

Interscholastic Sports on SDA Campuses  
More Women Pastors Baptize in U.S.

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# SPECTRUM

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Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums

Volume 19, Number 1

## THE GOSPEL SABBATH

The NT Church Kept the Sabbath  
The Sabbath as a Memorial of Salvation  
How to Keep the Sabbath Today

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## The Gospel Sabbath

The special cluster in this issue makes two points crucial to both Adventists and the wider Christian community. First, a careful understanding of how the New Testament was written makes it clear that the Gospels reflect the importance the Christian community gave to proper observance of the Sabbath a half-century after the time of Christ. That is much later than most contemporary Christians understand observance of the Sabbath to have flourished.

Secondly, Adventists and Christianity as a whole have mistakenly accepted or rejected the

Sabbath as simply a part of the law. Actually, in the Gospels the Sabbath is also understood in terms of worship. For the Christian community that produced the Gospels, the Sabbath is another of the sacraments—along with Baptism and the Lord's Supper—that embody Christ's redemption in the worshiping life of the church.

The Sabbath as a Christian sacrament of salvation is also discussed in *Festival of the Sabbath*. (See the wraparound to order copies.) Indeed, in both writing and art the volume relates the Sabbath to the main affirmations of Christian faith.

—The Editors

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# Silent Sanctuary: Growing Up in Kansas

by Kent Seltman

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A plume of dust, like the tail of a comet, rose from behind every car to signal its approach on our country roads. Every mile at the crossroad, I helped Dad look for dust plumes. Cars weren't easy to see, for the roads, without cuts and fills, clung closely to the shape of the gentle prairie hills. And every Sabbath morning, about 15 dusty comets approached our Sabbath home.

From the south came eleven Fords; from the north two Chevys and two Fords—we thought that Chevy owners might just get to heaven, but driving a modest Ford—especially a custom sedan, was a safer bet. Oldsmobiles and Buicks were like golden calves or jewelry worn sinfully for show. Mercurys presented a problem we could not solve—they were almost Fords.

If we got there first, I rushed for the bent, rusty nail stuck in the siding above the back door, and quickly picked the lock into the Sabbath school room where we kept the keys. Then I waited for my family to arrive—my grandpa, my aunts, my uncles, and my cousins.

It was a clean and silent world in which I waited. It was a clean and silent church in which I waited too. A world this pure seemed permanent though everyone said, "We are biding here for just a little time."

And I kept coming home. Every Sabbath for 18 years. Every vacation and summer through college and graduate school. Then with my wife

and family from the edges of the continent for annual vacations. For more than 40 years I raised a ribbon of Sabbath dust. But time ran out.

The church was a sentinel. It signaled God to farms for miles around from its prominence atop a prairie hill. The design was classic—a white frame rectangular box with a pointed steeple soaring above a bell tower. In fact, with red maples, a rushing brook, and whitewashed village, it could have posed for a New England calendar. Instead, it hung alone onto the dry, rocky hilltop. We didn't ring the bell, for no one lived in earshot. It was landscaped by a single evergreen tree on the north side of the entrance where the shade cooled and the church itself protected the tree from the blazing summer winds that killed one mate after another—trees planted by devoted members committed to aesthetic balance.

The church had no water—not even a well. Model mothers brought a thermos of ice water on hot summer days. The toilets—by no stretch of the imagination "rest rooms"—stood to the west of the church at a distance that became a gauntlet run by several bewildered new preacher's wives to the scatological delight of the prepubescent males.

This house of God symbolized the virtues of an earlier day, before pollution, before bomb shelters, before Elvis, before Marilyn Monroe. It represented the values of our grandfathers who had built it in the good-old-days before electricity, before bathrooms and septic tanks, before air conditioning—those days when each boy had a horse to ride whenever he wanted, when our dads hunted and trapped all winter for spending money, when God's bounty on the prairie promised riches to those who worked.

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Kent Seltman, who graduated from Union College and received his Ph.D. from the University of Nebraska, was an English professor at Columbia Union College and Pacific Union College for 19 years. He is now the administrative director of the Loma Linda International Heart Institute at Loma Linda University Medical Center.

The church itself seemed old—like our parents and our aunts when they turned age 30. Up close, the clapboards, painted and repainted over cracked earlier coats, resembled the pure white wrinkled skin that old saints must have. The ornate, pressed tin on the high vaulted ceiling was old-fashioned, like Grandpa's high-topped Sabbath shoes or the ceilings in drugstores that had real soda fountains and marble-topped counters with high round stools that twirled around. Perhaps that's why in the 1950s the church took a step toward the modern—the ceiling was lowered with flat acoustical tiles hiding the vaulted tin.

In reality, the church was young. While three generations worshiped together, the church itself was less than a generation old. Our grandparents had joined in their twenties and thirties when our parents were children and adolescents. We were the first generation truly raised in the Truth—or the Truth as it had filtered down to our parents through sermons, a short-lived church school, and the boarding academy. And the stories our parents told about their antics in academy suggested that the agrarian culture might there have won over the Christian.

My father recounted that cows from the dairy sometimes “found” their way up the stairs to the second floor of the academy's administration building. Then there was the dark winter evening that he and a friend hid in the ditches of a road and pulled, with an invisible string, a white sheet across the road in front of a freshman boy who was already scared of the dark. Tricks and pranks apparently absorbed the creative energies of the academy youngsters.

The Truth we knew provided fried chicken and roast beef at church potlucks—much to the chagrin of those poor new preacher's wives who filled their plates thinking that only sanctified food made it to church dinners. The Truth we knew provided baseball and basketball games with the cousins on Sabbath afternoons while our parents celebrated Sabbath rest. The Truth we knew provided Weeks of Prayer read for seven weary nights right out of *The Review and Herald* by farmers and their wives who had practiced the reading. Then, in the sanctuary lighted dimly by gasoline lanterns hung from the high ceiling on

long copper poles, followed the testimony service. Farmers, their wives, and children gave ritual testimonies. The service demanded speech, but the familiar words observed a higher principle of silence.

Sometimes our Truth included theological talk. In any of these discussions, however, “Common Sense” always triumphed over the “educated” adversary. Of course there was a Flood; we found shark-tooth and sea-shell fossils in the rocks in our fields and pastures more than a

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**Our Truth didn't really include Ellen White. . . Without a church school to help our generation understand, Ellen White was just a name, not really a presence.**

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thousand miles from the nearest ocean. And it didn't make any sense that God would want to save someone who might end up not being happy in a perfect heaven. So, we tried to live as perfect saints in Kansas to check it out.

Our Truth didn't really include Ellen White, who was the province of the preachers and aunts who wore wool underwear and ate health food. I guess we always felt they were a little better than we were, but the rest of us didn't covet their lives. Without a church school to help our generation understand, Ellen White was just a name, not really a presence.

Typically a couple of her books, beginning with *Patriarchs and Prophets*, found their way to our bookshelf through my generation's academy Bible classes. Our parents, who lived the principle of hard work, didn't quit work on the farm in order to come home and read in the evening. They came home to sleep, so Ellen White came into our lives through preachers and subtle cultural means—quite often a gentle hint or bits and pieces of overheard conversation. This eventually led to Friday afternoon shoe shines, to salt-shakers only on dinner tables set for preachers and certain aunts, to bicycle races and makeshift rodeos—boys will be boys—instead of ball games on Sabbath afternoon, and vegetarian—often experi-

mental vegetarian—casseroles at church pot-lucks.

At the center of our Truth stood Sabbath, the symbol that separated us from the neighbors. And Sabbath was a sanctuary from hard work. Some fathers read newspapers and listened to the radio news—as well as the World Series—on Sabbath. Others wouldn't read or listen to the radio themselves, but instead, would call their non-Adventist neighbors to get the news and baseball scores. Some would go on a Sabbath afternoon ride and end up in town right at sundown.

But *no one* worked hard on Sabbath. We milked and fed the cows. We gathered eggs and fed and watered the chickens. But we did not work the land, and this we felt put us a step above our other Christian neighbors. We didn't plow, plant, or, most significantly, harvest on The Sab-

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bath. The Methodists, Lutherans, Catholics, and Baptists in our neighborhood wouldn't plow or plant on their Sunday Sabbath, but harvest was another thing. Harvest was the farmer's great temptation, for the fruit of an entire year's labor stood on fragile, ripened straw almost daring a devastating wind or hailstorm. Sabbathkeeping in harvest time was our greatest act of faith.

There were two grandpas in our church—my grandpa and Grandpa Frick, who was the patriarch for the other family in our two-family church. They were both very old, and in my earliest years sat with our grandmas behind one another next to the aisle on the second and third rows of the north side of the church. But after two sad funerals, where we all cried, they sat in their customary pews alone.

Grandpa Frick was short, angular, clean-shaven, and trim. He wore wire-rim glasses, and

a healthy shock of gray hair topped his head. My bald-headed Grandpa Seltman was short, a bit chubby, but very strong. Grandpa Seltman had plowed under his briar pipe and tobacco pouch.

Without a knowledge of their youth, we knew them as saints—taciturn old men who prayed their prayers in German. These survivors of the Great Depression were men of principle. Men who wore high-top black leather shoes with laces, and their only three-piece wool suit to church each Sabbath.

And the coats stayed on, even in the searing summer heat that wilted crops and sometimes turned them brown. The coat was a principle. Prayers in German were a principle, and the preacher's German had to measure up. Attending church every Sabbath was a principle too, though by generous example, we knew that sleeping through the sermon didn't violate anything. In fact, it supported the next to the highest principle of all—hard work. Sabbath was literally a day of rest. Our grandpas deserved to sleep.

But the highest principle of all was reserved for silence. This was not quiet-silence in the holy sanctuary. In fact, we frequently admonished one another from the Sabbath school pulpit about reverence in the House of the Lord. This was even the one and only time that Catholics were mentioned in a positive light—their reverence shone as an example. But reverence for family and friendship won out over reverence for holy silence every Sabbath. Before, after, and in between services everyone talked and talked loudly in order to be heard.

Actually, the silence principle was related more to friends and family than to any articulated theological principle. Silence shielded us from the foibles of family and the sins of our friends. Silence hid from us the feelings of our grandpas and grandmas, our fathers and mothers, our aunts and uncles, our brothers and sisters in blood and in Christ.

Our church was a child's dream. Not a dream of sugarplum fairies or carnival thrills. Not a dream of exotic places or riches. Rather a dream of security, confidence, and love.

Every Sabbath we drove 20 country miles to church. We studied our Sabbath school lessons

together, listened to women's trios sing "The Green Cathedral" and "I Walked Today Where Jesus Walked." I marveled at the farmer who sang the harmony part of "Ivory Palaces" in a duet with his wife. About half the time we had a preacher, though only once a month for the 11 o'clock hour. Somehow I didn't like those backwards Sabbaths when the church service came before Sabbath school.

Sabbath school itself was a highlight of the week. We had the best Sabbath school in the conference—a personal testimony of the conference Sabbath school secretary, and, since he was not running for office—as far as we knew—and since we didn't hear what he told the other churches, we believed him—besides, it confirmed our own opinion.

This memorable height of quality involved a tree cut from the creek by Uncle Andy. He mounted it in the center of the Sabbath school room where my Aunt Rosa, the kindergarten through primary leader, wrapped it and its branches in brown crepe paper. Paper birds flew on strings through paper leaves. On the brown-papered branches, cotton birds bedecked with scavenged feathers swelled their breasts.

Sabbath school felts had not yet been invented, so the Bible stories were told with paper cutouts placed in sandbox tables made by an uncle. Aunts taught the lesson. Cousins dug for penny offerings in pockets that contained a whole week's treasure—rusty nails, bits of string, an unusual stone, perhaps a shark-tooth fossil, an arrowhead, a rifle cartridge—anything worth a "show and tell" to interrupt the lesson.

Every Sabbath we recited our memory verse to the adults at the end of Sabbath school. They always smiled and chuckled because it was cute. On 13th Sabbath as a *tour de force*—actually at my mother's urging—I would do the family proud with 13 memory verses recited in order and with only occasional stammers.

On 13th Sabbath we brought to church the homemade banks that had collected 13 weeks of pennies for missions in Africa or the South Sea Islands. Once we had a giant church about two feet long and one foot high on which we pasted coins for 13 weeks until it was completely cov-

ered except for its dollar bill windows. The conference Sabbath school secretary took a picture when he saw it, and the photo was published in the union paper. We had arrived. We were the best. We set the standards.

Then a cloud passed over us when the nominating committee passed over Auntie Rosa. We weren't asked; we weren't told. But we noticed in silence. Not only was she not our leader, she didn't come to Sabbath school anymore—or church. Our teacher! Our leader! My auntie!

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**These 60 people were the focus of my life. They created my identity. Their values—honesty, loyalty, and hard work—became mine.**

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Lost! I wondered if I'd ever see her in heaven.

What I loved, however, was not the services but the people who attended. Among the 60 regulars, the Seltmans dominated in numbers, followed by the Fricks and then a few other families without grandpas and supporting casts of uncles, aunts, and cousins, but with the credential of a good German name like Mohr or Reinhardt. These 60 people were the focus of my life. They created my identity. Their values—honesty, loyalty, and hard work—became mine. Deacon Dan told me almost every Sabbath that I should become a preacher. His counsel did not become "a call," but I did accept the less-demanding labels of leader, teacher, reader, and musician. The mothers, though they certainly didn't run the farms, did run the church. They asked the children to take part, and their praise of our childish efforts convinced us we were profound.

Since Grandma died, Grandpa Seltman had to do most of the grandparenting for 30 grandchildren. He knew our names, but not our birthdays. So he came prepared to church each Sabbath. If you had had a birthday during the week, you told Grandpa, and he pulled a 50-cent piece—a real half-dollar, not two quarters—from his pocket. If you didn't have a birthday you could "beg" for a white peppermint candy from his left suit-coat pocket or a pink wintergreen candy from the right. My tin bank bulges even today with years of hoarded, sentimental half-dollars. And I can still

taste the Sabbath wintergreen, my favorite. He taught me Hard Work—how to sharpen a plow, plant tomatos, and lay a brick—but not about God. I can't remember a single story, not a single word my Grandpa spoke. He mumbled a quick German grace over family food.

At church were five sets of aunts and uncles whom I saw mainly on Sabbath. And I liked them all. I talked with them each week. My uncles teased me every Sabbath after church about my girlfriends until I finally had the courage to claim one. Aunts and uncles confined by Kansas win-

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**The preachers preached the Second Coming in graphic and terrorizing detail. It would begin as a small black cloud and would grow in brilliance until it would bring begging sinners to their knees. But it would be too late.**

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ters to long evenings at home meant cousins and more cousins, who were usually born, my family noted, in September, October, or November—a little joke the aunts and uncles smiled at but I didn't comprehend.

Sabbath at its best began with lunch at Uncle Elverne and Aunt Mary's house. The peas and potatoes, the lettuce and tomatoes, and the lemonade and bread were tolerated in anticipation of Aunt Mary's sour-cream chocolate cake—a cake so moist and rich that it sometimes seemed best eaten with a spoon. After the last crumb of seconds, we were on our way—women and girls did the dishes. Cousins Bill, Lyle, Terry, Eddie, Larry and I were off to the barn—perhaps to practice gymnastics in the haymow or to build a hay bale cave. Sometimes we wondered together on Sabbath afternoon about the meaning of four-letter words and about how humans went about the breeding process we saw in the cattle almost every day. We would round up calves for a make-shift, one-event rodeo and ride bareback for a few glorious seconds before a descent into the manure of a well-used corral.

We felt secure in demonstrated but nonverbal family love. We sensed tentative financial secu-

rity as the just fruit of our Hard Work on the farm. We lived a romantic idyll of hard work, simple pleasure, and good food. But we never knew security in being saved.

Posted on the front wall of the church were The Ten Commandments in letters so large that all but the blind could read. They loomed over the heads of the children each Sabbath as they recited memory verses and sang new Sabbath songs. They stood at the preacher's right hand.

"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," we heard. "Only one in 20 Adventists are ready for the Second Coming," we were told. "Even the very elect will lead you astray," we were warned, and we wondered if that meant good Deacon Dan. We laughed politely among ourselves when our ebullient Pentecostal neighbors told us they were saved, for we knew better. We knew that we dared not sleep at night with unconfessed sins, so I held my eyes open trying to think of ones I might have forgotten.

The preachers preached the Second Coming in graphic and terrorizing detail. I understood that it would begin as a small black cloud the size of a man's hand and would grow in brilliance and glory until the whole heaven would shine with light that would bring begging sinners to their knees. But it would be too late.

One dark, cloudy day, shortly after hearing one of these prophetic sermons, I thought it was happening. At recess the dark clouds began to part. Brilliant outlines appeared at the thin edges of the breaking clouds. My heart raced. I wanted to be with my parents when it happened—I wasn't sure they were ready—I was certain I wasn't. Why anyone would pray for Christ's soon coming I could never understand. I waited for the sound of angel choirs and the sight of heavenly hosts. But when the clouds finally parted, I saw the sun not the Son. A close call. I sighed, relieved.

But the terror did not go away. Even the glorious sunsets playing with thunderheads over the prairie terrorized me for many years. I couldn't talk about the feeling, of course, so I sought comfort through more clever, subtle ways. When I was frightened that Christ was coming in



a sunset, I would seek out adults—usually Mother—on the pretext of showing them a natural wonder where I suspected the supernatural. I felt relieved on every such occasion.

Why should I feel secure in Christ? Auntie Rosa, now living in bitter self-imposed exile, didn't feel secure. She even violated silence and told tales I did not want to hear. Two present deacons and a friend—whom she named—in their wasted youth were very close to the young Miller girl. "She got pregnant, and one of them did it," Aunt Rosa assured me, "and they probably don't know which one themselves. . . . And Charles, who piously takes up the offering, was found drunk, lying in a ditch with a naked woman outside a local barn dance." While I tried to resist believing her bitter recital, my life tasted worse ever after. There were cracks even in my idols—my aunt and the deacons—as there certainly were in me.

And our devoutly on-again, undevoutly off-again Sabbath school teacher was not much comfort either. We didn't talk about this soft-spoken farmer, but we often saw bruises on the body of his wife. Even to 12-year-olds it didn't make sense to accept his advice—I doubted even then the good effects of spanking a crying, newborn child on the first night home from the hospital. Perhaps, we thought we were good for the Sabbath school teacher instead of he for us. Maybe the class could convert the teacher.

The pastors weren't much comfort either. We sought their advice on Sabbathkeeping and diet but with negligible effect, except on church-potluck Sabbaths. They were too good. We couldn't get the victory over pepper or Pepsi.

Then there was the time that Pastor Jacobson talked to me while we washed dirty pots and pans at junior camp. He described in graphic detail a pastoral visit to an ailing young woman confined to bed. But before the visit was over, she threw back the covers in naked, seductive invitation. He told her calmly that he would visit her next week with his wife. Why he told me, I never knew—perhaps he wanted credit. Perhaps I rewarded him with my reactions. Perhaps he was instructing me in virtue. But with new, unused hormones running through my system, I was sure I would not

have measured up.

I heard "I am not worthy the least of His favor," but the rest of the song and message was foreign to my world. There was only a tentative security in a way of life exposed to crop-killing drought and hailstorms, livestock-killing lightening and blizzards, and tornados that changed farms to matchsticks in seconds. Any security we knew depended on our hard work. There was no rest in a farm life where there was always more work to be done. There was no completion—no perfection—for farmers.

Our religion, almost untouched by theology, came from the world we knew: hard work, fairness, and family. Our homesteading ancestors gave us farms on which we could earn a living, just as Christ's death on the cross gave us the opportunity to earn salvation. Neither crops nor salvation were sure. We never knew pure Grace.

**W**e didn't talk religion much in Kansas. In Sabbath school classes we only asked questions from the quarterly. Answers came from Scripture read without comment. Dull, yes, but safe. Our religious life was private and personal. Church members didn't tell one another how to farm, how to raise their chil-

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**We didn't talk religion much in Kansas. In Sabbath School classes we only asked questions from the quarterly. Dull, but safe. Our religious life was private and personal.**

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dren, how to treat their wives, or how to believe. We were pragmatic. We expressed ourselves in action. At times of death we didn't talk sympathy; we plowed and harvested the widow's fields. Shortly after his conversion, Grandpa Seltman told the neighbors he didn't need to buy any insurance because God would protect him. Then lightning struck a stack of his wheat waiting to be threshed. We learned. We didn't announce God's providence in our life today, for fear that we might have to retract the testimony tomorrow.

