of the Ellen G. White Estate at Seventh-day Adventist world headquarters in Silver Spring, Md. She has served as conference youth director, pastor, Bible teacher, television host, and coordinator of youth-in-evangelism initiatives, including Magabook ministries. Dr. Tutsch is the author of *Ellen White on Leadership*, scores of articles published in Adventist periodicals, and is editor of *Visionary for Kids*, an online magazine. And last but not least, Dr. Tutsch has joined *Adventist Today* as one of our featured bloggers (look for her on our website at [www.atoday.com](http://www.atoday.com)). In this installment of 7 Questions, Dr. Tutsch answers several questions about the role of Ellen White, past and present.

**You were very surprised to have received the invitation to blog regularly for our website readers. What led to that reaction? And has your impression of *Adventist Today* changed since you started blogging for us?**

I am pretty theologically conservative! Frankly, quite often I'm not at all "on the same page" as *Adventist Today*, and I haven't been shy about my position on a literal interpretation of Genesis chapters 1-11. I think most of your editorial board knows that I believe in a seven contiguous 24-hour-days creation and a global flood, for instance. So yes, the invitation surprised me.

Based on the responses to my blogs, I'm also surprised at the philosophical diversity of your readership.

**What is it that you do at the White Estate?**

The White Estate Board hired me in 2000 to help children and youth understand that Ellen White's writings could help them know God better and help them meet the challenges they encounter in their spiritual journey. I serve as editor of *Visionary for Kids* ([www.whiteestate.org/vez](http://www.whiteestate.org/vez)), an electronic magazine for kids 8-14, and work to promote adaptations of Ellen White's writings into 21<sup>st</sup>-century English. Some of these adaptations are now in audio format that can be downloaded into MP3 players. I have also worked with our team to develop resources for parents and teachers who wish to promote Adventist history and Ellen White's writings to their students.

Additionally, I have traveled in all 13 world divisions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to preach and teach about God's gift of prophecy to adults and youth at our Adventist educational institutions and at camp meetings, Bible conferences, youth convocations, and workers' meetings.

**What's your biggest concern about the way Ellen White's writings are used by church members?**

1. That her writings are not being used at all, or considered to have no authority.
2. That her writings are used by some to supplant the Bible or used inappropriately to promote a narrow agenda.

**We hear assertions today that the early Adventists may have set apart women for pastoral ministry. Are these reports credible, in your view; should we take them seriously?**

Absolutely. According to General Conference archives, 21 women were granted ministerial licenses during Ellen White's lifetime. Some of these women were church planters, others public evangelists, and all of them were preachers.

**The Adventist Church doesn't take the position that Ellen White was infallible. What are two things she was incorrect about?**

I think everyone would agree with Ellen White's statement that "God alone is infallible." We know that she never viewed her role as correcting history books, for example, and that she updated some of the historical information in *The Great Controversy* during her lifetime. Another time she had to retract counsel she had given to church administrators about whether or not to close one of our major

institutions in the South. What is interesting to note, however, is that in that circumstance, unlike with matters of minor significance, she received corrective instruction from the Holy Spirit that led her to reverse her instruction.

**We hear various assessments of the relationship of Ellen White, in life, with the Adventist denomination, including the view that she was for a decade "exiled" to Australia. In a few words, what was the crux of the controversy Mrs. White had with her denomination? Was it primarily about power and authority?**

While some have characterized her mission service in Australia as an "exile," we must remember that the call they placed left the decision entirely to her judgment. The action of the Foreign Mission Board (on which her own son served) read that she was invited to visit Australia "if her own judgment, and the light she may have in the matter, shall be in accordance with this request." She certainly had painful conflicts with the brethren over how things were being run at the head of the work, but the decision was her own to make, and in the absence of any light to the contrary, she accepted the invitation. She wasn't enthusiastic about it, yet she went. In the nine years that she lived in Australia, she tirelessly promoted the church and its mission, including initiating our educational and medical work in the South Pacific Division. Nor did she break any ties with the administrators with whom she had interacted back in Battle Creek.

I personally find a lot to contemplate in her choices during this period that must have been really difficult for her on many levels.

**What's your view on the recent Ellen White conference?**

I didn't attend, but I find it thought provoking that many credible scholars outside of the Adventist Church have such an interest in and admiration for the remarkable contributions Ellen White made to our movement.