Adventism was not an abstract intellectual exercise. It was real, tough-minded, chauvinistic,

and separated us from our neighbors. Sabbath observance meant no Friday-night football or basketball games—big social events in the local communities. Our scrupulous ban on dancing, movies, and alcohol denied us most other social opportunities. But, we didn't feel like martyrs. We were a remnant whose happiness did not depend on sinful pleasures.

We were a remnant in another sense as well—survivors of the Great Depression. Economic Darwinians, we believed we had survived

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**We would have planted our crops in 1844 just to keep our bases covered in case he didn't come through. What we couldn't do for ourselves, we thought God might do for us. But we wanted to keep his burdens light.**

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because we were the fittest and now we deserved to enjoy the relative prosperity of the postwar world. Our two families—the Seltmans and the Fricks—had survived and farmed the land of tens of other families who had lost their farms and moved on.

We were established. Social lines were drawn. Religious lines were drawn in our community—unlike the time when Adventist evangelists had converted our recently arrived homesteading ancestors. Our evangelism became self-directed, especially toward the youth. We even became suspicious of newcomers. Good, hard-working, self-sufficient Christians sometimes worried that new converts might “confuse the church with the welfare department.”

We were a spiritually and economically blessed remnant. And we thought that those disappointed Millerites had been “just plain stupid”—“naive” not being in our vocabularies yet—for not having planted crops in 1844. We would have planted just to keep our bases covered in case he didn't come through. What we couldn't do for ourselves, we thought God might do for us.

But we wanted to keep his burdens light.

Our world was strewn with the debris of the Great Depression. Every mile or two on the way to church we saw dead farms—houses and barns no longer used, their shingles blown off, their windows broken and doors ajar, tin siding flapping in the wind. At other times only the windmill remained, or a few trees. Schools and churches died too—their clapboards grayed as white paint flaked off.

These skeletons told me of the shattered dreams of men and women, boys and girls who had left the land for Wichita, Chicago, Denver, and L.A. I watched a Lutheran church return to dust week after week as we drove by on Sabbath. The dignity and grandeur of sanctuary were gone long before a farmer cut a large door to transform it into a machine shed. A windstorm mercifully laid it down to rot soon thereafter.

I knew it couldn't happen to my church. We were committed. We would endure to the end. We were wrapped in the security of our land and our church. I wanted to believe that I could return again and again as long as I lived to see the stone house my grandpa built with his own hands, the barn I helped build, the steel corrals we created in our pastures, the creek where I fantasized adventures of Kit Carson, Buffalo Bill, and the Pawnee Indians, or my Sabbath home on the rocky hilltop.

The Seltman Fords still drive to church every Sabbath, but they don't stop at the top of the rocky hill. The trails of dust don't fade at the church anymore. However, after 80 harvests, my father still plows and sows. After 88 years, Grandpa's house still doesn't have a crack in its thick, stone walls. Aunts and uncles, cousins and their children still tend the wheat fields that have passed a century as Seltman farms.

The church still stands. And the grass still gets mowed; the roof repaired. The clapboards are still repainted. The antique chairs, stored in the empty bedroom of my brother's farm house down the road, are waiting the next special occasion—a family reunion, a wedding, or a funeral. The shrine lives. The silence is still a sanctuary.

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# A True North American Division: Why We Can't Wait

by Raymond Cottrell

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In a *Spectrum* interview unique in the history of Adventist publications, my good friend Richard Hammill said many fascinating and accurate things about possible General Conference presidents following the 1990 General Conference Session. However, on one important point he and I profoundly disagree. In the last issue of *Spectrum* (Vol. 18, No. 5) Dr. Hammill said, "For now, I don't think the North American Division should be made independent like the other divisions are."<sup>1</sup> The fact is, structurally, the one thing the Adventist church needs more than anything else is a genuine North American Division.

Given the special relationship between the General Conference and the North American Division, North Americans have historically dominated the General Conference. However, the 1990 General Conference Session will accelerate the internationalization of the General Conference headquarters officers and staff. The church in North America faces the very real prospect of coming, within two years, under the control of non-Americans. At the turn of the century Adventists decentralized their denominational structure because they realized that church leaders in North America could not be sufficiently well-informed to make decisions for the church in other parts of the world. Today, non-North

Americans must realize, as they anticipate their inevitable domination of the General Conference, that they cannot be sufficiently well-informed to make decisions for the church in North America. It is imperative that two years from now, at the 1990 General Conference Session, North America gain full division status.

Presently, instead of a *bona fide* division, North America has a movie-set facade division organization, still effectively controlled by the General Conference. Although it has made some grudging responses to North America's desires for a meaningful division, the General Conference retains direct administrative authority over North America through a dummy North American Division that remains an integral part of the General Conference headquarters staff.<sup>2</sup> Unlike all other divisions, North American Division monies and treasurers are not separate from those of the General Conference. Just one practical consequence of North American funds not being separate is the requirement that before unexpected, urgent meetings of the North American Division officers and union presidents can take place, travel funds must first be authorized by the General Conference Committee. Also, North American problems are often referred directly to the General Conference, rather than to the division office as in other divisions. The General Conference president has often intervened directly in North American matters, for example in resolving the Donald Davenport affair, in deliberations concerning the structure of the North Pacific Union, and in disposing of Harris Pine Mills.

Increasingly, the General Conference staff has

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become more international. Overseas divisions have rightly felt that they should be adequately represented at the General Conference headquarters. For the past 20 years, more and more non-Americans have become not only staff of the General Conference departments, but also officers, including the secretary and several vice-

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**The General Conference governs the church in North America without giving it a sufficient voice in its own affairs.**

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presidents of the General Conference. In the future a higher percentage of officers will likely come from outside North America, including, as Dr. Hammill indicated, future General Conference presidents. That would be altogether proper were it not for the fact that the General Conference governs the church in North America without giving it a sufficient voice in its own affairs.

The special relationship that has existed since 1922 between the General Conference and its captive North American Division should be dissolved. It is no longer necessary for the General Conference and is certainly no longer desirable for North America.

When circumstances demanded it earlier Adventist leaders did not hesitate to make significant changes in church structure. Originally formed in 1863, the General Conference was reorganized in 1901 because a form of church government that had been appropriate 38 years before had become inadequate. In 1863 membership in the Seventh-day Adventist church totaled 3,500, all in North America. By 1901 the membership was 22 times that size—17,188—with 19 percent of Adventists outside North America.

Actually, the decentralization I am recommending motivated the 1901 reorganization. Much of the administrative decision-making, authority, and control was transferred from the General Conference to newly created union conferences and missions, each consisting of several local conferences or missions.

By 1922 several interim experiments with

more-or-less-autonomous world divisions finally crystallized into a system of “divisions,” quasi-intermediate entities between the General Conference and the unions. From that time on only a nominal North American Division has existed. Structurally, the divisions are divisions of the General Conference; functionally, except for North America, the divisions are discrete entities administering the church in their respective areas of the world. Unless a division so requests, the General Conference does not intervene in the internal affairs of the division—with the exception of the North American Division.

The wisdom of the 1901 decentralization was fully evident by 1922 when overseas membership (at 107,642 or 52 percent) surpassed that of North America (at 101,129 or 48 percent).<sup>3</sup> As of April 1, 1988, world membership stood at 5,461,161. Two divisions—Inter-America (1,049,139) and South America (815,932), exceed the membership of North America (716,207). In three others—Africa-Indian Ocean (675,628), Eastern Africa (698,819), and Far Eastern (695,826)—membership approaches that of North America. In four divisions—Euro-Africa (273,700), South Pacific (202,062), Southern Asia (154,202), and Trans Europe (64,632)—the membership is considerably smaller, but in two of these divisions the church is nevertheless substantially self-sustaining. The areas administered directly by the General Conference because of political circumstances (the People’s Republic of China, the Middle East, Southern Africa, and the Soviet Union) have 115,014 members.<sup>4</sup>

The majority of the denomination’s world divisions are essentially mature—staffed by experienced national leaders, more-or-less well-equipped with institutions, financially self-sustaining, self-propagating, and flourishing; in some instances more so than in North America. These divisions are able to accept full responsibility for themselves as established Seventh-day Adventist communities. Eighty-seven years after the reorganization of 1901 the church in most parts of the world has developed to the point where it is able to conduct its own affairs. Indeed, each division should operate in the way it considers most appropriate and effective.

Divisions should become even more independent than they are now. The General Conference should become less a governing and more a coordinating body. The General Conference, with a fully international, representative staff and located in a neutral country such as Switzerland, should be a place where leaders of mature world divisions can confer and coordinate their work.

For example, a division faced with an emergency might request temporary assistance from the other divisions. The other divisions, fully responsible for conducting the work of the church in their parts of the world, would decide together whether and how they would cooperate in response. Policies discussed at the General Conference would not determine actions in the divisions, but would be recommendations for consideration by the divisions. Of course, if a part of the world church wished to continue to have the current, more dependent relationship to the General Conference it could elect to do so.

Some fear that decentralization would threaten the unity of the church. But mature persons—and organizations—work together on common objectives far more effectively on the basis of voluntary cooperation than within an imposed uniformity. The decentralization proposed here would recognize the social, cultural, economic, and political diversity present in a highly international Advent-

ist church. Appreciation of that diversity, rather than leading to division, would foster increased cooperation and genuine unity.

Many fear a North American Division as self-governing as other divisions are now, let alone a North American Division as independent as I propose all divisions should become. Opponents of a North American Division are haunted by the fear that if North America's contribution to missions were voluntary the General Conference would lose its financial base. But under the present special relationship the proportion of missions' giving to tithe has fallen from 67 percent in 1922 to 10 percent in 1980.<sup>5</sup> Given the opportunity to administer its own affairs, the Seventh-day Adventist church in North America would be more likely to contribute as generously, if not more generously, than it does now.

I applaud Dr. Hammill's plea for greater self-determination by the world divisions. However, it is imperative that self-determination be extended to the North American Division. It is urgent that fundamental changes in Adventist church structure be made, that the present paternalistic and hierarchical polity be replaced with a General Conference that is an international coordinating organization fostering cooperation among mature and autonomous world divisions. True unity is voluntary; it cannot be imposed.

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# Epic Fantasy and Christian Theology

by Gary Chartier

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Though once snubbed as escapist fare with appeal only for a cult of aficionados, epic fantasy has attracted widespread popular interest in recent decades, as the public reception of J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* and, more recently, Stephen Donaldson's Thomas Covenant novels make clear.<sup>1</sup> Some Christian thinkers have contended that fantasy is a medium of expression that is especially appropriate to the Christian artist. All of these factors make it worthwhile to attempt a theological assessment of epic fantasy and its significance in light of Christian theology.

Before proceeding further, it will be helpful to define terms. What is epic fantasy? The epic is a genre of literature, Donaldson contends, that is concerned

explicitly with the largest and most important questions of humankind: What is the meaning of life? Why are we here? Who is God? . . . What is the religious and/or moral order of the universe?<sup>2</sup>

Epic literature is literature that gives us insight into these vital questions of meaning and purpose. "Throughout English literary history," Donaldson says,

the writers of 'epics' have wanted either to say something transcendent about what it means to be human, or to say something about the nature of transcendence itself. The tools and resources of fantasy were formed for just those subjects. . . . [No] other communicative tool would convey the size of what they wanted to say.<sup>3</sup>

Donaldson defines fantasy as:

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a form of fiction in which the internal crises or conflicts or processes of the characters are dramatized as if they were external individuals or events.<sup>4</sup>

In fantasy, the world of objective, sensory experience mirrors that of subjective, mental experience.

Epic fantasy, then, is literature in which the characters confront issues of fundamental importance, and in which their internal struggles are reflected in the personalities of the external world created by the fantasist. It is a literary vehicle uniquely suited to the exploration of the nature and meaning of human existence.

Is the epic vision inherently competitive with the Christian vision? We will conclude that it is not. Epic fantasy would be competitive with a Christian account of ultimate meaning only if epic fantasy pretended to be exhaustive, something it does not do.

What criteria might we employ to determine the compatibility of the epic fantasist's world view with that of Christianity? We find such a standard when we consider what the epic fantasist is trying to do. His or her focus is not on specific questions of history, philosophy, or theology so much as it is upon the nature and meaning of human existence. Thus, it is not reasonable to expect all such questions to be addressed. Further, the epic fantasist employs an overtly mythic framework within which to communicate an understanding of the human situation—a structure that cannot be expected to closely resemble reality as we actually experience it in many particulars.

How, then, does epic fantasy view human existence? What does it say about life's meaning?

First, that life has significance. The choices that Donaldson's Thomas Covenant makes do have a positive impact on his own life and those of the people he touches. As he transcends his self-hatred he finds value and purpose in his existence. His experience is designed to show the possibility of finding meaning, redemptive meaning, for one's life.

Second, epic fantasy's stress on the heroic underlines the fact that human decisions make a difference. Despite the hesitancy constantly prompted by his self-doubt, Covenant acts decisively, self-sacrificially, to confront his antagonist, Lord Foul. The quest of the One Ring in Tolkien's trilogy *really* has the *responsibility* to overturn the purposes of the Dark Lord. Whether Covenant will surrender his ring to Lord Foul is not a predetermined conclusion; and his choice has consequences with cosmic implications. Especially in a behaviorist, determinist era, in which the reality of human choice is denied; in a bureaucratic, institutionalized era, in which the effect of human choice is minimized, the heroic emphasis of epic fantasy calls attention to the actuality and significance of personal decision.

Third, because choices do matter, because supernatural interventions—whatever they may represent in the mind of the author—do occur in the world of epic fantasy, there is hope. There is almost an *eschatological* note, as in Tolkien's *Return of the King*—where a new age dawns under the leadership of a returned monarch (one who, intriguingly, has been among the other characters of the story, unbeknownst to them, throughout the trilogy). Similarly, Covenant's defeat of Foul ushers in a new era in the Land. And this is really the ultimate message of epic fantasy—human life is meaningful. It is especially meaningful because it can be directed purposefully. It makes sense to act purposefully, because our decisions make a difference. Furthermore, our decisions make a difference, especially insofar as they contribute to or anticipate our eschatological hope.

Is such a vision compatible with Christianity? Clearly, Christians have always made similar affirmations. The doctrines of humanity's creation in the divine image and the inestimable cost

incurred in the course of human redemption both testify to Christianity's high view of human value. Continual appeals for personal decision, the importance of numerous heroic characters in the Old Testament, and of One Hero in the New—all point to the significance of personal choice. And Christianity views the success of that One as proleptic of the decisive victory of God in human history. Thus, the Christian and epic visions share certain basic elements. Insofar as it stresses these elements, the epic vision communicates truth.

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**The Christian believes that the characters in an epic fantasy do not create redemptive meaning for their lives and for that of the reader; they discover it.**

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Tolkien may serve as a good example. Probably the greatest writer both of fantasy and of the traditional epic in the 20th century, and a deeply committed Christian; he nonetheless created a mythology in his *Silmarillion* and *Lord of the Rings* that, while it is not anti-Christian, lacks the clearly stated Christianity of, say, Charles Williams. As Tolkien expresses his position in a letter to Milton Waldman,

Myth and fairy-story must, as all art, reflect and contain in solution elements of moral and religious truth (or error), but not explicit, not in the known form of the primary 'real' world.<sup>5</sup>

According to Verlyn Flieger, "*The Silmarillion* is Tolkien's gloss on Christianity, illustrating its universals, not its specifics."<sup>6</sup>

Gunnar Urang admits that the occasional oblique reference to an unnamed divine power in *The Lord of the Rings* is

as close as we come in Tolkien's work to the idea of a God. Yet the *patterns* of providential ordering and eschatological crisis are there. What is important religiously in this work is not a faith *in* a 'God' who orders all according to his will but a faith *that there is* such a providential design; not a hope in a God who at the end brings all things to their consummation but a hope that the happy ending will come.<sup>7</sup>

Though Tolkien's mythos does not relate Christian truth as such, the sense of an ever-present

Providence to which Urang alludes qualifies its message as clearly Christian.

Despite this common ground, however, the approach of epic fantasy might legitimately be seen as cause for concern for two reasons. First, epic fantasy has been viewed by some as a kind of “do-it-yourself cosmology”—a means whereby writer and reader join forces to create a mythic framework within which to understand human reality, an imaginative framework that is uniquely theirs.<sup>8</sup> Donaldson seems to support this when he

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**For the Christian epic fantasy is not escapist; it tells us something about the way reality really is.**

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affirms that “it is the responsibility of every human being to create the meaning of his/her life.”<sup>9</sup>

Naturally, Christianity rejects the attempt to do cosmology—in any ultimate sense—on one’s own. The Christian believes that the characters in an epic fantasy do not create redemptive meaning for their lives and for that of the reader; they discover it. The meaning of human existence is independent of the human imagination; it is grounded in God, our Creator and Redeemer. In fact, the Christian theologian is apt to find something quite puzzling about Donaldson’s affirmations of hope, and something even more curious in the following comment from Verlyn Flieger:

[Tolkien] gives us, for however brief a period, a universe of beauty and meaning and purpose. Whether there really is such a universe is less important than the undeniable truth that we need one badly, that we are deeply uneasy at the lack of one, and at the prospect that we may have to make, or remake, one ourselves.<sup>10</sup>

While it is certainly true that we do need very badly “a universe of beauty and meaning and purpose,” it is difficult to see how making or remaking one ourselves would help. If our hope is to be more than a delusion, a cunningly wrought fable, it must have a basis in objective fact. Without a real resurrection, Paul proclaims, Christians would be the most miserable of all people. Momentary self-deception might make us feel good for a while, but in the long run it must lead

to an unhealthy and irresponsible engagement with reality.

Thus, the proponents of “do-it-yourself cosmology” are placed in a quandary. Either they must admit that the hope and meaning they wish to communicate have their basis in a realm of meaning that transcends the artistic imagination, or they must concede the truly escapist nature of their work. As we have already suggested, for the Christian epic fantasy is not escapist; it tells us something about the way reality really is. But without such an overarching scheme of meaning, the burden of justifying his or her seemingly extravagant claims for human purpose and hope rests upon the epic fantasist.

A further consideration is appropriate at this juncture, however. The epic fantasist is under no more obligation to be consistent than are the rest of us. He or she can be truthful in communicating the reality of hope and meaning without sensing the need for a transcendent ground for his or her contention. The work of the scientist who develops a cure for AIDS will be no less useful should it happen that he or she is an atheist. Such a researcher’s picture of the world will be incomplete, certainly; but his or her conclusions about AIDS will be nonetheless true. In the same way, should an epic fantasist who promotes a view of reality that is implicitly rooted in eschatological hope profess no faith that might constitute reasonable support for this view, it would still be inappropriate to reject the truth clearly communicated in his work.

Scholars receptive to the possibility of natural theology have supported this position. Jacques Maritain, for instance, contends that there exists a real inspiration, coming not from the Muses, but from the living God. This is a special movement of the natural order by which the first intelligence, when it pleases, gives the artist a creative movement superior to the yardstick of reason, and which uses, in super-elevating them, all the rational energies of art. Its impulse, moreover, humans are free to follow or to vitiate.<sup>11</sup>

Norman Reed Cary cites the Jesuit critic Harold Gardiner’s belief that “in addition to the conscious purpose the author has in mind (the *finis operantis*) there is ‘an intrinsic finality, a



goal inherent in the work itself (*finis operis*), and this will be operative whether the author thinks of it or intends it or not."<sup>12</sup> And perhaps most surprisingly, the noted American Baptist theologian A. H. Strong writes that "the great poets, taken together, give united and harmonious testimony to the fundamental conceptions of natural religion, if not to those of the specifically Christian scheme."<sup>13</sup>

It is easy to see the relevance of these suggestions for the problems posed by epic fantasy's non-Christian components. If we admit that literary and artistic creation that is not inspired by special revelation may still owe its essence to general revelation, we can better understand how the epic fantasist can affirm an overarching order from which values and ethical principles can be derived, without necessarily comprehending the relationship between Christian faith and the hope and meaning he or she asserts.

**T**he second of our two questions about epic fantasy concerns its stress on the heroic. Does this emphasis, while admittedly compatible to some degree with that of Christianity, compete with the already-won victory of Jesus and the necessity of grace?

Certainly, the possibility exists that the protagonist of an epic fantasy, and thus, vicariously, the reader, might find the answers to life's questions in a ruggedly individualistic heroism. Such a position is not far removed, after all, from that of the do-it-yourself cosmologists, since both approaches stress the ultimacy of individual decision—the one with regard to the definition of meaning, the other in relation to the resolution of real-world problems.

Epic fantasy need not, however, reflect this naive faith in the heroic. And even should it appear to do so, we must be careful that our expectations not exceed the necessary limitations of a work or of the genre to which it belongs.

Donaldson's Covenant stories do not present a naive vision of the invincible hero; far from it. What, then, is Covenant's role? The Creator of the Land cannot himself employ "wild magic" to bring the reign of Lord Foul to an end. To do so would be to risk destroying the "Arch of Time"

and freeing Foul to roam eternity at will. Thus, the Creator—in the form of an old and decrepit beggar—must commission Covenant, and later Linden Avery as well—to confront Foul. Further, Foul has no power to compel Covenant to surrender the white-gold ring that is the source of his power; the decision must be Covenant's alone. Thus, it is true that Covenant assumes almost cosmic proportions: Upon his success rests the future of the Land.

But Covenant is not a traditional heroic figure. Leprous, self-deprecating, destructive of those he loves, he is no model man, no benchmark of humanity, and Donaldson does not present him as such. He comes to the Land not so much to offer salvation as to find it. Covenant's confrontation with evil is ultimately salvific. In Donaldson's word, the "characters or images" of epic fantasy seduce Covenant

away from cynicism and bitterness and hatred; toward love, friendship, and loyalty, toward the willingness to risk himself for things larger than he is. . . . Despite his own sick, stupid, painful, reflected, alienated existence, he learns to accept his life, affirm his spirit to acknowledge the things he loves and believes in. . . .<sup>14</sup>

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**For the epic vision to be Christianly faithful, there [must] be sufficient parallels to these divine realities that the epic hero not appear a self-sufficient superman.**

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It is the product of his choice, to be sure, but not of his will. He is "elected" to enter the Land by the Creator, and his growth comes, not as the result of either an introspection that reveals all his guilt feelings to have been mere neuroses or one that eventuates in his concluding that his "dark" side is simply to be accepted. Instead, growth occurs as he fights his own evil, represented by Lord Foul, in light of what he slowly comes to realize about the nature of reality.

But while the opportunity for redemption that the Land provides could be viewed as a kind of grace, there is, admittedly no apparent providence or "assisting grace." It would seem important that, for the epic vision to be Christianly faithful, there

be sufficient parallels to these divine realities that the epic hero not appear a self-sufficient superman.

Of course, as Benjamin Warfield reminds us in another context, there is no mention of them in the parable of the prodigal son, either:

There is no atonement in this parable, and indeed no Christ in even the most attenuated function which could possibly be ascribed to Christ. There is no creative grace in this parable; and indeed no Holy Spirit in any operation the most ineffective that could be attributed to him.<sup>15</sup>

Even this, the most famous parable of our Lord, is an incomplete picture of the plan of salvation. And yet no one cries “foul” when it is cited as the encapsulation of the most precious of Christian truths. An oft-quoted gem from our own Seventh-day Adventist heritage may help to illustrate the same point:

The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold; men who in their inmost souls are true and honest; men who do not fear to call sin by its right name; men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole; men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall.

But such a character is not the result of accident; it is not due to special favors or endowments of Providence. A noble character is the result of self-discipline, of the subjection of the lower to the higher nature.<sup>16</sup>

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**In Adventism’s view, God does not intervene in ways that violate human freedom because to do so would be to confirm Satan’s charges that God is the sort of person who would do just such a thing.**

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While the passage concludes with a reference to God—the goal of noble character is to be achieved throughout “the surrender of self for the service of love to God and man”—there is still no mention of assisting grace, or of divine providence as a basis for heroic achievement.

The point: just as this passage does not encompass all that Ellen White believed and wrote about character development and related topics, so it should be obvious that the apparently absolute

claims of the epic fantasist about “heroism and transcendental love,” questionable if taken in isolation, may be true when they are relativized by being placed within a larger context. Thus, while the emphasis in the epic is typically on the importance of human decision, the Christian theologian may find in this stress a reminder of the reality of human freedom, not a denial of the priority of grace.

Furthermore, what makes Covenant’s choices important, what renders him heroic, is divine self-limitation, a concept important in many versions of Christianity. While the limitation Donaldson proposes does not correspond with exactitude to those envisioned by Christians, the message is still similar: The fight against evil imposes certain constraints on God’s activity in the world; to ignore those constraints is to risk the loss of a greater good, perhaps even of the “Great Controversy” itself. In Adventism’s view, God does not intervene in ways that violate human freedom because to do so would be to confirm Satan’s charges that God is the sort of person who would do just such a thing. In the Covenant novels, intervention by the Creator risks destroying the “Arch of Time” and thus releasing Lord Foul into eternity. Donaldson’s Creator is a kind of finite deity, resembling perhaps the god imaged in process thought; he does not share all the characteristics of the Christian God, at least as typically conceived. But he does face similar dilemmas in relation to his activity in the world. And it is these dilemmas, rather than any inherent heroic qualities on Covenant’s part, that lead ultimately to Covenant’s involvement in the deliverance of the Land.

It is safe to conclude that, while Donaldson’s cosmos is not that of traditional Christianity, it shares with it certain important affinities. I further conclude that a certain selectivity and even distortion in the parables of our Lord—if taken literally—help us to recognize that the lack of certain features in Donaldson’s cosmos does not by definition classify his work as anti-Christian. The themes that are important in the Covenant novels—the rejection of power and the triumph of love, recognition and rejection of the evil within, the importance of human decision—are essen-

tially Christian ones, even if the ways in which they are worked out in Donaldson's secondary world do not always parallel the manner in which they are exhibited in the primary world.

Of course, it would be perfectly possible to construct an epic fantasy that promoted blatantly anti-Christian themes—the victory of might over right, for instance. But the works of Donaldson and Tolkien reveal that epic fantasy can be a vehicle for the communication of Christian truth. Epic fantasy will not communicate Christian truth in its entirety anymore than other varieties of literature. But it will emphasize the meaning, hope, and ultimate victory that are fundamental components of the Christian vision.

Epic fantasy's fantasy component enables the fantasist to objectify, to externalize the inner conflicts of his or her characters. This use of symbolism is similar to but usually not identical with allegory. Expressed by means of magic and the supernatural, it is what makes fantasy a unique literary genre.

The popularity of the epic reflects the "lostness," the sense of futility and abandonment, that typify the human predicament. The Christian theologian finds in this fact both an empirical index to the state of humankind, and a hint that humans were created for something better, more fulfilling.

The epic vision emphasizes the possibility that human beings can make a difference in the world, that they can "project their passion against the void" successfully. Epic fantasy's anticipation of the eschaton, its emphasis on eucatastrophe, may be its most important contribution to Christian faith and life.<sup>17</sup> Epic fantasy re-presents the fundamental datum of Christian faith that the present order is transitory, that human striving for truth and justice in the present has meaning because of God's promised eschatological future. While, taken by itself, this epic vision might be viewed as competitive with the Christian vision, taken on its own terms it is a powerful symbolic reenactment of the message of biblical apocalyptic.<sup>18</sup> Just as Jesus himself did not address certain themes exhaustively in one sitting, so epic fan-

tasy should not be expected to provide the whole truth about the meaning and purpose of human existence, something it does not purport to do. But this limitation should not prevent us from seeing its ability to convey some portions of the Christian message very clearly.

This communication of Christian truth need not be intentional. Just as Paul's pagans had the

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**For some, epic fantasy is a do-it-yourself cosmology. But the Christian reader may be the only one who dares to imagine that epic fantasy, viewed on what we have called its covert level, is really true.**

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law without knowing the law, so, too, is it not possible that a writer like Donaldson has sensed intuitively the Christian truth that life is truly meaningful? Not only can the Christian apologist find in epic fantasy a powerful tool for communicating the gospel; the Christian theologian can recognize that truth, albeit in distorted form, in the work of the non-Christian fantasist.

For some, epic fantasy is a do-it-yourself cosmology. The hope and meaning it offers are, according to this view, to be created individually by a writer and his or her readers. Rejecting this view, the Christian declares that only in light of what Jesus has done and will do for us does it make sense to promise hope and meaning. The Christian reader, then, may be the only one who really dares to imagine that epic fantasy, viewed on what we have called its covert level, is really true.

While proponents "of the modern American novel would argue that seduction by epic vision can only lead to stupid destruction," Donaldson is quick to note dryly that this response represents "precisely the attitude Lord Foul takes toward Thomas Covenant."<sup>19</sup> And here the Christian theologian will wholeheartedly agree. Of course, adhering to a vision of the eschatological makes no sense to one for whom "man is a futile passion." But the epic vision will be only natural to one who anticipates the victory of God's love.

Perhaps the sweetest pleasure that fantasy that

has captured the Christian vision of hope and meaning imparts is what C. S. Lewis has called the "baptism of the imagination." Epic fantasy will have well served its purpose when it imparts to readers, as it did to Lewis, a vision of that which is "more gold than gold." Writing of his first encounter with the fantasy of George MacDonald, Lewis says:

What it actually did to me was to convert, even to baptize . . . my imagination. It did nothing to my intellect nor (at that time) to my conscience. Their turn came far later. . . . But when the process was complete. . . I found that I was still with MacDonald and that he had accompanied me all the way and that I was now at

last ready to hear from him much that he could not have told me at that first meeting. But in a sense, what he was now telling me was the very same that he had told me from the beginning. . . . The quality which had enchanted me in his imaginative works turned out to be the quality of the real universe, the divine, magical, terrifying and ecstatic reality in which we all live. I should have been shocked in my teens if anyone had told me that what I learned to love in *Phantasies* was goodness. But now that I know, I see there was no deception. The deception is all the other way round—in that prosaic moralism which confines goodness to the region of Law and Duty, which never lets us feel in our face the sweet air blowing from the "land of righteousness," never reveals the elusive Form which if once seen must inevitably be desired with all but sensuous desire—the thing (in Sappho's phrase) "more gold than gold."<sup>20</sup>

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## NOTES AND REFERENCES

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1. See Stephen R. Donaldson, *Epic Fantasy in the Modern World: A Few Observations* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State Univ. Press, 1986), pp. 1, 2. According to Donaldson:

My first book, *Lord Foul's Bane*, has now sold close to 5 million copies around the world. In 1983 I out-sold every writer in the world except Wilbur Smith—in New Zealand. I was the best-selling author in Alice Springs, Australia, for six months, and in the U. S. my last "Covenant" novel, *White Gold Wielder*, was on the *NY Times* bestseller list for 26 weeks, selling close to two hundred thousand copies.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 11. Emphasis in original.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 4.

5. J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien*, ed. Humphrey Carpenter with Christopher Tolkien (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981), p. 144.

6. Verlyn Flieger, *Splintered Light: Language and Logos in Tolkien's World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), p. xix.

7. Gunnar Urang, *Shadows of Heaven* (Philadelphia: Pilgrim, 1973), p. 120.

8. I borrowed this term from Ursula LeGuin, *The Language of the Night: Essays on Fantasy and Science Fiction*, Susan Wood, ed., (New York: Putnam, 1979), p. 125, who employs it in a much more positive fashion than I.

9. Donaldson, p. 17.

10. Flieger, p. viii.

11. Jacques Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism and the Frontiers of Poetry*, trans. Joseph Evans (New York: Scribners, 1962), p. 66.

12. Norman Reed Cary, *Christian Criticism in the 20th Century: Theological Approaches to Literature* (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat, 1975), pp. 109, 110.

13. Augustus H. Strong, *The Great Poets and Their Theology* (Philadelphia: Griffith, 1897), p. vii.

14. Donaldson, p. 17.

15. Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Plan of Salvation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), pp. 46, 47.

16. Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1903), p. 57.

17. Tolkien describes the Incarnation as a fantasy: a "fairy story" that "has entered History and the primary world." That this seeming legend should be true implies a "hallowing" of legends, "especially the 'happy ending'" — what Tolkien calls a eucatastrophe (J. R. R. Tolkien, *Tree and Leaf* [London: Allen, 1964], pp. 60, 62).

18. Frederick A. Kreuziger, *Apocalypse and Science Fiction: A Dialectic of Religious and Secular Soteriologies*, AAR Academy Series 40 (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1982).

19. Donaldson, p. 16.

20. C. S. Lewis, introduction, *Lilith*, by George MacDonald (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), pp. xi, xii.

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# Watching the Bouncing Ball: Interscholastic Sports on Adventist Campuses

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## 1. Play Has Already Begun

by Bonnie Dwyer

While General Conference brethren debate the pros and cons of interscholastic sports during the 1988 annual council in Nairobi, Kenya, men's and women's basketball, football, soccer, volleyball, softball, and track teams on Adventist college campuses will have already started another season of intercollegiate sports. A recent survey conducted by the SDA Health, Physical Education, and Recreation Association (SDA-HPERA) found that in North America 80 percent of the Adventist colleges and more than 50 percent of the academies (who responded to the survey) compete with other schools in at least one sport. Some colleges have had intercollegiate sports programs for several seasons and are joining the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA).

The NAIA is a league made up of schools that have less than 4,000 students. The oldest such association—having existed for a half century—its purpose is to give smaller colleges the opportunity to compete with schools of equal means. The NCAA is the larger colleges' (4,000 or more students) league. Like the NCAA, the NAIA holds an annual national tournament.

A look at five colleges in different parts of the

country provides an insight into a major new development in Adventist campus life.

### *Columbia Union College*

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Since the 1984-1985 season, Columbia Union College has awarded \$72,000 in scholarships each year to academy students entering the college's sports program. The college has given out \$1,500 scholarships to 18 soccer team members and 30 men's and women's basketball team members per year.

Four years after the program started, CUC's varsity men's basketball team has been picked to win its district this year in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (Division III). Last year the president, William Loveless, created an athletic council to advise on the budget, coach selection, philosophy, and league policies. On the council are Wendy Pega, a member of the physical education department; Rick Murray, the basketball coach and men's dean; a financial administrator; a public-relations representative; another faculty member; and an administrator.

Pega calls the varsity teams successful for the school just in terms of what they have done for the intramural program, which she directs. Good players now have a place to go, she says, and it has taken the competitive pressure off the intramural games, which are now more like what they were

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Bonnie Dwyer, before assuming her present responsibility of raising an infant son, was the public information officer of the city of Brea, California. As its news editor, she has frequently appeared in *Spectrum*.

originally designed to be, a place where all students can take part in sports activities.

Coach Rick Murray says CUC's teams stress life-style and attitude more than overt witnessing. He tells the players that it is important not to give sermons but to be a "sermon in shoes." Neverthe-

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**"I had always believed that interscholastic sports and Christian behavior could be combined on an Adventist campus as they have at other Christian college campuses."**

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less, team members are often asked, spontaneously, by referees, coaches, and members from the opposing team to give postgame Bible studies. Murray recalls when the team waited an hour and fifteen minutes after the game while a member gave a Bible study to three members from the opposing team. In addition, teams hold clinics, vespers, and worships at local academies.

Roland Wilkinson, a business major and a guard on the basketball team, says he did not choose CUC just because of the basketball team; he wanted to attend a Christian school. But he is enthusiastic about how good this year's basketball team is. "Only one player graduated and there are five or six good new players. We've been picked to win our district," he says. Although CUC does not play other Adventist schools during its regular season play, Wilkinson feels CUC has the best, most competitive team for an Adventist college.

### *Atlantic Union College*

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**A**tlantic Union College also provides basketball and soccer scholarships and has decided to join the NAIA. AUC's program began 1986-1987 with exhibition games (considered a trial season), which prompted the college board to approve AUC also joining the NAIA this year. Coaching the team is Stacy Nelson, the chairman of the physical education department, whose doctoral dissertation, "A Ra-

tionale for a Program of Interscholastic Athletics," helped to set up the AUC plan.

Atlantic Union College student Ivan Davis chose to leave Berrien Springs, where his father teaches English at Andrews University, and study at AUC because of the basketball team. When he heard about the AUC program, he says he was eager to be a part of it. "I had always believed that interscholastic sports and Christian behavior could be combined on an Adventist campus as they have been at other small and large Christian college campuses. I also believed that interschool sports could provide for participants what the intramural programs seemed unable to—a learned self-discipline. I think an interscholastic program presents possible opportunities for individual gains as well as school-wide gains."

### *Walla Walla College*

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**W**alla Walla College, which has the oldest, largest Adventist sports program, fields the most teams for intercollegiate competition: men's football, men's and women's basketball, men's and women's volleyball, coed soccer, men's and women's softball, and men's and women's track. Walla Walla is also the most overtly evangelistic of all the college sports programs. Almost 10 percent of the student body takes part in the program which is affiliated with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. (This national organization sponsors Bible-study groups in professional and collegiate varsity teams. It is promoted by luminaries such as Dallas Cowboys coach Tom Landry, and former Philadelphia 76er Julius Irving. Walla Walla has organized the only Adventist chapter.)

Walla Walla College started intercollegiate competition five years ago when Tim Windemuth, who had previously operated similar programs at Orangewood Academy in Southern California and Campion Academy in Colorado, joined the faculty

Athletics is a very effective medium by which to share Christ, says Windemuth, director of the Walla Walla program where witnessing is a ma-

for part of the sports activities. In addition to playing other colleges, Walla Walla plays teams from the state prison and the local police department. Team practice includes a Bible study session. After a home game opposing teams are always invited to share food and fellowship. When the team travels to an academy, players are prepared to help with programs the entire weekend: Friday-night vespers, Sabbath school, church, afternoon meetings, the ball game, postgame recreation and activities for all students, followed by a singing, sharing session. Windemuth says he likes to sponsor tournaments with other schools at Walla Walla, because he can then structure activities to encourage good play rather than bitter competition. For instance, instead of an elimination tournament Walla Walla often structures a tournament so that each team gets a chance to play every other team at the meet. At the end, there is a winner by virtue of who has the best record, but the spirit of fair play has been fostered.

Given that his teams take part in some 200 programs a year, it would seem that the outreach potential of sports would be its biggest selling point. But to Windemuth, the outreach activities are third on his list of foci for the program. First, are the students in the program. Sports provides a common ground for peers to talk about what is important in their lives. He wants them to be comfortable about sharing their Christian experience with one another. Secondly, he says the sports program promotes a positive image on campus, a rallying point for Christian fellowship. The outreach is third.

Asked to tell his best story from the past year's experience, he thinks of an incident at an Adventist academy. A player stopped to talk with a girl who was crying in the hallway. Three days later the girl told the player how important his kind words and listening ear were in helping her to decide to attend a Christian college. "He recruited a kid for Christ. As long as we keep Christ at the center of our program, it doesn't matter what our win/loss record is."

But Windemuth also admits that a strong team helps to keep those witnessing opportunities coming. Last year, Walla Walla lost only one football game. This year he says, they will be

playing more teams of a junior varsity caliber.

One alumnus was won over for sports after spending several days with the team at practice and then on the road. "Your young men have changed my opinion of athletes," he told Windemuth. The man was so impressed he wrote an article about the team for the *North Pacific Gleaner*.

"Hey, we're Christians, too," Windemuth says. "We just want the kids to learn a way of life that includes sharing Christ. When kids come back after graduation and tell stories about being involved with sports teams and sharing Christ just like they did at Walla Walla, that's the trophy."

Walla Walla even puts the sports teams, administratively, under campus ministries, although Windemuth is himself a member of Walla Walla's department of health, physical education, and recreation faculty.

## *Loma Linda University*

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Each Adventist school seems to develop its own system for operating teams. For instance, at Loma Linda University, a General Conference institution that officially cannot field teams for play with other schools, a way was devised through the student-affairs office to participate in intercollegiate sports: instead of administrative departments, teams are organized by campus clubs. A Health Education Recreation Club has several teams, including basketball, soccer, and a girls' volleyball team. Two years ago Loma Linda played six games against non-Adventist colleges. That number doubled to 12 during the 1987-1988 season. Included in each year's schedule of games for LLU is a game against Pacific Union College, which also does not officially recognize its team. (An alumnus from Modesto comes in to coach the team.) Last year, the LLU team also played Walla Walla.

Walt Hamerslough, chairman of Loma Linda's physical education department, says the school would like to expand its program. It has received positive remarks from non-Adventist schools. People have heard about the Loma Linda Medical

Center, but don't know much else about the organization. "It gives us a chance to share [Christ] in a fellowship way," he says.

## *Union College*

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Two years ago, Union College started its men's basketball team to fellowship with athletes from other Christian colleges. The team plays 16-18 games a season and at each game the team has a pregame worship and a postgame social with opposing teams.

The team isn't a member of a league and isn't affiliated with any of the college's departments. Its coaches are volunteers and it raises its own budget. One of the volunteers, Donald Pursley, Union College's vice-president of finance, says they emphasize self-discipline, cooperative attitudes, and teamwork.