## Sola Scriptura Inaugural Sermon Progressive Adventist?

**Hey Adventist Man, what is the best way to show my non-Adventist friends that we do, in fact, subscribe to *Sola Scriptura*?**

Ah, a very good question. The perpetual struggle to represent ourselves as Bible-adhering Protestants has plagued us since the beginning. Various misconceptions and miscommunications have contributed to a widespread view that Seventh-day Adventists do

# Adventist Man

A SATIRICAL LOOK AT ADVENTIST LIFE

not hold to the primacy of Scripture. There are many ways to deal with this issue. One would be to demonstrate from the Bible our fundamental beliefs, and another would be to track down the writings of Adventist pioneers who defended our biblical positions with great care. But quite frankly, this smacks of scholarship, hard work, and copious amounts of time. And as we all know, time is short. So why not adopt a new method from the playbook of our new General Conference president, Ted N.C. Wilson, at his inaugural sermon?

With guests from the Reformed Church and Baptist World Alliance, Wilson declared that "We must be vigilant to test all things according to the supreme authority of God's Word" while holding up the Bible. Then he went in for the kill—not by quoting scripture, but by adding "and the counsel which we have been blessed with in the writings of Ellen G. White." Just in case people missed the ultimate *Sola Scriptura* argument, moments later Wilson shared that our "Biblical foundation will stand secure to the end of time!" Then he proved it with a two-page quote from *Selected Messages*, pages 207-208, which admonished "prayerful study of the

Word." There is no better way to demonstrate the primacy we place on Scripture than by showing people a quote from Ellen White telling them that we do. I have no doubt that those visitors from other churches now know the ultimate authority in Adventism.

**Adventist Man, what was your favorite line from Ted Wilson's inaugural sermon?**

"I'm still quoting..."

**What is a progressive Adventist?**

Historically it means an Adventist who believes that truth operates as a dynamic progressive revelation instead of being a stagnant statement of belief. However, in recent times, they tend to be reactionary baby boomers who are trying to be relevant and end up being about as cool as a *Twilight* mom.

**Do you have a tough question? Adventist Man has "the answer."** As a former member of "the remnant of the remnant," Adventist Man was ranked 8,391 of the 144,000—and working his way up. Now he relies solely on grace and friendship with Jesus. You can email him at [atoday@atoday.com](mailto:atoday@atoday.com).

**Editorial** continued from page 3

"There is one great central truth to be kept ever before the mind in the searching of Scripture—Christ and Him crucified. Every other truth is invested with influence and power corresponding to its relation to this theme. It is only in the light of the cross that we can discern the exalted character of the law of God. The soul palsied by sin can be endowed with life only through the work wrought out upon the cross by the Author of our salvation"<sup>5</sup>

"One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up every other—Christ our righteousness."<sup>6</sup>

And you who read this editorial don't have to wait for Elder Wilson to follow what Ellen White says. You can begin right now!

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, p. 189.

<sup>2</sup> White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 415-416.

<sup>3</sup> White, *Manuscript 49*, 1898; also in *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, 1956, p. 1113.

<sup>4</sup> White, *Gospel Workers*, 1915, p. 156.

<sup>5</sup> White, *That I May Know Him*, 1964, p. 208.

<sup>6</sup> White, "Be Zealous and Repent," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Dec. 23, 1890.

## Spiritual Renaissance Retreat Begins December 30

The 17<sup>th</sup> annual Spiritual Renaissance Retreat will be held at the Hyatt Regency in Monterey, California, from Dec. 30, 2010, through Jan. 2, 2011.

Presenters include J. David Newman, editor of *Adventist Today*, on Why Seeing Ellen White as a NT Prophet Revolutionizes Our Approach; Michael Peason, vice principal of Newbold College on Millennial Dreams Recurring; Robert Melashenko on Sin, Science and Salvation, plus many more.

John Hughson, founder of the Spiritual Renaissance Retreat, is coordinating the event along with his wife, Joan.

**For more information and/or application, call (707) 965-7297, fax (707) 965-6774, or email [jhughson@puc.edu](mailto:jhughson@puc.edu).**

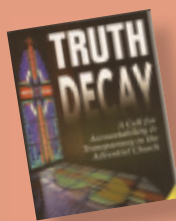
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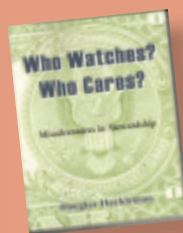


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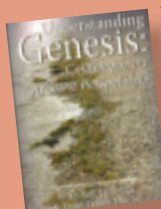


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