## *Academies*

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Many Adventist academies also have active teams that compete in community leagues and offer scholarships to students on the team. One academy with an active program for many years, and one of the largest Adventist academies in North America, is Takoma Academy in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. When John Graham joined the academy faculty as a physical-education teacher in the mid-1960s, he started the school's interscholastic basketball teams. Every year the men's varsity team plays 21-22 games, the men's junior varsity 15 games, and the women's varsity 10-12 games. In 1986 Takoma Academy added a track team to its interscholastic program. According to Frank Jones, the academy's vice-principal and one of the former basketball coaches, both the track and basketball programs have enjoyed great success.

It was the success of the program at La Sierra Academy that turned Walt Hamerslough at Loma Linda University into a leading advocate of inter-

school sports programs. He had been opposed to the academy program at La Sierra when it was first proposed, and he fought it all the way to the union committee. Despite his protests, it was approved. As the program grew and became successful, Hamerslough changed his mind about the advisability of such a program for Adventist schools. Now, as the executive director of SDA-HPERA he has become the spokesman for the organization in its attempt to convince the General Conference to change its official position banning interscholastic sports.

Unfortunately, he says, there does not seem to be anyone at the General Conference willing to take a stand supporting sports against those who would ban them. He feels that those who oppose sports base their judgments on what they see on television and read in the newspapers—something very different from what he advocates.

Hamerslough says he has asked the General Conference to allow a representative of SDA-HPERA to be present at the 1988 Annual Council in Nairobi, Kenya, but he assumes the General Conference will not fund the person's trip, and he does not know who will. He does know that George Akers, director of the General Conference Department of Education, will present a strong case in Kenya against interscholastic sports. Akers sent a very strident message to the national meeting of the SDA-HPERA this year making very clear his displeasure with intercollegiate games.

However, with college boards approving the sports programs in North America, perhaps the vote in Kenya will be a moot point. Hamerslough says he hopes the General Conference will recognize that whatever they do, the young people will probably continue to play games, whether or not they have school or church approval. What he suggests is that the General Conference take positive action to help set the proper spirit for sports. He envisions a commissioner or council on sports at the North American Division level that could assist institutions in setting up and maintaining proper programs. He says there need to be workshops for coaches to help train them in setting up programs with proper Christian standards.



## 2. Debate on the Sidelines

Written by Ted Robertson, Todd Coupland  
Reported by Dawna Ringering and Sean Wilson

Since 1893 when Battle Creek College attempted interschool sports, the Adventist church has considered interorganizational sports unnecessary and unwanted in Adventist education. Until recently, this stand has not been challenged. A year and a half ago the General Conference appointed a committee to investigate the situation of interorganizational sports in the Adventist church. This includes interschool and interchurch sports. The committee made a study of the situation and produced a report. That report says each division will be permitted a protocol that has to be petitioned to the union committee (of the division), which will decide whether the petitioning organization will be able to participate in certain sports, with several guidelines.

Dr. George Akers, world director of education for the General Conference and former dean of the School of Education at Andrews University, served on the study committee. He has made a statement of intent: the Department of Education will draw up another report that will call for elimination of interorganizational competitive sports in the Adventist church. This is a reaffirmation of the current church stand, and this report will not advocate the exception protocol.

There is speculation that both the reports will

be presented to the General Conference annual council this fall in Nairobi, Kenya. General Conference President Neal Wilson declined an interview with the *Student Movement*.

A university administrator said "It would be a disaster to go to Nairobi to discuss this North American problem. The General Conference does not fully understand the problem. They should let the unions and schools take care of this problem."

Dr. David Faehner, Andrews University vice-president for academic advancement, said that taking the issue to Nairobi "may be sidestepping the issue. It may make it like the women's issue" so that the problem is not quickly solved.

In clarification of the Education Department's position, Akers said, "We have no objection to intramural sports. Everything that we want to accomplish in Christian education is right on campus." Akers also said that he is not opposed to "friendship matches" in which two schools have a sporting event on the agenda during a spiritual and social gathering.

"All along, Dr. Akers has been articulating a position that is different from the vote the committee has taken. He is not being secretive on how he or his staff stands," said Dr. Calvin Rock, chairman of the coordinating committee that studied this issue.

Rock continued, "I think the committee did a good job. I think they discussed it fairly." Akers added, "Health and physical education teachers had input through the whole [study]."

The March Adventist Intercollegiate Association meetings at Atlantic Union College sent a letter to Rock calling for student input into the decision-making process.

This situation began when the physical education teachers of Adventist schools asked the North American Division K-12 [Kindergarten through

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This article is reprinted from the April 20, 1988, *Student Movement*, the Andrews University campus newspaper. Ted Robertson is a senior zoology major at Andrews University and will be the editor of the *Student Movement*, 1988-1989. Todd Coupland graduated from Andrews University in 1988 and is now working for Bear, Sterns & Co., Inc. Sean Wilson is a senior public relations major at Andrews University and last year was layout assistant and sports editor of the *Student Movement*. Dawna Ringering graduated in 1988 from Andrews University where she was a writer and researcher for the *Student Movement*. She has been accepted into a masters program at Howard University's school of journalism.

high school] and the Board of Higher Education to consider the interschool sports activities situation. "When it was seen by these two organizations that this was a worldwide church problem, it was referred to the General Conference in Rio at the annual council two years ago," said Akers. "It was here that a study committee was [appointed to study into this concern]."

The group to study this was composed of two committees. One was the coordinating committee that received reports from the divisions worldwide, and the other studied interorganizational sports in North America. Dr. Rock chaired both committees. The coordinating committee compiled the findings and produced the report that reinforced the church's stance on this issue but allows for exceptions.

Opinions of Adventist leaders concerning interorganizational sports are mixed. "When you [obtain opinions from] board chairmen, the academy principals, and the board of trustees members, there is severe division," said Akers.

"Sports are an extremely important part of our society today," says Walter Hamerslaugh, executive director of SDA Health Physical Education Recreation Association. "Our [SDA-HPERA] philosophy is that you're not going to get people to stay away from sports, and so we feel that we

need to teach people how to relate to sports in the proper way. One way is through interorganizational sports programs. This will teach people how to be good spectators, winners, and losers." He continued, "I am a promoter of organized sports if properly conducted."

On the other side of the issue, Dr. Donald Sahly, president of Southern College, said, "Southern College would not support an intercollegiate program at all. . . . I have problems with this issue. Philosophically, this does not support the goals of Christian education. . . . I totally agree with George Akers on most issues."

Faehner said, "In the ideal sense one could argue that we need to be spending all our time working for the Lord. You wouldn't have time for fun and laughter, you are strictly needing to serve society. I respect this philosophy."

He continued, "However, in the world we live in, sports are a part of our being and they can be a very healthy part of our lives. Sports develop camaraderie, exercise, cheering for one friend over another. . . . An Andrews team playing basketball, tennis, hockey, or softball [in an intercollegiate fashion] would boost the morale of the campus. In a practical way it causes people to rally around something."

"Loma Linda would be in favor of establish-

## Early Adventist Competition

**T**he Student Movement *printed an article on the first Adventist venture into interschool sports* (Ami Long, "Edging Out the Competition," 72:12, January 22, 1987). The following is an excerpt from it.

The final seconds of the fourth quarter steadily ticked away. The college team executed its play, scored, then watched in disbelief as flags flew and referees nullified the gain. Unwilling to end the game with the local high school in a tie, the college supporters proceeded to engage in a violent verbal assault on the competency of the officials in a desperate (albeit unsuccessful) attempt to make them reconsider. Those in charge remained firm in their decision, a rematch was planned, and the students returned to their dormitories to discuss the gross injustice with their peers

who were unfortunate enough to miss the game.

Though this ill-fated team was short-lived (it lasted less than six months), it was important in the respect that it set a precedent for all organized competitive sports in Adventist colleges. The game cited took place on the Battle Creek College campus in the fall of 1893. Local newspapers reported the match and gave specific attention to the violent disagreement at the end of it. They then directed the public's eye to a special football competition between the American and British students of the college. When the game took place, the British won. The event was touted as "The Great International Football Game," was heavily attended, and was the primary reason for the downfall of competitive Adventist athletics.

One British student sent a copy of the newspaper's game

ing a limited intercollegiate sports program," said an administrator at that university. Concerning competition, President Richard Leshner of Andrews University said, "You are into an area of rivalry which does not allow you to center on Christian principles. This rivalry builds into a situation leading to ill-will and antipathy." He feels it is unrealistic for each union or school to decide this issue on its own. "It just leads to confusion." He said the issue should be decided at the annual council.

President John Wagner of Union College said he would like the decision to be made at a committee where the North American college presidents can be in attendance. He strongly supported having this issue decided on a local and union level.

Leshner continued, "The system is not a problem, sports is a problem in the church. In some instances the rivalries build up a spirit that is keen as those in war."

Changing his opinion on the issue, Paul Chapman, principal of San Fernando Valley Academy, related, "I've been against it [inter-school sports] for years. I just came to Southern California. We've always been against playing other schools up there. But down here, it seems that everything is so congested, and the kids are

out running the streets. A little ball may keep them out of trouble."

Another supporter of the current church stand, Dr. Richard Orrison, principal of Andrews Academy, said: "Interscholastic and intercollegiate competition has a potential to hurt the schools involved. With all the things that are needed in Adventist schools, to carve out a position that is largely or primarily to be that of a coach for a small program for a mere 20 students is something that I doubt can really be afforded."

Doug Newberry, professor of physical education at Andrews University, told that Akers made a comment on a tape sent to a convention for Adventist PE teachers on April 5, 1988, to the effect that if some of these "jocks" don't like what our schools provide, then maybe they should go somewhere else.

Dr. John Pangman, chairman of Andrews PE department, said, "The question must be asked that even if the team were exemplary, could we really witness for our Lord and for our church? And if that were [not] to happen, . . . it would be counterproductive."

Ted Wick of Church Ministries for the North American Division, outlined part of the current church position on interorganizational sports in a prepared statement:

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coverage home to his parents in Australia, who lent it to Ellen White who was shocked that such "frothy language" would be employed in reference to her model school and lost no time in writing an incensed letter to W. W. Prescott, president of the college. Prescott read the letter to the faculty and student body. They called off a football game scheduled for that day, and, in his words, "decided to have no more match games of any kind on the grounds."

Hammerslough commented on the stand of Mrs. White against interorganizational sports competition:

My reaction to that counsel is the same as my reaction to the counsel about riding bicycles. And her counsel about work in the South where she said there should be separate churches for the blacks and the whites. [These counsels] were important and needed to

be given for that time. Some sports in the late 1800s and early 1900s were very brutal. Boxing used to go until someone fell down, and in fact Teddy Roosevelt, who was a strong supporter of football, said it needed to be cleaned up. In addition, there was a heavy amount of gambling. Ellen White was not the only one writing against sports; many other Christian writers were also.

Then, many people were rural. Now, there are many who are urban and I think recreational pursuits are different nowadays than then.

President Richard Leshner of Andrews University spoke concerning this issue. "Ellen G. White never condemned the playing of games. She even voiced support of an innocent game of ball. The problem is defining what is innocent and what is not."

Those who utilize physical fitness and sporting activities as a means of Christian witness are encouraged to do so with these guidelines:

(1) Teaching, training, skill improvement in a Christian atmosphere is the purpose of the activity.

(2) A college team of Christian athletes going to an academy and holding a basketball clinic, in which good sportsmanship is a central part of what is taught. Going to a prison facility where the play is an outreach ministry is encouraged.

(3) It is not to be used as an avenue to open the

way for interschool or interchurch events that pit institution against institution in regularly scheduled elimination play.

(4) That inner-city athletic activities be recognized as desirable for the benefit of our own youth who may not be in an SDA school intramural situation.

As the comments suggest, interscholastic sports is a divisive issue among educators and other church leaders. At this juncture, we cannot foresee the outcome, but we can surely predict that the issue will not just go away.

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# Beyond Moving: The Merging of Loma Linda University

by Jean and Maynard Lowry

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On May 9, 1988, Gruen Associates, a group of planners, economic consultants, and civil engineers, presented a progress report on land-use potential to the Loma Linda University Board of Trustees. The report shocked the university administration and the Board of Trustees. Money, new money, *a lot of* new money is in the university's future, and several pieces of property are ripe for development. Property owned by the university in the Banning and Beaumont area promise revenues not previously included in projections of the University's future. The report states that "there is tremendous potential for developing these properties to produce a return to the university that will not only provide an adequate basis for funding the unification of the university but will also provide an excellent endowment in the future for the operations of the university."

Three months earlier, on January 12, 1988, the university board of trustees voted to consolidate the two campuses of the university on the Loma Linda campus. While earlier land-use proposals had covered the agricultural land and campus located in Riverside (La Sierra), the Gruen Associates report followed a broader directive to take a comprehensive, strategic approach to the total development of all real estate assets of the university. These assets include more than 1,600 acres

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in four locations in Banning, Beaumont, Loma Linda, and Riverside, California.

The operative word of the Gruen report is "future." Land development is a long-term proposition. In the meantime the university faces a decade of conserving and maintaining institutional resources in financially uncertain times. Short-term survival continues to depend on stemming the tide of declining enrollment, halting further program cuts, and maintaining support from the Pacific Union Conference and the General Conference. Much of the decade will be spent simply surviving; it must also be a decade of planning.

Loma Linda University's future now includes options that were pipe dreams only months ago. Those options could include maintaining two campuses, lowering tuition and/or providing scholarships, paying faculty salaries comparable to peers in the public sector, or building new facilities and equipping laboratories, or some combination of several options. For example, although preliminary plans are for land development rather than land sale, the university owns one large parcel that, if sold now would provide an immediate endowment that would rank Loma Linda University 140th among endowed higher-education institutions in the United States. Increases in scholarships and salaries would allow the university to attract students and faculty nationwide. Financial opportunities will reshape Loma Linda University, but only clear vision and superior leadership will make University President Norman Woods' dream of a "good, small, comprehensive university" a reality.

Meanwhile, attention continues to be focused on moving, rather than merger. In its August 1988 meeting the board of trustees is expected to affirm its resolve to move the La Sierra campus. A constituency meeting of the university could then be called as early as mid-1989 to vote on this issue. Woods has stated that if the constituency

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**The university will not reach its potential if it does not satisfactorily grapple with two key issues: The merger of the two campuses into a single unit and the physical move of the La Sierra campus.**

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rejects the board action the La Sierra campus will not move to Loma Linda. However, the constituency is expected to approve the move.

The university constituency is roughly divided into thirds, with one-third representation each from the General Conference, the Pacific Union Conference, and the university/alumni. In the past, members representing the General Conference and the union have voted as a block; but given growing differences between the two groups, it is likely that the past will not be repeated in the upcoming meeting. Predictions are that the General Conference members will support moving the La Sierra campus, while the union will oppose the move. The remaining one-third, the university/alumni members, may make the critical difference. Understating the potentially volatile issue, Woods notes that the selection of this latter group may be "highly politicized."

The university will not reach its potential if it does not satisfactorily grapple with two key issues. The first is the merger of the two campuses into a single functional unit; the second is the physical move of the La Sierra campus. The financial future of the institution will influence both issues. The university no longer faces financial pressures to merge or move, but the faculty, administration, board, and constituency will continue to analyze and debate both merger and moving.

It may be a surprise to some who are not well acquainted with Loma Linda University to learn that merger between La Sierra College and Loma Linda University has not been accomplished. On April 23, 1967, the constituency voted "the unification of Loma Linda University and La Sierra College as one organically integrated and consolidated institution as of July 1, 1967," and specified the complete implementation of the merger not later than September 1968. The General Conference and the Pacific Union were to continue to support the institution financially with plans being "worked out to unify all areas of the new merged balance sheet."

The new board of trustees met for the first time on April 24, 1967. But it failed to implement the mandate for merger given by the constituency. Since 1967 each campus of Loma Linda University has retained its own budget, sources of funding, salary schedules, general-education requirements, student affairs, admissions policies, and offices, and a federated group of separate alumni associations representing each school. Despite constituency action two decades ago, administrative separateness still prevails.

**T**oday, the relationship between the campuses that compose Loma Linda University follows more closely the description of a federation. Federations are often formed between a larger university and a smaller liberal arts college. The college is given "institutional identity and autonomy in terms of name, programs, faculty, and facilities." Federated colleges may have an interlocking board of trustees and/or a single central administration, while at the same time the identity and autonomy of each member of the federation remains intact.

The nature of Loma Linda's current efforts to join the two campuses remains unclear, due in part to the language used to describe the process. At the outset, the university administration chose the descriptive term *consolidation* to describe the joining of its two campuses. However, as the outpouring of negative emotion associated with the process of consolidation became intertwined with the term, *unification* became the new byword. To quote one senior university administra-

tor, "*Consolidation* has a takeover ring to it while *unification* has a more cooperative, positive connotation."

Unfortunately, changes in terminology have not added definition to the process. One poorly defined term has been substituted for another. In most instances, *unification* is used to indicate that the institution is moving several academic units into new facilities. Occasionally, it is used to imply that the institution is in fact merging disparate entities. While moving conveys the idea of transit and packing boxes, merger is a more complex idea with focus on mission and a unified purpose, identity, and voice. Merger may or may not be accompanied by a move that narrows the geographic distance between two previously separate entities. Even more important, physical proximity does not guarantee that merger will occur.

President Woods' public presentations focus on moving issues: time lines, new buildings, street closings, and parking accommodations. He affirms the need for "unity" in the institution; a goal he feels can best be achieved by moving. He rarely speaks of merger, although in a paper presented to the board of trustees the university officers allude to merger by calling for a "full integration of professional and liberal arts curricula" while maintaining an "emphasis in medical and health sciences."

What is envisioned by the university officers is a faculty that is "vitalized by ongoing research" while engaged in "masterful" teaching. The tight-rope that all institutions of higher education walk between teaching and research is certainly an issue of mission, but the dreams of university officers have not been widely shared with the faculties. Nor have the discussions begun that are necessary to make the dreams a reality.

The university officers' paper implies that moving will result in "full integration," or merger. According to Gail S. Chambers, research associate in higher education at the University of Rochester, the merger of two educational institutions "needs to move through an increasingly accurate and balanced understanding of (1) what the new place can be, (2) who will move it to fruition, and (3) what will be needed in structure and resources

to support the plan. In other words: the new institution's mission, advocacy, and feasibility." To date the university officers and the institution's Strategic Planning Committee have focused too much attention on the feasibility of moving the La Sierra campus. Merger has received only incidental attention.

According to Hugh L. Thompson, chancellor of Indiana University at Kokomo, certain conditions are conducive to merger: (1) The physical distance between the institutions should not be great. (2) There should have been some previous cooperation prior to merger. (3) The academic programs offered should be complementary rather than duplicative. (4) Academic excellence should increase as the result of merger. (5) There should be common political interests. Loma Linda University meets all five criteria. Ironically, these factors were in place in 1967 when a number of decisions were made that prevented a genuine administrative merger of the two campuses.

The financial relationship and practices of the campuses are fundamental to continuing divisions within the institution. There has never been a "merged" balance sheet. University administrators carefully maintain two independent financial entities, and the board of trustees approves separate budgets for each campus. Departments that

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serve both campuses, such as the school of religion, the library, and the records office, develop and maintain separate budgets and accounting for their operations on the respective campuses.

Beyond these separate accounting procedures, different budgetary philosophies prevail on the two campuses. The Loma Linda campus is a financial consortium made up of central administration and the schools. Each entity has its own financial base. Central administration's financial

base is the General Conference subsidy, overhead payments from funded research, and a payment from the La Sierra campus. The financial base for the schools is tuition. Each school retains all tuition funds generated by the faculty of that school. On the La Sierra campus there is no consortium. The Pacific Union subsidy, tuition income, and any industry income or loss are the financial base for the campus. Each school on the La Sierra campus receives its operating funds from the campus budget without a direct reference to the amount of tuition it generates.

The Loma Linda campus budgetary procedures are school oriented; on the La Sierra campus they are campus oriented. For 20 years university administrators have lived with these incompatible budgetary philosophies and practices that have only reinforced separation between the campuses and thwarted merger. While the rhetoric has been that of a merged institution, the reality has been a federated institution.

Joan B. Cannon, who studied a state-mandated merger of two institutions, warns of the damaging effect of a discrepancy between rhetoric and action. Prior to merger a consultant identified certain areas of concern including: "(1) College X would only agree to a marriage of equals merger; (2) College Y feared that their reputation would be tarnished as a result of merging with College X; (3) a latent distrust and rivalry existed between members of the two institutions . . ." Merger was recommended, despite these areas of difficulty. Decisions made during the merger made it clear that a "merger-acquisition" was occurring, with College X being acquired. For nearly two years following the merger the institution continued to have "disparate and inequitable working conditions, tenure and reward systems, and salary schedules." The delay in resolving these inequities resulted in reports of "job dissatisfaction, merger anxiety, role tension, and merger dissatisfaction." This was especially true for College X

## The Case for Moving as Well as Merging

by Ron Graybill

**L**oma Linda University has a choice: to keep doing what we have been doing—operating an average college and an average cluster of health-related professional schools—or to become a truly good small university, a place to which Adventist young people can look for quality training that will enable them to carry out the mission of the church.

I believe that if Loma Linda University is ever to fulfill its mission to prepare Adventist young people for service, it must not only continue to serve "average students"; it must also offer more help to educationally disadvantaged or poorly equipped young people and a better-quality educa-

tion to talented high achievers. Elitism, however, should not be the method for achieving excellence.

Such academic excellence will best be achieved on a single campus, for a number of reasons. The integration of academic programs on a single campus will give liberal-arts classes a larger student pool on which to draw and will help broaden the experience of the professional students. For example, fine-arts students will have a larger audience for their talents and split programs (such as social relations) will be unified. Students studying Adventist history will have more ready access to the Ellen G. White Branch Office.

Unifying the campuses will allow the La Sierra academic entities to be considered truly a part of a single university instead of being looked on as merely another senior college, separated from the so-called "main" campus by 20 miles. It will increase the commitment of the undergraduate faculty to research, thus enriching their classroom work and increasing the value of the degrees the university offers. Moving will also improve chances of bringing faculty salaries into parity, which will help the university recruit and retain a higher-quality teaching force.

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respondents.

Loma Linda University has lived with inequities for 20 years while telling the faculty, students, and constituents that it is one university. This discrepancy between talk and action has cost university management much credibility. The board of trustees recently attempted to redress the heritage of mistrust by voting to promise that money from the La Sierra campus farm would benefit only the entities of the La Sierra campus and would not benefit the School of Medicine. Nevertheless, the faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences has requested that the university faculty senate explore the advisability of retaining legal counsel to ensure that their interests are protected within the university. Merger cannot occur amid such mistrust.

Nor can it occur without a change in the external constraints placed on the institution. Woods has identified pressure from the university's ex-

ternal publics as the greatest stumbling block to merger. Key sources of such external forces, such as the General Conference, the Pacific Union Conference, and sectors of the university's constituency, have insisted that the La Sierra campus conform to the operational policies and practices of the other North American SDA colleges.

Woods has indicated that this pressure is so intense that moving the La Sierra campus may be the necessary catalyst for the College of Arts and Sciences and School of Education at La Sierra to be able to conform to policies governing the rest of the university, rather than remaining tied to policies governing other Adventist colleges. Given past attitudes, that may be too optimistic.

For example, at the first meeting of the board following La Sierra College becoming a part of Loma Linda University, April 24, 1963, it was voted to appoint a small committee to "work out" wage differences between the La Sierra and Loma Linda campuses. That was not accomplished.

The students' social experience will also be enhanced. Hundreds of undergraduates currently study on the Loma Linda campus where their choices for a life companion are limited to other health professionals. Bringing the College of Arts and Sciences and the Schools of Education and Business to Loma Linda will allow all students a wider choice.

More than half of the students currently at La Sierra are enrolled in programs leading to careers in health. If they were on the Loma Linda campus, they would have ready access to the large health library there. They would also have greater opportunities to work in jobs related to their interests.

Some have expressed concern about the impact of unification on the university's spiritual health, but I find it hard to believe that the institution's commitment to spiritual principles or its spiritual atmosphere will be substantially altered by a 20-mile move.

Not only will academic programs be enhanced and student life enriched by unification, but administration of the university will also improve and become more efficient. The current physical distance between the campuses is both a symbol and a cause of an unhealthy level of suspicion and distrust within the university. A unified campus will allow

for more frequent and convenient consultation and for more rapid, effective communication. Naturally, being on one campus will not solve all administrative problems, but it will make some of them easier to solve.

Finally, financial issues must be considered. It is undoubtedly true that if the La Sierra campus were maintained and the farm land at La Sierra properly developed, there would be a greater initial amount of money available for endowments and scholarships at La Sierra. But the university has no intention of dissipating the La Sierra assets if unification takes place. Moreover, long-term savings should result from campus unification. In the first place, there will be operational savings resulting from the elimination of duplicate services and facilities. But as the university becomes more truly united, fund-raising and marketing efforts will become more focused and efficient. This, together with the superior educational product a unified campus will allow us to offer, can lead to even greater long-term financial stability.

In short, I see a single-campus institution as the best, perhaps the only hope for genuine merger and unification. Twenty miles is not a long distance on a road map, but on our mental map of who we are and where we belong, those miles create an unbridgeable gap.

Now, when some departments are moved from the La Sierra to Loma Linda campuses, department faculty can and do receive pay increases. Nevertheless, Francis Wernick, past president of the board of trustees, has stated that the La Sierra campus faculty will not be moved to the Loma Linda campus wage scale "short of the Second Coming." Undoubtedly concerned about the fiscal impact internal merger of wages at Loma Linda would have on Pacific Union College, Thomas Mostert, current vice-president of the university's board of trustees and president of the Pacific Union Conference, believes that moving the La Sierra campus to Loma Linda will not alter the La Sierra campus faculty wage scale. Despite such past and present board opposition to merger on the issue of faculty wages, Woods has not abandoned the goal of an equalized wage scale.

Merger should have occurred in 1967. The dissonance within the university today is due, in part, to the institution's unwillingness to acknowledge that merger failed. It is time for the university's external publics to support the faculties in their efforts to merge successfully, whether

or not this involves moving.

Gail Chambers encourages the faculties of merging institutions to begin as friends. She notes that, "The personal demands of a merger attempt are best met when two presidents can stand toe to toe with one another and like what they see." Loma Linda University has only one president. It is the deans and the faculties who must argue and work together until they like what they see. It will not be easy. They must change a balkanized institution into a unified one.

Moving, while a more emotionally charged issue, is much simpler than merging. Institutions may be forced to move for financial reasons or choose to move to provide for a better future. In the case of Loma Linda University, finances do not necessitate a move. The decision to move the La Sierra campus has been made because the board of trustees, the university officers, and the Strategic Planning Committee believe that it will provide a better future for the institution. While moving may be only an incident in the life of an institution, Loma Linda University will not survive without merger.

# The Sabbath in Matthew, Mark, and Luke

by Herold Weiss

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It is no secret that Adventists have been rather defensive about the Sabbath. The Sabbath, maybe even more than the expectation of the Second Coming, has been the doctrine that has given our Christianity its particular tone, and been our most visible identity marker. To most Adventists, however, the Sabbath has been tied to the Law; many feel that to defend the Sabbath, they must defend the Law.

Adventists have not been the only ones who have tied the Sabbath to the Law. Others have argued that Jesus abolished the Sabbath, and thereby did away with the Law. This essay will show that such a conclusion is unwarranted, and that to read the gospel stories as involved in an argument for or against the validity of the Sabbath is to misread them. The gospels take the validity of the Sabbath for granted. Specifically, I will argue that Matthew, Mark, and Luke (what scholars call the Synoptic Gospels) indicate that the early Christians took for granted that Jesus had observed the Sabbath, that they themselves also observed it, and that their debates on the subject centered on permissible and nonpermissible Sabbath activities.

A careful examination of the references to the Sabbath in the Synoptic Gospels shows that none of them takes issue with the Sabbath's validity.

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Jesus' sayings and activities on the Sabbath were not understood to have rendered it obsolete, and thus destroyed the Jewish law. After the death and resurrection of Christ, the Christian communities, which left us the gospels, did not discuss whether to keep the Sabbath, but how.

## *General Approach to the Gospels*

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First I need to say a word about the approach I will use in studying the Sabbath passages in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. My inquiry uses the historical-critical method. Although some object to the notion of "critical," this word only denotes that when reading the New Testament it is legitimate to ask questions and to seek solutions to the questions.<sup>1</sup> Anyone who has studied the Synoptic Gospels cannot finish reading them without having all sorts of questions in mind. The answers to these questions have been in the works for 200 years, and today New Testament scholarship has reached a consensus on some basic matters. These need to be set out before I embark on our inquiry about the Sabbath.

New Testament scholars have come to understand that the degree of verbal similarity among the Synoptic Gospels can be explained only in terms of literary dependency. The careful study of the relationships among the Synoptics has resulted in the conclusion that the Gospel of Mark

was written first, probably in connection with the fall of Jerusalem around 70 C. E.<sup>2</sup> The Gospel of Matthew was written about 15 years later by someone who used the Gospel of Mark as the basic source of information, and the Gospel of Luke was written about 20 years after Mark by someone who used Mark and several other sources (as he openly acknowledges in 1:1-3). Moreover, since there are 23 sections of Matthew and Luke in which these two gospels have a very strong literary dependence on material not reported by Mark (and therefore could not have been derived from Mark), it is clear that these two gospels had another common source besides Mark. Scholars designate this presently unavailable common source by the letter *Q*.

Another matter of scholarly consensus is that the material that came into the gospels had been kept alive in the oral tradition of the early Christian synagogues. There, Christians engaged in the exegesis of the Old Testament, preached, taught, and in general encouraged and debated with one another. This means that the things Jesus did and said were remembered and adapted for use in the different ministries of the church. So any study of the Synoptic material has to take into consideration how the material was handled in the oral tradition, how it came into a written gospel, and how it passed from one gospel to another. It also has to ask the question as to what may have been in the theological agenda at each of these stages in the transmission.

## *Consensus That Sabbath Should be Observed*

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To make better sense of it, I will arrange the material in Matthew, Mark, and Luke about the Sabbath into three categories. First, I will look at what seem to be actual historical reminiscences of the early Christians, even if we find variations in the reports. Second, I will deal with what are clear “redactional” statements, brought into the account by the evangelists as they composed their story. Finally,

I will examine those reports that fit somewhere in between the previous two categories; that is, reports that show quite a bit of elaboration in the process of oral transmission.

The references to the Sabbath in connection with the burial and the resurrection of Jesus clearly reflect historical reminiscences. Taking Mark’s account first, one notices that it matter-of-factly reports that on the evening of the Day of Preparation, identified as *prosabbaton* (15:42), Joseph of Arimathea arranged to have Jesus taken from the cross and placed in a tomb while two Marys watched the proceedings. Then, when the Sabbath had passed (16:1), three women went to the tomb to anoint the body. In this account it is taken for granted that all readers would understand the necessity to postpone the anointing due to the Sabbath.

Matthew’s account follows Mark’s rather closely in the burial scene, omitting Pilate’s inquiry about Jesus’ condition, and adding that the tomb actually belonged to Joseph. The author, however, finds it necessary to rebut the slanderous accusation that the disciples had stolen the body. Thus one reads of the arrangement made by the Pharisees to have the tomb sealed and guarded (27:62). Here the author delights in showing the Pharisees in flagrant violation of the Sabbath while, by contrast, the Christian women wait until after the Sabbath to anoint Jesus’ body (28:1). The anti-Pharisaic bias of Matthew is unmistakable.

Luke also follows Mark in the details of the burial, pointing out that it was the Day of Preparation and the Sabbath was beginning (23:54). Then, somewhat to our surprise (since usually this gospel is reluctant to mention the Law and the Commandments) we read that the women went home and prepared the spices and ointments, but “on the sabbath they rested according to the commandment” (23:56, RSV throughout). From these reports no one could detect that there was anything unusual about the behavior of the women. Nothing is said to explain that what may have been a matter of concern back then (31 C.E.) was such no longer (70-90 C.E.).

We shift, then, to a consideration of the four clearly “redactional” references to the Sabbath in the Synoptic Gospels. I may begin with Mark 1:21

(par. Luke 4:31), the exorcism in the synagogue at Capernaum which, it is said, took place on a Sabbath while Jesus was teaching there. The fact that the incident took place on a Sabbath in no way contributes to our understanding of it. In the oral tradition the story was probably told without a Sabbath connection.

Our second reference is Mark 6:4, where Jesus' teaching in the synagogue on a Sabbath gives rise to opposition and the saying, "A prophet is not without honor, except in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house." Again,

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**There are references in the Synoptics that leave no doubt that Sabbath observance was a controversial matter.**

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this Sabbath reference is secondary. This saying is reported in the other three gospels (Matthew 13:57; Luke 4:24; John 4:44), but in each one of them it has a totally different setting. Thirdly, one may note Luke 4:16, the introduction to the famous sermon in the synagogue at Nazareth, where the author of Luke/Acts says of Jesus what he also says of Paul: he was in the synagogue on the Sabbath "as was his custom."<sup>3</sup> Here the author leaves no doubt that he is making a personal observation.

Finally, let us examine how the Markan statement, "Pray that it may not happen in winter" (13:18), is expanded by Matthew into "Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a sabbath" (24:20). Luke, who also uses most of Mark 13 in Luke 21, chose to omit the saying. We may conjecture that, if Luke was written about 90 C.E., it was already well known that the fall of Jerusalem had not taken place in winter, and thus what had been a concern in Mark's time was no longer relevant. Matthew, on the other hand, gave the saying a new lease on life by expressing concern for the Sabbath rest. Whichever way one explains the evidence, it is safe to say that the saying belongs to the Matthean redaction.

As a group, these redactional references make clear that at the time when the gospels were

written the Christian communities still understood the significance of the Sabbath and were concerned about its observance. There are no redactional statements that qualify in any way the validity of Sabbath observance.

## *Controversies Over How to Observe the Sabbath*

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The evidence presented thus far shows that the Christian communities that sustained the Synoptic tradition did observe the Sabbath, and probably felt that they were doing it even better than the Pharisees. One does not receive the impression here that the Sabbath was at the center of a dispute. There are, however, other references in the Synoptics that leave no doubt that Sabbath observance was a controversial matter. The prime evidence comes from material in our third category: that which went through elaboration in the oral transmission.

Let us begin with the two stories that appear together, and in the same order, in all three Synoptics. These are the incidents of the disciples plucking grain while making their way through a wheat field (Mark 2:23-28, par. Matthew 12:1-8, par. Luke 6:1-5), and the healing of the man with the withered hand at the synagogue (Mark 3:1-6, par. Matthew 12:9-14, par. Luke 6:6-11). I would like to begin by looking at the Matthean and the Lukan versions first, leaving Mark's more original version for last.

Matthew expands the story of the disciples in the wheat field by making a parallel to David's men at the tabernacle: both groups of men were hungry. Besides noting their being hungry (not mentioned by Mark), Matthew also finds another Old Testament story to support the practice. He writes, "Have you not read in the law how in the sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are guiltless?" This second precedent corresponds to an ordering of priorities known from the Rabbinic literature, to which Matthew gives an appropriate Christological twist. According to Rabbi Simeon ben Menasiah,

Rabbi Akiba (120-135 C.E.) taught: "If punishment for murder has precedence over temple worship, which in turn has precedence over the Sabbath, how much more the safeguarding of life must have precedence over the Sabbath."<sup>4</sup>

Both Matthew and Akiba seem to agree that the temple has precedence over the Sabbath. How-

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**Matthew takes the punch line away from the lips of Jesus and gives it to the Pharisees, thus allowing Jesus to come up with a new punch line.**

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ever, while Akiba derives from this principle that activities on behalf of those in peril have precedence over temple activities, Matthew concludes that the activities of Jesus have precedence over temple activities. As he says: "Something greater than the temple is here!" We may also notice that in order to bolster his position Matthew also quotes Hosea 6:6, a Christian proof text that could be applied to different circumstances (cf. Matthew 9:13).

Luke places his imprint on the same narrative by changing the nature of the charge brought by the Pharisees. Rather than challenge the conduct of his disciples, the Pharisees challenge the action of Jesus himself: "Why are you doing what is not lawful?" they ask. Like Matthew, who used the story in order to establish the superiority of Jesus over the temple, Luke is also bringing in Christological considerations by putting Jesus himself at the center of the controversy.

The Christological interest is also shown by the fact that both record the secondary affirmation that "the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath," but leave out the more radical Marcan statement, "the sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath." These transformations of the story within the synoptic tradition show us that with the passage of time a story that had been used to settle questions about what is permissible, or lawful Sabbath activity, came to be used to establish the Lordship of Christ, a theological point not quite relevant to practical questions about lawful Sabbath conduct. In its role as a Sabbath controversy story the Matthean version, especially, shows the

use of Old Testament proof texts in order to settle disputes concerning permissible Sabbath conduct.

Taking up the story of the healing of the man with the withered hand, we see that Matthew has again altered the Marcan account in order to introduce material from *Q*. In the earlier Marcan version Jesus takes the initiative and asks, "Is it lawful on the sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" Scholars have seen this story as having been built around a "punch line," only in this case the punch line has been turned into a question. This phenomenon is well known in rabbinic arguments.<sup>5</sup> We notice that Matthew takes the punch line away from the lips of Jesus and gives it to the Pharisees, again a procedure used elsewhere within the Synoptic oral tradition.<sup>6</sup> This allows Matthew's Jesus to come up with a new punch line, which Matthew has received from *Q*, and which appears in three versions within the Synoptics.

Besides being Jesus' answer in this Matthean narrative, it appears as a doublet in Luke,<sup>7</sup> once at the healing of the woman who had been suffering for 18 years a spirit of infirmity (Luke 13:10-17), and again at the healing of the man with dropsy (Luke 14:1-6). Here are the three versions of this one *Q* saying:

What man of you, if he has one sheep and it falls into a pit on the sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? (Matthew 12:11)

Which of you having a son or an ox that has fallen into a well, will not immediately pull him out on a sabbath day? (Luke 14:5)

Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his ass from the manger and lead it away to water it? (Luke 13:15)

In the Matthean setting, the *Q* saying prompts the exclamation, "Of how much more value is a man than a sheep!" followed by a direct reply to the Pharisaic question, "So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." Clearly, the story remains focused on the lawfulness of certain activities on the Sabbath, without any consideration being given to the agent of the act.

The Lukan version of the healing of the man with the withered hand preserves the Marcan

story almost word for word, but here the story does receive some Christological twists. This version omits reference to the fact that Jesus “looked . . . at them in anger” (Mark 3:5), and instead records that Jesus “knew their thoughts” (Luke 6:8). These changes, however, do not play a role in the subject of our inquiry.

We now turn to the Marcan accounts of the two stories we have been examining. The story of the disciples plucking grain on the Sabbath has consistently caught the attention of scholars for its artificiality.<sup>8</sup> It is not easy to imagine the Pharisees trailing Jesus and his disciples into the open fields on a Sabbath day. Moreover, it is somewhat unusual that what is being called into question is the behavior of the disciples. We already noticed that Luke remedies the situation by making Jesus the object of the challenge. Still, the story preserves elements that are an integral part of the tradition. The appeal to the conduct of David and his men seems a bit out of focus. The two activities being compared do not quite belong to the same order. One has to do with matters of worship in the realm of the sacred, while the other is a question of law. It may also be said that the saying “The Son of man is Lord of the sabbath,” is a secondary development within the tradition.<sup>9</sup>

At the core of the Marcan story is the saying, “The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath.” This is, without a doubt, one of the most radical statements Jesus ever made. Its very radicalness, which argues for its authenticity, may have been the reason Matthew and Luke decided to omit it from their accounts. The closest thing to it that may be found within Judaism is a statement of a second century rabbi, who, commenting on Exodus 31:13, wrote: “The Sabbath was given to you, not you to the Sabbath.”<sup>10</sup> We need not labor the point that it is not quite the same to say that the Sabbath was given for the benefit of the Jews, and to say that it was given for the benefit of humanity.

Much has been written about this pregnant saying. Most of it has had to do with what the statement denies. Thus, just to mention one example, E. Lohse has written that by means of this statement “the absolute obligation of the commandment is . . . challenged.”<sup>11</sup> However, what the statement affirms is more significant than what it

denies. To make the point that the Sabbath was made for man in no way challenges the validity of the commandment. Rather it takes it for granted and places it within a larger context. So, not even this, Jesus’ most radical statement, can in any way be construed to belong to a controversy concerning the validity of the Sabbath. (To be fair to Lohse, I should point out that he later adds, “though its validity is not contested in principle.”)

Finally, we may return to those Lukan stories that contain the doublet of the *Q* saying we already found in Matthew. In his account of the healing of the man with dropsy, the Pharisees are present,

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**One of the most radical statements Jesus ever made is “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.” Its very radicalness may have been the reason Matthew and Luke decided to omit it from their accounts.**

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but they are silent throughout. Confronted by the man, Jesus opens fire with the question, “is it lawful to heal on the sabbath, or not?” Then, after healing the man, he justifies his action with a version of the *Q* saying (Luke 14:5). The question clearly states the point at issue.

The other Lukan story allows for some more important observations. The story of Jesus’ healing of the woman with the spirit of infirmity does not itself include the *Q* saying. After the healing, a ruler of a synagogue takes center stage and rebukes the people saying, “There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days to be healed, and not on the sabbath day” (Luke 13:14). To this directive Jesus responds, “You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?”

This whole scene reflects most openly the Lukan agenda, as the following redactional comment reveals, “As he said this, all his adversaries were put to shame; and all the people rejoiced at

all the glorious things that were done by him" (Luke 13:17). The story elaborates on the Lukan appropriation of the passage from Isaiah 61, the text for Jesus' sermon at the synagogue at Nazareth. It promises release to the captives on the acceptable day of the Lord, thus causing all the people to rejoice.

## *Not Whether, but How*

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From the above analysis, we may conclude that there are five different kinds of references to the Sabbath in the Synoptic tradition. A close examination reveals that none of these items in any way questions the validity of the Sabbath *per se*. On the contrary, they take it for granted.

(1) Historical reminiscences of the burial of Jesus and redactional statements from the agenda of the authors that *assume* the obligation of the Sabbath rest among Christians.

(2) The aphorism "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."

(3) The affirmation "It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath," or versions in the form of a question.

(4) Appeals to what was common practice among Jews in caring for animals or children.

(5) Proof texts from the Old Testament quoted to defend activities some were questioning. Since some of the material is polemical, one needs to determine what is the nature of the controversy.

Until now it has been assumed by modern New Testament scholarship that the controversy is between Christians and Jews. In other words, Jesus is presented as challenging the Jews, who wish to maintain the Sabbath law by declaring the Sabbath obsolete.<sup>12</sup>

Such understanding of the evidence is clearly prejudiced. These controversies do not represent either Jesus or the early Christians involved in a dispute with Jewish opponents. As we have noticed, not even the most radical piece of evidence challenges the validity of the Sabbath.

Rather, the dispute concerns whether this or that activity was to be considered lawful on a Sabbath. The evidence shows that within the Christian communities the question was not whether to keep the Sabbath, but how. Indeed questions of how to observe the Sabbath remained a major concern, just as it had been at the synagogues where these Christians had worshipped prior to their becoming disciples of the Crucified.

What we have in the gospels is the evidence of how Christians of Jewish and Gentile origin, inside and outside of Palestine, continued to carry on their worship services on the Sabbath. Like all other Jews and Godfearers<sup>13</sup> of the time, they were trying to determine *how to* observe the Sabbath rest by establishing which kinds of activities were lawful and which were not. These were internal controversies, and not of the kind where some stand outside denying its validity, and others are inside affirming it. Rather, both sides of the debate presuppose the validity of observing the Sabbath.

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## NOTES AND REFERENCES

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1. See J. Gladson, "Taming Historical Criticism: Adventist Biblical Scholarship in the Land of the Giants," *Spectrum*, 18:4 (April 1988), p. 20.

2. C. E. is an abbreviation for Common Era. It is equivalent to A. D. (Anno Domini, "in the year of our Lord"). We use C. E., along with many scholars, out of respect for our readers whose commitment is to a religion

other than the Christian religion.

3. *New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978).

4. For full documentation see G. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), p. 181.

5. A. Hultgren, *Jesus and His Adversaries* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1979), pp. 50, 51.



6. One of the best examples of the punch line appearing on different lips is when Luke gives the great commandment to the lawyer, Luke 10:27.

7. New Testament scholars call a doublet a saying that developed into two versions in the oral tradition and appears twice in the same gospel.

8. See Hultgren, *Ibid.*, p. 112.

9. On the secondary character of Mark 2:28, see V. Taylor, *The Gospel According to Mark* (London: Macmillan, 1959), p. 220; C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Gospel According to Mark* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1959), p. 118; D. E. Nineham, *The Gospel of St. Mark* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1963), p. 106; W. F. Beare, "The Sabbath Was Made for Man," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 79 (1960), p. 135; A. Hultgren, *Jesus and His Adversaries*, pp. 113, 114. For a review of the argument see, M. D. Hooker, *The Son of Man in Mark* (London: SPCK 1967), pp. 94, 175-177.

10. See C. G. Vermes, *Ibid.*, p. 180 for full documentation.

11. E. Lohse, "Sabbaton," in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, T. Kittel ed., vol. 7, p. 22.

12. H. Braun, *Jesus of Nazareth; the Man and His Times* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), pp. 58-61; W. Rordorf, *Sunday* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968), pp. 62, 63; E. Stauffer, "Neue Wege der Jesusforschung" *Gottes ist der Orient* (Berlin: Toepelmann, 1959), p. 167; S. Schulz, *Die Stunde der Vortschaft* (Hamburg: Surche, 1967), p. 85; E. Schweizer, *Good News According to Mark* (Richmond: Knox, 1975), p. 40. It may be pointed out, however, that there are non-Adventist scholars who have denied that the abrogation of the Sabbath is being declared here. See, for example, M. J. Borg, *Conflict, Holiness, and Politics in the Teachings of Jesus* (New York: Mellen, 1984), p. 151.

13. Those Gentiles who had been attracted to Judaism and its synagogues and who participated in some Jewish ritual, but who had not become proselytes, are identified as "Godfearers." Cornelius is said to have been one (Acts 10:2).

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# Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the Sabbath—According to the Gospel of John

by James J. C. Cox

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Some Adventists, over the past decade, have given up on the Adventist doctrine and practice of the Sabbath. As we listen to them defend their decisions, we hear them propound, in one form or another, the following arguments:

“We believe, with most Adventists, that the central elements of the faith and practice of the New Testament church remain normative for the continuing church, including the 20th century church. Among those central elements, we include the early church's views of God and man, sin and salvation, second advent and mission, its practice of Baptism and its celebration of the Lord's Supper. We do not, however, include the Adventist doctrine and practice of the Sabbath.”

“Why?”

“Well, we believe, like most Adventists, that Paul's letters represent the most mature thinking of the New Testament church on Christian faith and practice.” However, unlike most Adventists, we believe that those letters reflect and propose a view of the law, ‘sabbaths,’ and ‘days’ that disallows the Adventist doctrine and practice of the Sabbath.”<sup>1</sup>

In this essay, we support their claim that the central elements of the faith and practice of the

New Testament church remain normative for the Christian community, including the 20th century church. But we challenge two of their basic arguments. First, the argument that Paul's letters contain the most mature thinking of the New Testament church on Christian faith and practice. Second, the argument that the Pauline point of view disallows the Adventist doctrine and practice of the Sabbath.

We could challenge those arguments from the perspectives of the faith and practice of the early church as reflected in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke (often called the Synoptic Gospels), and the Acts of the Apostles.<sup>2</sup> However, in this essay, we will do so from the perspective of the faith and practice of the first-century church as mirrored in the Gospel of John.

We will argue that the Christian communities of Syria, Asia Minor, and Europe, at the end of the first century, C.E.,<sup>3</sup> were regularly practicing the central Christian sacraments—participating in Baptism, sharing in the Lord's Supper, and observing the Sabbath. They apparently had no questions about whether Christians should or should not practice those rites. They did, however, have some questions about their meaning, significance, and *Christian* practice. That is as true of the Sabbath as it is of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

It is not clear what Paul meant by his reflections on the law *vis-a-vis* the Sabbath and his remarks

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about “days” and “sabbaths” in his letters to the Christian communities scattered from Syria to Europe. What is clear is that those same congregations, some 35 to 40 years later, did not understand Paul to mean that the Sabbath had been discontinued as a Christian rite. Nearly a half-century after Paul wrote and published his letters, those very congregations were still observing the Sabbath, as well as Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, as central sacramental elements in their Christian faith, practice, worship, and mission.

Consequently, we conclude if ex-Adventists and Adventists are right in their contention that that which was central and normative for the faith and practice of the first-century church remains central and normative for the continuing church, then Adventists are right in concluding that the practice of the Sabbath, as well as the practice of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, remain central and normative for *Christian* faith and practice in the 20th century church.

### *Relevant Characteristics of John’s Gospel*

**B**efore examining specific texts and passages, we need to mention three relevant characteristics of John’s Gospel.

First, the Gospel of John both mirrors and augments a later and more mature stage in the early church’s thinking about its faith and practice than do the letters of Paul.<sup>4</sup>

The letters of Paul reflect the faith, practices and concerns of Christian communities scattered along the northern rim of the Mediterranean, from Antioch to Rome, during the *central third* of the first century, C.E. The writings of John, on the other hand, mirror the faith, practice, and concerns of Christian congregations settled along the same westward-oriented missionary trails during the *last third* of that century.<sup>5</sup>

Consequently, when we ask historical questions, as we do in this essay, the literatures of the early Christian communities on which we plan to

draw for our answers must be consciously arranged according to the historical periods they actually represent—first, the Pauline letters, written in and representing the *central third*, and then, the Johannine documents, written in and representing the *last third* of the first century, C.E.

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**The stories, drawn from the life of Jesus, and told by John, are intentionally shaped so as to lead the reader to the conclusion that he who spoke such wise words was the Messiah.**

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If we wish to know and understand the faith, practice, mission, and concerns of the church in the *last third* of the first century, we must turn to the literature of that period. For the purposes of this essay, that means the writings of John, in particular, the Gospel of John. The literature of the previous period, the *central third*, the letters of Paul, may only be used legitimately to contribute perspective—not to control, in any way, either the historical questions or their answers.<sup>6</sup>

It follows that we may not take the Pauline letters as the last word on the thinking of the New Testament church about its faith, practice and mission. What Paul proposed, in his letters, about the meaning and significance of faith and practice he set forth in dialogue with the congregations to whom and for whom he wrote. It both reflected and instructed their faith, their practice, their mission, and their concerns. We may not, however, legitimately use his letters to assess the faith, practice, mission, and concerns of those and other congregations of a later time. To do that, we must turn to the writings of that later period, in this instance, the writings of John, in particular, the Gospel of John.

Second, the Gospel of John, like the Synoptic Gospels and the letters of the New Testament, was written in dialogue with the communities to which it was first addressed. It, like them, both reflects and contributes to the thinking and the practice of those communities.

From the answers given in the gospels, as in the letters, it is possible to identify the questions of the communities to which they were first addressed and, thereby, to identify the thinking and concerns of those communities.

We are therefore able, from the answers John provides, to recover the questions his congregations were asking about Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the Sabbath. By identifying those questions, we can also identify both their thinking and their concerns about those rites.

Third, the stories, drawn from the life of Jesus, and told by John are intentionally shaped so as to lead the reader steadily to the conclusion that he who spoke such wise "words" and wrought such remarkable "works" was the promised Messiah.<sup>7</sup>

John tells those stories with the intention of developing the more profound aspects of his doctrine of Christ in relation to the more consequential dimensions of Christian faith and practice; particularly those that pertain to the heart of Christian worship—the practice of participating in Baptism, sharing in the Lord's Supper and observing the Sabbath.<sup>8</sup>

### *Baptism: John 3*

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Many scholars agree that although John does not record any command to baptize converts, as does Matthew,<sup>9</sup> he does have a profound interest in Baptism and its significance. In passages such as the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus, they would argue, John treats both the inner meaning and the more profound implications of Baptism.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, this and other passages in the gospel reflect the continuing practice of Baptism in the communities to which John addressed his Gospel. The intention of the passage is to authenticate that practice and to emphasize its Christian significance by drawing on the words and attitudes of Jesus.<sup>11</sup>

Most scholars would see this brought to focus in the words, "Let me assure you, unless one is

born again, one cannot even comprehend God's kingdom," and "Let me assure you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, one cannot become a citizen of God's kingdom."<sup>12</sup>

When we seek the purpose of John's thumbnail sketch of the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus, some obvious questions come immediately to mind. Why does John choose this particular portion of what must have originally been a much longer and more complex dialogue? What is he trying to say to his intended readers by this specific focus? What questions, posed by the Christians of his time, is he attempting to answer?

It is obvious that John wants his readers to focus on the central expression of the dialogue—"to be born again"—and, especially, on Jesus' explanation of its deeper meaning—"to be born of water and the Spirit." That explanation would remind them at once of the sacrament of Baptism.

John's contemporary readers were not asking, "Shall we, or shall we not, practice Baptism?" Rather, they were asking, "Given that we practice Baptism, what is its importance? Other religious groups practice initiatory ablutions. What is so important about our practice? What is its real significance—its *Christian* significance?"

John uses the words of Jesus to convey his answers. Baptism is a significant act. "Unless one is born again, one cannot even comprehend God's kingdom, let alone become its citizen." It is not only a symbolic act—an initiation by water. It is also a sacramental act—an incorporation by the Spirit. "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, one cannot become a citizen of God's kingdom." And it is backed by the authority of the Messiah. "Let me assure you, . . . You must be born again."

### *The Lord's Supper: John 6*

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Similarly, many scholars agree that although John does not record the story of the institution of the Lord's Supper, as do the other three Gospel writers,<sup>13</sup> he is intensely interested in its practice, meaning, and significance. In passages such as the sermon based on

the account of the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000 on the eastern shore of the sea of Galilee, John treats both the unique intentions and deeper ramifications of the Lord's Supper.<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, this and other passages reflect the regular practice of celebrating the Lord's Supper among the congregations for whom the gospel was written. One of the purposes of the passage was to authenticate that practice and to highlight its Christian significance by drawing on the words and intentions of Jesus.<sup>15</sup>

The story of the feeding of the 5,000 leads directly to the long sacramental discourse on the "bread of life." There Jesus claims to be the "Bread of Life," an appellation he equates with the messianic title, "Son of Man." And Jesus also claims to be the "Bread of the Lord's Supper," a notion he equates with the sacramental expression, "flesh and blood."

In the following passage, he develops these claims:

I am the Bread of Life. Your fathers ate manna in the desert, yet they died. This is the Bread that has come down from heaven. One may eat of it and not die. I am the living Bread that has come down from heaven. If one eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. . . . Let me assure you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have [eternal] life in you. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of him, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the Bread that has come down from heaven. Our forefathers ate [manna] and died, but he who eats this Bread will live forever.<sup>16</sup>

When we ask about the function of this particular portion of the speech, several questions call for attention. What is its specific purpose? What questions, posed by his readers, is John attempting to answer by it? What role do the words of Jesus play?

It is obvious that John wants his readers to give special attention to the central expression, "flesh and blood," a phrase that would immediately remind them of the elements ("bread and wine")

of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

When we enquire into the interests and concerns of John's readers, it becomes transparent that their implied question is certainly not, "Shall we, or shall we not, continue to celebrate the Lord's Supper?" It is rather, "Given that we regularly celebrate the Lord's Supper, what is its special value? Other religious groups have their communal meals. What is so special about ours? What is its real significance—its *Christian* significance?"

The words of Jesus once again become the means by which John communicates his response. The Lord's Supper is a necessary rite. "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have [eternal] life." It is not only a communal meal—a participation in, and celebration of, the life of the community. It is also a sacramental meal—a participation in, and celebration of, the life of the Messiah. "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him." And it is backed by the authority of the Messiah. "Let me assure you, . . . He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life."

Even more explicitly and extensively than with Baptism and the Lord's Supper, John shows a profound interest in the meaning of the Sabbath and its significance. In passages such as the story of the healing of the Bethesda cripple (John 5), the dialogue about circumcision and healing (John 7), and the account of the healing of the man born blind (John 9), he treats both the inner meaning and deeper implications of the Sabbath.

### *The Healing of the Bethesda Cripple on the Sabbath: John 5*

The story of the healing of the man crippled for 38 years leads directly to the charge of the "Jews"<sup>17</sup> that Jesus, in healing this man *on the Sabbath*, was breaking the Sabbath.<sup>18</sup>

Jesus' response ("My Father continues his work—right up to this very moment. And I work

alongside him”) was tantamount to his saying, “If God the Father, doesn’t break the Sabbath by carrying on his compassionate and redemptive work on the Sabbath, as you allow in your interpretations of the Torah, then surely I, his Son, by the same logic, am not guilty of breaking the Sabbath by carrying on the same work as his rep-

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**The teachings and practices of Jesus suggest that compassionate service is an essential part of *Christian Sabbath* observance. Indeed, it *distinguishes* the *Christian Sabbath*.**

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resentative. I may have transgressed some of your many halakic regulations designed to protect the Sabbath, but I have not broken the Sabbath command, nor have I desecrated the Sabbath.”<sup>19</sup>

When we ask about the purpose of John’s telling this story, several questions present themselves. What is the focus of the story? What is John trying to say through it? What questions, raised by his potential readers, is he addressing?

There can be little doubt that John wants to say something about the Sabbath that will be an encouragement to the congregations he addresses. He goes out of his way to tell us that this healing occurred on a Sabbath, and to inform us that that very fact became the catalyst that caused the Jews to “persecute” Jesus.

The Jewish opponents of the Christian church were attacking the congregations to which John was addressing his Gospel. They were charging those congregations with desecrating the Sabbath by their compassionate deeds for the downtrodden and poverty-ridden, the incapacitated, and the incarcerated. Those were all deeds, they were insisting, that could wait until the Sabbath had passed.

The members of those congregations were asking, “Is that so? Are we, in fact, breaking the Sabbath by such acts of mercy? Or, is the Christian keeping of the Sabbath different?”

In response, John tells this story to inform his

readers that such deeds are both permissible and essential on the Sabbath—the Christian Sabbath. Let me tell you, John is saying, for Jesus and for us contemporary Christians, compassionate service is an essential element of *Christian Sabbath* observance.

It is important to note that the passage intimates that John’s readers were observing the Sabbath and that their implied questions did not even hint at whether Christians should or should not keep the Sabbath. Rather, their implicit questions suggested that they were anxious to know, given the charges of the Jews, what was proper *Christian* service on the Sabbath.

John’s response, like that of the authors of the Synoptic gospels,<sup>20</sup> was that the teachings and practices of Jesus suggest that compassionate service is an essential part of *Christian Sabbath* observance. Indeed, it is compassionate service that distinguishes the *Christian Sabbath*.

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*Circumcision, and Healing on the Sabbath: John 7*

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Most scholars agree that the dialogue about circumcision and healing in chapter seven continues the issue raised by the story of the healing of the Bethesda cripple in chapter five. Jesus’ remark, “I wrought one miracle, and you are all astonished,” is an immediate reference to it.<sup>21</sup>

If so—and we agree with them—then we have an additional defense of compassionate service on the Sabbath and thus supplementary evidence of the attitudes of both the Jews and John’s readers towards the Sabbath.

Once again, note that this is in response to implied questions about proper *Christian* observance of the Sabbath—not to questions about whether the Sabbath should or should not be observed by Christians.

John calls attention to Jesus’ use of a typical Rabbinic argument—a *qal wahomer* (or a *minori ad maius*, from the lesser to the greater) argu-

ment—to make his point. It proposes that that which is true (or legitimate) in a lesser case must be even more so (or more legitimate) in a greater case. “Thus,” so Jesus argues, “if you don’t break the Sabbath command when you care for the hygiene and health of a *baby boy* by circumcising him on the Sabbath (which your halakic regulations allow),<sup>22</sup> then surely I don’t break the Sabbath command when I care for the hygiene and health of a *grown man* by healing him on the Sabbath.”

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**John claims, indirectly, that the essence of observing the *Christian Sabbath* is compassionate service. That has behind it both the authority and the example of the Messiah.**

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For John, Jesus’ concluding remark is as appropriate for the Jews who are condemning his readers for their works of compassion on the Sabbath as it was for the Jews who laid their charges against Jesus: “Stop making superficial judgments.”<sup>23</sup>

### *The Healing of the Man Born Blind on the Sabbath: John 9*

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Comparable to the story of the healing of the Bethesda cripple is the story of the healing of the man born blind. Once more John goes out of his way to remind us that this compassionate act occurred on a Sabbath.<sup>24</sup>

The story proceeds from the healing itself to the charge, laid by the Jews, that Jesus had desecrated the Sabbath by healing the blind man on the Sabbath.<sup>25</sup> That was surely a work that could have waited 24 hours!

Jesus’ implied answer is, “I may have transgressed several of your halakic regulations for the proper use of the Sabbath, but I have not trans-

gressed the Sabbath commandment, nor have I desecrated the Sabbath.”

And again, for the Christian communities to which he was ministering and for the Jews who were condemning them, John claims, indirectly, that the essence of observing the *Christian Sabbath* is compassionate service. That has behind it both the authority and the example of the Messiah.

If our presuppositions, methods, and logic are sound, several conclusions follow.

First, the Christian communities of Syria, Asia Minor, and Europe, at the end of the first century, C.E., were regularly practicing the central Christian sacraments—participating in Baptism, sharing in the Lord’s Supper, and observing the Sabbath.<sup>26</sup> They apparently had no questions about whether they should or should not practice those rites. They were, however, exploring their meaning, significance, and Christian practice. That is as true of the Sabbath as it is of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

Second, whatever Paul meant by his discussion of faith and works in his letters to the churches in Galatia and Italy,<sup>27</sup> by his reference to “sabbaths” in his letter to the community at Colosse,<sup>28</sup> and by his remarks about “days” in his epistle to the Christian groups in Rome,<sup>29</sup> the Christian congregations scattered throughout Syria, Asia Minor, and Europe did not understand him to mean thereby that the Sabbath had been discontinued as a Christian rite. Some 35 to 40 years after Paul wrote and published his letters, those very congregations were still observing the Sabbath, Baptism, and the Lord’s Supper, as central elements in their *Christian* faith, practice, worship, and mission.

Third, if ex-Adventists and Adventists are right in their contention that that which was central and normative for the faith and practice of the first century church remains central and normative for the continuing church, then Adventists are right in concluding that the practice of observing the Sabbath, as well as participating in Baptism and sharing in the Lord’s Supper, remains central and normative for Christian faith and practice in the 20th century church.

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 NOTES AND REFERENCES
 

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1. We have tried to state fairly the position of our ex-Adventist friends. If we have failed, please forgive and inform us.

2. See the previous essay by our respected colleague, Herold Weiss.

3. C.E. is an abbreviation for Common Era. It is equivalent to A.D. (Anno Domini, "in the year of the Lord"). We use C.E., along with many scholars, out of respect for our readers whose commitment is to a religion other than Christianity.

4. Most New Testament scholars date the Pauline letters between the very late forties and the very early sixties of the first century, C.E. We concur. And most date the Johannine writings in the nineties. So do we. We are aware that some would date the Gospel of John in the seventies. We are not yet persuaded by their arguments. However, even if we were to concede their earlier dating, our basic conclusions would not change.

5. See our remarks on the dating of these literatures in footnote 4 above.

6. To ask historical questions of the first-century church and then naively set out the literature of that church, from which the answers will be sought, in the sequence, first, the writings of John, then, the letters of Paul, is to stand history on its head. That seems to be so obvious, it hardly needs stating. However, the many essays which naively assume that the Fourth Gospel only reflects the thinking of Jesus and his immediate disciples in the *first third* of the first century, and that the more developed thought of the early church is to be found mirrored in the letters of Paul, penned in the *central third* of that century, demand that we state it.

For a recent example of standing history on its head, as described here, see D. A. Carson, ed., *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical and Theological Investigation*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 1982).

7. John 20:30, 31. All quotations from the New Testament are translated directly from the Greek by the author.

8. This is particularly the case in the passages treated in this essay: John 3:1-15; 5:1-18; 6:48-58; 7:21-24; 9:1-34. Each story becomes the ground for the reporting of the relevant sayings and speeches of Jesus which lead the reader into a more refined understanding of the doctrine of

Christ—who Jesus was and is—and, logically, into a more penetrating understanding of his authority with respect to the central elements of Christian belief and worship, practice, and mission.

9. Matthew 28:18-20

10. John 3:1-15. See R. E. Brown, "The Eucharist and Baptism" in *Catholic College Teachers of Religion Annual*, 8 (1962), pp. 14-33.

11. Ibid.

12. John 3:3, 5. The clause we have translated, "let me assure you," is a solemn formula used, particularly in the Gospel of John, to give special emphasis and authority to the saying which it introduces. All quotations from the New Testament are translated directly from the Greek text by the present author.

13. See Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:15-20.

14. John 6:48-58. See R. E. Brown.

15. See R. E. Brown.

16. John 6:48-58.

17. In the Gospel of John, the "Jews" are those Jews who oppose and persecute Jesus and his followers. They are, at the same time, counterparts of the diaspora Jews who oppose and persecute John's readers.

18. John 5:1-18.

19. John 5:17.

20. Compare, for example, Matthew 12:1-8; 9-14.

21. John 7:21-24.

22. See Mishnah, Nedarim, 3:11: "R. Jose says, 'Great is circumcision since it overrides the stringent Sabbath.'"

23. See John 7:24.

24. John 9:14. Cf. John 5:9.

25. See John 9:16.

26. On the Sabbath as a sacrament and on the profound relationship within this trinity of sacraments, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the Sabbath, see R. Branson, "Festival of Fellowship," Roy Branson, ed., *Festival of the Sabbath*, (Takoma Park, MD: Association of Adventist Forums, 1985), pp. 75-77.

27. See his letters to the Galatians and to the Romans.

28. See Colossians 2:16,17.

29. See Romans 14:5-8.



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# How to Keep the Sabbath

by Charles Scriven

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One day my friend John Brunt overheard some Adventist college students discussing their childhood experiences of the Sabbath. They also—and this was remarkable, since the students came from many different places—remembered a common body of Sabbath rules. These rules were not written down in a formal code but were widely known, an Adventist oral tradition:

- Hiking, even vigorous hiking, is permissible on Sabbath.
- Swimming is taboo, though wading is permissible, so long as the water goes no higher than the knees.
- Running and playing are permissible, but no ball may be used; the use of a ball violates the Sabbath.

Rules such as these are familiar to most of us. Similar rules were familiar in Jesus' day as well. The rabbis considered the whole law to be a gift from God—including the Sabbath, which was to be both treasured and protected. Indeed, in the time of Jesus the idea had arisen that a fence needed to be built around the Sabbath in order to preserve it from violation. This fence, made up of protective rules, was what Jesus confronted when some Pharisees objected to his disciples' plucking heads of grain on Sabbath. Jesus answered that God made the Sabbath for us, not us for the Sabbath (Mark 2:27, RSV). He took the Sabbath to be a day to celebrate creation and liberation, a day to remember God in joy and gratitude. To him it was ridiculous to counter this festivity with

regulations that sabotaged the Sabbath's basic purpose.

In light of our own Adventist "oral tradition" it may suddenly dawn on us that Jesus' disagreements with the Pharisees strike close to home. We too have tried to build a fence of rules around the Sabbath. We have wanted to protect it, to "guard its edges," and have become, many of us, preoccupied with the question of rules.

John Brunt tells another story. It is about his daughter Laura who was a little girl when the incident occurred. The Brunt family was sitting together at the breakfast table on a Sabbath morning. Laura suddenly, out of the blue, remarked: "I don't think people ought to chew gum on Sabbath." Here was a family that had tried very hard to make Sabbath a festive day, and the remark was surprising. When her father asked why she believed this, Laura replied, "I don't know. I just think it would be a good rule."

It's hard to know why this would be a good rule, unless nothing enjoyable should be done on the Sabbath. From the Gospel of Mark, chapter two, however, we know that this isn't so. We know that the Sabbath was made for us, not us for the Sabbath. That is, God gave us the Sabbath to enhance life, not detract from it. At the time Laura made her remark about chewing gum, she still, despite her parents, saw the Sabbath in negative terms. But because the Sabbath is celebration time, a festival, a rule against chewing gum on Sabbath would be a bad rule. The question still remains whether there are any rules at all. Are there any guides for Sabbath conduct? Any regulating principles? And if there are, what are they, and what should be our attitude toward them?

Consider three biblical passages. The first, Leviticus 23:3, reads as follows: "Six days shall

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work be done; but on the seventh day is a sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation; you shall do no work; it is a sabbath to the Lord in all your dwellings.”

The “rest” element of Sabbath experience is meant, of course, to be liberating, to deliver us from the slavery of routine and the evil of drudgery. But Leviticus says also that the Sabbath is a “holy convocation.” What does this mean?

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**Sabbath observance is not a burden; it is liberating. On Sabbath we must rest from our normal business and celebrate with God. The whole thing is ruined if we don't discipline ourselves to make it special.**

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Scholars tell us that Leviticus was completed during the time when the Jews had synagogues as well as the temple in Jerusalem. The “holy convocation” referred to here was a religious gathering, a public meeting like (or something like) our own Sabbath morning church services. To the Jews, then, this verse was a call to worship. To those outside Jerusalem and far distant from the temple, it was a call to attend the synagogue on Sabbath.

We know that Jesus himself attended the synagogue on Sabbath—“as his custom was,” Luke tells us (4:16). Together with Leviticus, this suggests that if there are some rules we can reject—such as the chewing gum rule—that does not mean we can reject all rules. The heritage of Scripture shows that part of the very meaning of the Sabbath experience is worshiping together. Sabbath *means* being together in praise of God and remembrance of what God has done. We can think of this as a rule—or if you prefer—a guideline for Sabbath conduct.

The next passage, also from the Old Testament, is found in Isaiah 58. Here, in verses five and six, God says to Israel, “Your fasting doesn't impress me. What I really want,” God continues, is for you to “loose the bonds of wickedness,” to “let the oppressed go free,” to “share your bread with the hungry,” and “bring the homeless poor

into your house.” One thing that strikes us right off is the straight-out rebuke of religious ritual without moral commitment.

It is just a few lines after this, in verses 13 and 14, that the subject becomes the Sabbath. God will bless you, the words declare, if you honor the Sabbath and call it a “delight.” The best-known translations speak of turning back from seeking “your own pleasure” on the Sabbath, but this is misleading. The point is not that we should refrain from everything pleasurable. Instead, we should refrain from doing just anything we please, and in particular (so the commentators say) refrain from doing our business, from pursuing gain, on the Sabbath. This is rather a day to focus our thoughts upon God—and to experience delight as we do so.

Some scholars think this part of Isaiah was composed after the return of the Israelites from exile in Babylon. If it was, it came into being at a time when the Sabbath had become a day of genuine religious joy. Sabbath observance was not a burden; it was liberating, freeing the believer to meet with God and celebrate God's goodness.

Embedded in all this, I think, is another guideline for Sabbathkeeping. It is that on Sabbath we must rest from our normal business and celebrate with God. The whole thing is ruined if we don't, just as Christmas would be ruined if we treated it like an ordinary weekday. There would not even be a Christmas if we did this. And there wouldn't be a Sabbath either; not if we didn't discipline ourselves to make it special.

**S**o we have two guidelines before us now: (1) Worship together, and (2) Rest from normal business. This brings us to a third passage of Scripture and a third guideline. In Mark 3:1-6, Jesus, immediately following his controversy over the plucking of the wheat grains, plunges into another confrontation with the rabbis over Sabbathkeeping.

Mark's story concerns the healing of the man with the withered hand. As usual, Jesus went to the synagogue on Sabbath and while there, seems very deliberately to have made a scene. The rules forbade medical work on the seventh day except in dire emergencies. The rules even said (or said by the time they were written down) that sub-

stances normally usable on Sabbath could not be used medicinally on that day. It was thought, for example, that a toothache could be relieved by sucking vinegar. Although taking vinegar was normally permissible on Sabbath, taking it to relieve pain was specifically forbidden. Yet when Jesus saw the man with the withered hand he said provocatively, "Come here."

The rabbis now had something to watch. Then Jesus asked, "Is it lawful on the sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" The issue, Sabbathkeeping, had become clear. So, with everyone looking on—and silent—the rabbis refused to answer the question. Jesus healed the withered hand. Thereby he broke the conventional rules of Sabbathkeeping. Verse six records what happened next: "The Pharisees went out, and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him."

With this and other Sabbath miracles and sayings, Jesus challenged the whole rabbinic system of rules and rituals. Rules had become a preoccupation. The story of the Pharisees' objections to plucking wheat on Sabbath suggests that the rules were undermining the blessing Sabbath was meant to be, undermining the joy of the day. The story we have just considered suggests that, besides this, the rules deadened the sense of responsibility to help others. Jesus was saying, The Sabbath is not only for worship and rest; it is also for deeds of kindness, for healing acts.

Here, in fact, is the third guideline we may extract from the passages we have read: on the Sabbath we must take redemptive action; we must do redemptive deeds. We are not, of course, excused from this on the other days. It is just that according to Jesus it is never wrong to help someone, never wrong to do a kindly deed. The Sabbath is a day for worshiping together in praise of God and remembrance of God's deeds. It is a day for resting from our normal business, from the pursuit of a livelihood.

But this does not keep it from being at the same time a day of opportunity for service. That is why it is perfectly acceptable on Sabbath to teach the children in Sabbath school. And that is why it would surely be just as acceptable on Sabbath to mow a shut-in's lawn, or teach English to an

immigrant, or open the Community Services Center. The Sabbath, Jesus taught us, is a day for doing good. People matter more than rules; people matter more than ritual.

What it comes down to is this: no more for Jesus than for the author of Isaiah 58 is the Sabbath an end in itself. The Sabbath was made for human beings, not human beings for the Sabbath. Ellen White herself, in the book *Medical Ministry*, p. 251, said that "true sympathy between man and his fellow man is to be the sign distinguishing those who love and fear God." Well, the Sabbath serves the end of true sympathy between us and our fellow human beings; it directs us to God and away from the commerce and clatter of the weekdays, so that we can become whole and be servants to one another and servants in the wider world.

So what do we know now about how to keep the Sabbath? We know three things: we are to worship together; we are to rest from normal business; we are to do deeds of kindness.

But is that it? What about the details? Can the water go higher than our knees? Can we toss a football back and forth? Can we buy food in a restaurant?

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**Do on Sabbath only what is compatible with restful celebration. Scrap your diet for a day; eat ice cream. If you jog grimly, from a sense of duty, don't do it on the Sabbath; if you jog because you love to, then do so.**

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After the debacle Jesus had to cope with, it's best to stick with the broad outlines, the general principles of Sabbathkeeping: Sabbath is for worship, celebration, service. The details are for us to work out in our own small circles, in our families, among our friends.

Though detailed lists of rules may be pernicious, we still wonder, naturally, about which specific activities to countenance on Sabbath. When observing the Sabbath, consider these four points:

First, if on Sabbath anything goes, then Sabbath ceases to be special; we gain an ordinary day and lose a festival. It is important to make distinctions. "Friday night" is not like any other night. Start it with worship, or if a conventional worship scares you or repels you, begin the Sabbath with the lighting of a candle, a special meal, or a special way of giving thanks. And all the way to the end of the Sabbath, carry the uniqueness through—creatively and positively.

Second, do on Sabbath only what is compatible with the praise of God and the remembrance of God's deeds. For me, at least, it's hard to see how downhill skiing would qualify, or watching football on the tube. These are all-consuming activities, at odds with the contemplative spirit of the day. But cross-country skiing might qualify, and so might a TV documentary about Mother Teresa, say, or Amnesty International.

Third, do on Sabbath only what is compatible with restful celebration. Scrap your diet for a day; eat ice cream. If you jog grimly, from a sense of duty, don't do it on the Sabbath; if you jog because you love to, then do so.

Fourth, never lose sight in all this of the reasons for Sabbathkeeping; never lose sight of what it is you are trying to preserve.

This reminds me of what my wife Marianne said once. We happened to be talking about the Sabbath while rushing through some last-minute cooking—after Friday sundown. Feeling suddenly repentant, Marianne said: "It's not that God will punish us for this, it's that we cheat ourselves."

Her remark illuminates our whole attitude to Sabbathkeeping. A gift has come to us, the gift of the Sabbath. God is not waiting around to zap us at the first sign of our misusing the gift, but if we do misuse it, we dishonor the Giver—by cheating ourselves out of the songs and prayers together, out of the restful celebration, out of the opportunity for deeds of kindness.

But if, on the other hand, we treat the Sabbath well, if we honor it, if we stop and remember in the doing, then we will find wholeness. The Sabbath will cease being merely a collection of rules and become what God intended the Sabbath to be, a jubilee of the world.

## Women Pastors Baptize and Perform Marriages in North America

by Lori Kuehnert

Two large conferences in the North American Division are now permitting women to perform baptism and marriages. In the largest conference in the Pacific Union (for that matter, in the entire North American Division), the Southeastern California Conference, four women pastors have baptized 37 people and performed 10 weddings during the 17 months since December 1986. The Southeastern California Conference constituency, on September 28, 1986, approved women performing baptisms and marriages: "It shall be the practice of this conference to give to unordained women and men the same rights and privileges in regard to officiating at baptisms and weddings in our conference." Since the late 1970s unordained male pastors in North America have been permitted to perform baptisms and marriages, so the action of the constituency meant women in the Southeastern California Conference were able to do so as well.

The executive committee of the Potomac Conference, the largest conference in the Columbia Union, May 18, 1988, adopted a similar policy:

Whereas we believe it is neither right nor expedient for the Seventh-day Adventist Church to continue denying anyone full participation in ministry on the basis of gender; it shall henceforth be the practice of this conference to give women and men in ministry the same rights and privileges in regard to officiating at baptisms and weddings.

Actually, three women pastors in the Potomac Conference—Marsha Frost, Jan Daffern, and Francis Wiegand—began performing baptisms on February 24, 1984, two years before Margaret Hempe performed the first baptism by women in the Southeastern California Conference. How-

ever, within a few months, under pressure from the General Conference, the Potomac Conference in August 1984 suspended further baptisms by women until the General Conference had considered the matter.

Since then two international commissions appointed by the General Conference and chaired by its president, Neal Wilson, have met in late March of 1985 and 1988. On neither occasion did they make official recommendations concerning ordination of women or performance of baptisms and marriages in North America by unordained women. The second commission is scheduled to meet again before the 1989 Annual Council. When the first commission was appointed in 1984 it was expected that some action would be taken at the 1985 General Conference Session. Now, it is not clear that even the second commission will recommend in its 1989 meeting that the 1990 General Conference Session take any action.

Neal Wilson, in his report in the May 12 *Adventist Review* concerning the 1988 meeting of the commission he chaired, urged church members "to avoid further controversy and argument. . . to abstain from circulating books, pamphlets, letters, and tapes that stir up debate and often generate more confusion." He admonished church officials and members that "it is time for us to be done with argument and discussion about this issue, time for us to utilize every resource, every talent, every ability, every gift. It is time for us to unite to finish the work and go home to live with our blessed Lord forever."

Still, since the meeting of the commission this year, the North American Division officers and union presidents in May 1988 requested that the General Conference officers consider that

there are discrepancies between the responsibilities of and remuneration of licensed ministers and commissioned ministers who are associates in pastoral care. Reportedly the NAD is the only division that permits the unordained minister to perform the essential functions of ministry. However, the same privileges have not been accorded to women.

And in two large conferences in the North American Division women pastors are proceed-

ing to perform baptisms and marriages: Margaret Hempe and Diane Forsyth at the Loma Linda University Church; Delores Robinson at the Arden Hills, California, church; Halcyon Wilson at the La Sierra Collegiate Church, and Marsha Frost, at the Fairfax, Virginia, church. Conference committees in Southeastern California and Potomac are convinced that other women will soon be performing baptisms and marriages, not only in their own areas, but in other North American conferences as well.

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## Adventists Lead in California Battle vs. Tobacco Companies

by David Larson

Adventists are in the forefront of the current political battle in California against tobacco interests. Loma Linda University has formally endorsed California's 1988 Tobacco Tax Initiative and pledged its support for the measure which would increase by 25 cents the tax on each pack of cigarettes sold within the state. The Coalition for a Healthy California, which includes California's Heart and Lung Association, is headed by James Nethery, a professor in the Loma Linda University School of Medicine. He is simultaneously chairman of the state's American Cancer Society. Although not a church member, another leader of the coalition is a senior member of the medical school faculty, Philip Gold, chairman of the California Lung Association. Between September and June the coalition organized the collection of more than a million signatures on a petition requiring the state to put the matter on the November presidential election ballot.

In a May 31 letter to Nethery, Norman J. Woods, president of Loma Linda University, wrote that "We wish to pledge our support of the tobacco tax initiative and, therefore, authorize your group to use our name in support of this important cause." Woods also commended Nethery for "the work of your organization," and expressed the university's pleasure that it is "to be involved in support of this initiative." David Hinshaw, president of Loma Linda University Medical Center, also pledged the official support of the hospital.

These commitments resulted from a proposal presented by a task force of the Loma Linda University Ethics Center. Professor Charles Teel, Jr. (ethics), chaired the task force assisted by Professors James Nethery (prosthetics) and Carroll Small (pathology). This task force of almost a dozen Loma Linda University faculty emerged from a recommendation to the Ethics Center's Executive Committee by Dr. Bruce Branson, chairman of the university's department of surgery. The task force recommended that Loma Linda's largest institutions take the following actions:

- Endorse the initiative at the highest appropriate administrative levels.
- Encourage employees of the institutions to vote in behalf of the initiative in November.
- Authorize the formation of a larger task force that would draw upon the resources of Loma Linda University, Loma Linda University Medical Center, and Adventist Health System/Loma Linda.
- Permit appropriately previewed use of institutional resources such as meeting rooms, press releases, chapel services, and faculty and student involvement.
- Utilize in judicious and effective ways Loma Linda's current visibility to support the initiative.
- Cooperate with other organizations and agencies that support the initiative.

By responding affirmatively to these recommendations, Loma Linda University joined the California branches of the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, and the American Lung Association, plus dozens of other medical and civic organizations, in the Coalition for a

### Healthy California.

This state-wide coalition was orchestrated in September 1987 by Loma Linda professors James Nethery and Philip Gold (pulmonary medicine) and others when it became clear that all attempts to increase California's tax on cigarettes would be defeated in the state's legislative bodies because of strong opposition from the tobacco industries. The son of missionaries to China, Nethery, who views his 20 years of volunteer efforts with the American Cancer Society as "my form of missionary work," concluded that there was no remaining option but to take the proposal directly to the citizens of California. "The big selling points," according to Nethery, "are that the tax will pay for anti-tobacco education in the schools, and the 25 cent tax itself will discourage tens of thousands of people from beginning to use tobacco products."

Recent polls indicate that Californians favor the initiative by nearly a three-to-one margin. The political challenge before the coalition, therefore, is not so much to generate support as to maintain it in the face of the \$16 million media campaign the Tobacco Institute has already launched in California against the initiative. In July alone tobacco money bought nearly \$4 million of television advertising in opposition to the initiative. These TV commercials portray the additional tax on cigarettes as a way to enrich medical professionals and other wealthy citizens at the expense of less prosperous Californians who choose to smoke. Jack Nicholl, the coalition's campaign director, anticipated the media blitz. He had predicted that "the tobacco companies will ignore the health issues. They won't mention the recent Surgeon General's report, *Nicotine Addiction*. Instead, they will focus on issues like cigarette bootlegging and the unfairness of the tax to low-income groups." But Nicholl expects that the heavy spending by tobacco companies "will work against them, and create a backlash by voters who do not trust the tobacco industry to tell the truth."

The truth appears to be that the additional tax of 25 cents is only slightly more than a tithe of the \$2.17 it costs the people of California in direct and indirect expenses every time someone in their state smokes a package of cigarettes. This tax will

generate about \$600 million a year. One hundred and twenty million of this is earmarked for educational programs that will inform California's young people and adults of the danger of smoking. Thirty million will fund research regarding ways to cure diseases caused by tobacco use. Two hundred and sixty million will be used to cover the hospital and medical costs of treating people with such diseases who have no other form of medical insurance. Thirty million will be used each year by the state to improve its parks, fisheries, and wildlife areas. The remaining \$150 million per year can be used for any of the above purposes, as well as for fire-prevention programs, as determined by the state's legislators. The initiative envisions a constitutional amendment in California that will permit these funds to be spent in these ways.

The Loma Linda University task force is planning a number of events for the university campuses in support of the initiative. A special weekend of activities cosponsored by the Loma Linda University Church and the Ethics Center will highlight the risks and costs of smoking tobacco, as well as Adventism's historic and continuing commitment to physical health and healing as spiritual responsibilities. The weekend will be climaxed by a fund-raising dinner for the initia-

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**It is estimated that in California the additional tax will markedly diminish the number of teenagers and children who start smoking and subsequently find it very difficult to stop.**

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tive, featuring prominent community leaders.

Financial assistance is needed because even the most optimistic scenarios portrayed by the Coalition for a Healthy California concede that it will have at its disposal less than a third of the amount the Tobacco Institute will spend in California. The various corporations that fund the Tobacco Institute are taking the initiative very seriously because they correctly understand that if this measure passes in California, similar initiatives will probably be approved by the citizens of other

states as well. Researchers confirm that increasing the cost of cigarettes by as little as 25 cents per package will significantly decrease the sales of such products, especially among the young and other first-time smokers. It is estimated that in California, where only 25 percent of the adults smoke tobacco, the additional tax will markedly diminish the number of teenagers and children who start smoking and subsequently find it very difficult to stop.

To help, the coalition urges all Californians to vote in November in favor of the initiative. Secondly, the coalition needs contributions, which may be forwarded to Coalition for a Healthy California, 5858 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 400, Los Angeles, CA 90036. The coalition's telephone

number is (213) 937-6464. "We think this time we're going to win," declares chairman Nethery with quiet determination. "We're confident. And if we succeed here maybe Adventists in other parts of the country will also organize nonpartisan coalitions against the tobacco companies."

Seventh-day Adventists are already leaders in this nonpartisan political campaign because it expresses their Christian values, because it reflects the actions of the One who came that all might have life and have it abundantly.

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## Lewis Walton and SDA Fundamentalism

Lewis Walton, *Omega* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assoc., 1981), 96 pp. \$6.50 (paper); *Decision at the Jordan* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assoc., 1982), 93 pp. \$5.95 (paper); *Advent* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publishing Assoc., 1986), 95 pp., \$6.95 (paper); *How to Survive the Eighties* (Mountain View, Ca.: Pacific Press Publishing Assoc., 1983), 128 pp., \$.50 (paper).

Reviewed by Alex Lian

During the 1970s the Seventh-day Adventist church reeled under a number of internal blows to its official teachings that resulted in great confusion and consternation for many of its members. Two of the church's core beliefs, the doctrine of the sanctuary and the prophetic ministry of Ellen White, were subjected to trenchant criticism by scholars and ministers within the denomination; the former most notably by the Australian theologian Desmond Ford, and the latter by an SDA pastor, Walter Rea (*The White Lie*, 1982), and Ronald Numbers (*Propheticess of Health: Ellen G. White*, 1976), a historian now at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Adventist historian Gary Land, in commenting on these episodes, placed them in the context of an ongoing tension since the 1960s within the Adventist community. He contrasted those who want the denomination to follow its historical pattern of cultural isolation and remain a sect, and those who desire the denomination to move closer to and interact with mainline conservative Protestant churches. Such accommodation would include,

among other things, coming to terms with mainline Protestant theological thinking. According to Land, "What had been a sectarian and in many ways fundamentalist theology appeared [in the 1960s] to be moving toward conservative Protestantism, though that movement was facing a strong reaction."

The issue most clearly destined to receive a battering by such a movement within the church would be the role and function of Ellen White within the Adventist community. Due to the work of Rea and Numbers, questions had already arisen concerning the nature of White's inspiration, and in some minds, whether she was divinely inspired or not.

In response to Ford, Rea, Numbers, and those who wished to change the church's sect-mentality, a corps of men arose to defend what many Adventists term "traditional Adventism." Forming the vanguard of such defenders are Lewis Walton, Kenneth Wood, Herbert Douglass, and most recently, that *enfant terrible* Kevin Paulson, who, with his book *Coming to Terms*, has emerged as a theological watchdog for the younger generation. As these men view it, the Adventist church must never deviate from its historical beliefs. The truths proclaimed by the pioneers must not be compromised or de-emphasized, but must always act as the guiding lights for Adventists everywhere at all times. Moreover, for these defenders a traditional understanding of the inspiration and authority of Ellen White is of paramount importance, for to deny her validity in any manner is tantamount to rejecting God's instructions for the present age.

In 1981 the publication of Lewis Walton's *Omega* marked a major counterattack against the so-called "liberals" (men like Ford, Rea, and Numbers) and simultaneously catapulted Walton to the forefront of the fray. A lawyer and writer from Northern California, Walton sought to recount in *Omega* the trials faced by the Adventist church during the early part of this century, which, according to Ellen White, once again would face the church in the last days before the Second Coming. Consequently, Walton exhorted

Adventists to stay faithful to the teachings of the church, listen to the warnings of the prophet, and not allow the enervating speculations of human reason to sway them from God's Word.

From all appearances Walton was extremely successful in gaining a hearing from a large portion of the Adventist population. *Omega* went through an initial printing of seven editions totaling more than 70,000 copies and continues to sell approximately 800 copies a year. Since 1981 Walton has published three more books dealing with some aspect of Adventist history or theol-

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**Walton is not the Stephen King of the Adventist publishing industry, but the initial printings of his books do place him significantly above the average.**

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ogy. In 1982 he coauthored with Herbert Douglass *How to Survive the Eighties*, the missionary book of the year (200,000 initial printing, 200-400 annual run); also in 1982 he published *Decision at the Jordan* (initial printing 10,000, annual run 300-400); and in 1986 he authored *Advent* (initial printing 10,000).

By Adventist publishing standards Walton has done well. According to one source in the Seventh-day Adventist publishing industry, in 1986 the average run for a book in the Walton genre would be 5,000-6,000. To print 10,000 does not make Walton the Stephen King of the Adventist publishing industry, but it does place him significantly above the average. Add to this Walton's extensive speaking schedule, and we see a message that commands a hearing from a sizeable portion of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

The obvious and key question is why? Why is Walton so popular? What has enabled him to achieve the position he currently occupies within Adventism? The short answer: Lewis Walton's popularity results from his ability to calm many of his fellow Adventists by explaining the crises of the 1960s and 1970s in terms they can understand and believe—terms at the same time both Adventist and fundamentalist.

The longer answer is more complex. When

Lewis Walton published *Omega* in 1981, he benefited from the resurgence of conservatism as the prevailing national mood, including the rise of fundamentalism from a backwoods phenomenon to a potent national force, and the country's shift to the right with the election of Ronald Reagan. The downcast spirit of many Adventists, heightened by public disclosures of Adventism's theological and financial woes in national newspapers and newsweeklies, also gave Walton's message a more receptive audience than would have normally been the case. Furthermore, Walton's ability to interpret the events of the seventies within both categories of the Great Controversy and of fundamentalism, allowed him to establish connections with both the heritage of Adventism and the resurgent fundamentalism of the eighties. Walton asserted in *Omega* that the events of the seventies had long been prophesied by White herself as part of Satan's attempts to destroy God's church. He explained these same events through fundamentalist images of a battle between followers of the revelation of God as found in Scripture and humanists, following the dictates of human reason and understanding.

Adventism's relationship with fundamentalism extends back to the origins of the fundamentalist movement itself. Fundamentalism, an attitude more than a particular religious creed, commenced between 1910-1915 with the publication of *The Fundamentals*, 12 small volumes edited by Amzi C. Dixon and Reuben A. Torrey. These works, some six written by noted conservative theologians like Benjamin Warfield, sought to reduce the Christian message to its unalterable essentials and thus counteract the teachings of liberal Protestant theologians who accepted the scientific conclusions of the day as normative. Fundamentalists believed that liberals relegated Scripture to quaint and useful, but by no means authoritative, literature.

Integral to the fundamentalists was a belief in the Bible as the literal revelation of God. This included, among other things, belief in a six-day Creation, original sin, and the existence of miracles. Especially taboo were the modernist ideas of evolution and higher criticism.

During the 1920s Seventh-day Adventist lead-

ers welcomed fundamentalism and joined the movement with gusto, vigorously denouncing evolution, higher criticism, and alcohol. Adventists found in fundamentalism a support system that provided a bulwark against Adventism's own peculiar sensitive spots: attacks on the inspiration of Ellen White (where the historical-critical method could really hurt), and the pantheist heresies of the previous two decades. Land states that as early as 1905 Adventist writers correlated attacks on Ellen White and pantheism with the evils of higher criticism and evolution.

With such a tradition at his disposal, Walton was able to draw upon a rich heritage of fundamentalist thought. He expressed his views to Adventists in cadences woven from the cultural fabric of their past, calculated to offer the security they so desperately desired.

Unfortunately, what Walton also gave them was high-pitched rhetoric, crass emotionalism, inaccurate historical detail, and shoddy reasoning. In *Omega*, Walton wrote of the *alpha*, a term used by Ellen White and taken by many Adventists to refer to a period of hardship and crisis for the church. The *alpha* was understood by early Adventists as precipitated by the pantheism of John Harvey Kellogg, Albion Fox Ballenger's rival interpretation of Christ's sanctuary work, and the suspicions cast on the genuineness of Ellen White's prophetic gift by A.T. Jones, Kellogg, and others. Walton also appropriated the term *omega*, used by White to mean the final crisis to face the church from within before the Second Coming. Walton sought to establish parallels between White's *omega* and questionings of the sanctuary doctrine and Ellen White's inspiration by Desmond Ford and Walter Rea. Walton's supports for such parallels were contrived at best. It was almost a shame that there was no pantheist running around that he could have pointed to, so the entire equation could have balanced perfectly.

Walton ensconced the rest of his historical and theological rhetoric, which has already been critiqued in previous *Spectrum* articles (see Vol. 12, No. 2, December 1981), in a historical framework that suggests that the world was ready for the Second Coming if only Adventists had prepared themselves. Instead, they had fallen for the dev-

il's trap and allowed themselves to become embroiled in theological speculation and sophistry. Walton claimed, that "in a word it was astonishing. It was almost beyond explanation. People who enjoyed the greatest religious light in history were now imperiled by errors that could leave them trapped and they would not even know it." (*Omega*, p. 49).

Walton's more recent historical/theological books are no sounder and advocate the same themes. In *Decision at the Jordan* he paid more attention to perfectionism; one gets a healthy dose of this-is-definitely-the-end-so-repent-and-sin-no-more rhetoric. What is striking about *Decision*, *Advent*, and to a lesser degree, *Omega*, is Walton's use of the identical categories fundamentalists used in the 1920s to describe evil. For example, in *Decision* (p. 50) he did his readers the favor of pointing out the historical figures who were in the service of Satan. Yes, you're right—Darwin, Marx, and Mary Baker Eddy.

Like the fundamentalists of the past and present, Walton exhibited in his works an anti-intellectualism that is perhaps the litmus test for the true believer. Fundamentalists have always been, at heart, pietists; theirs is a religion of faith, almost to the extent of excluding reason. The key difference between Walton and a contemporary fundamentalist like Jerry Falwell, is that the intense energy Falwell expends in affirming the integrity of the Word of God, Walton exerts affirming the prophetic ministry of Ellen White. Still, anti-intellectualism makes them bedfellows.

In *The Roots of Anti-intellectualism in America* Richard Hofstadter links anti-intellectualism with a revolt against modernity that appealed mainly to those who were in America's heartland, "often fundamentalist in religion, nativist in prejudice, isolationist in foreign policy, and conservative in economics." The fundamentalists usually see the intellectual as the spokesperson and advocate for such evils as Darwinism, Freudianism, Marxism, and Keynesianism, and hold them largely responsible for the disintegration of the old and better America.

Walton elaborates this fundamental motif by

holding Adventist intellectuals responsible for the disintegration of the old and truer Adventism. Listen as he quotes Ellen White: "In the very midst of us will arise false teachers, giving heed to seducing spirits whose doctrines are of satanic origin" (*Omega*, p. 58). In speaking of Adam and Eve and the original sin Walton asks, "Would they subject God's revealed truth to their own analysis and judgment? Before believing, would they demand that God's word first be validated and reinterpreted by the human mind?" Walton's answer is yes (*Decision at the Jordan*, pp. 80-83).

Ironically, Walton, despite his valiant attempts to warn others of the evils of modern critical thinking, has failed to heed his own advice. Walton has allowed his name to be connected with a book that espouses Darwinistic ideas. In the book co-written with Herbert Douglass, *How to Survive the Eighties*, the authors begin by presupposing that if one is to survive the vicissitudes of modern life one must learn from nature. And what does nature have to teach us?

The answer came into focus one day as we read about a fortress someone had built in the American Northwest—a concrete bunker perched on the side of a rocky mountain, filled with weapons and food. Yet, within a few decades, it will begin to crumble, its foundation split by blades of grass. The concrete will fail; the grass will survive. That gave us the clue for which we were searching (p. 14).

The clue turns out to be in the word *survival*. As it happens, according to the authors, nature has a program for survival, but it is only for the strong. As they reiterate throughout the book, "Tomorrow is not for the weak!" In reading the book, one is flabbergasted to realize that the entire work is based on the Darwinian notion of survival of the fittest. Even the Bible becomes a sort of survival guide (p. 64).

This blunder illustrates a critical flaw of fundamentalism, whether it be of the Adventist variety or some other species. That is, it is impossible to escape the influences of modernity.

The Seventh-day Adventist church, a church born in the 19th century, will remain in the 19th century as long as men like Lewis Walton refuse to take the 20th century seriously and ignore the

unique problems faced by the modern person. One hopes that in time fundamentalists of all stripes will recognize the harmful effects of their trying to understand Adventism in fundamentalist categories.

## Adventism and 1844: Shut Door or Open Mind?

Ingemar Linden. *1844 and the Shut Door Problem*. Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Studia Historico-Ecclesiastica Upsaliensia 35 (Uppsala: by the author, 1982), 130 pp.

Reviewed by Rolf J. Poehler

The persistent questions regarding Ellen White's involvement with the so-called "shut-door doctrine" of Seventh-day Adventism's infancy years seemed to have been finally settled once and for all almost 40 years ago, in 1951. That was the year Francis D. Nichol devoted about one-fourth of his 700-page volume, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, to an uncompromising rebuttal of the charge "that Mrs. White taught that the door of mercy was closed on October 22, 1844." However, despite the case presented by this talented attorney for the defense of the arraigned prophetess, the newly developing critical approach to Adventist history sooner or later led Adventist scholars to appeal her acquittal on the grounds that the jurors had been prejudiced in Ellen White's favor.

The opportunity to arraign the prophetess anew for allegedly teaching heretical views was seized exactly 20 years later by the Swedish church

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historian Ingemar Linden in his doctoral dissertation, entitled "Biblicism, Apocalyptic, Utopi" (Uppsala, 1971). His investigation into the early history of Adventism in the United States (which makes up the first part of his thesis) led him to bolster the traditional charges (best known through D. M. Canright's polemical writings) by means of a critical analysis of the original sources. Linden argued that Ellen White belonged to the radical, left-wing minority of post-Disappointment Adventism that gave strong visionary support to the abortive shut-door theory. That theory excluded all, except faithful Millerites, from access to divine mercy. Swiftly, the indicted prophet's grandson, Arthur L. White, responded in a 62-page paper entitled "Ellen G. White and the Shut-Door Question" (1971). Arthur White reiterated the traditional Adventist position that was repeated in his six-volume biography of Ellen White.

Seven years later, Linden's indictment was presented for English-speaking readers in *The Last Trump* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1978). The author claimed it was "the first serious scholarly presentation of Adventism," but it apparently failed to get the attention Linden hoped it would receive. Finally, a third volume from the pen of the Swedish scholar focused exclusively on the troublesome issue of the shut-door. This last work—which is the first book-length monograph on the shut-door question in print—purports to be at last a factual, scholarly, comprehensive, and indeed definitive, study of a problem that has troubled the Adventist church since its very beginning.

*1844 and the Shut-Door Problem* begins with a discussion of the "shut-door ideology" that (after the "shipwreck" of Millerism and its "ultraistic" Midnight Cry Movement) developed in the "radical left wing" of this "most spectacular apocalyptic revival." The Sabbatarian pioneers were among this "dangerous faction" that followed "fanatical aberrations" in both doctrine and practice (Chapter 1).

Following this, Linden takes up "the crux of the whole problem" (p. 11), namely, the involvement of Ellen White in this "heresy." According to him, the young prophetess had a "radical sect-

arian mind" (p. 70, note 70) and taught this "very ultraistic and radical" view until 1851 (Chapter 2).

Then follows a very brief and thus necessarily superficial delineation of the "new theology," viz., the doctrines of the sanctuary and of the investigative judgment which, in the author's eyes, constituted "a major metamorphosis" (Chapter 3).

The two concluding chapters present a valuable survey of the controversial debates on the shut door that may have begun as early as 1853 and continued throughout denominational history until the present time. Emphasis is placed on the more recent Adventist writers on the subject of the shut door: F. D. Nichol, A. L. White, P. G. Damsteegt, and R. J. Poehler. The last two, Linden says, offer "some promising indications" for a new and more factual approach toward this old problem (p. 107).

Linden has obviously benefited from the studies of Damsteegt and Poehler who had strongly criticized his views on several counts. As a result, Linden has somewhat softened his rather harsh language, made certain minor but not unimportant admissions, and shows a more balanced interpretation of past writers on the issue. He also silently dropped certain interpretations that were ill-founded and untenable from the start.

At the same time, the book basically reiterates Linden's previous positions on the shut-door question, which—in the eyes of his critics—are partly overdrawn. For example, Linden still treats the widening gap among shut-door believers after 1844 on doctrinal as well as practical issues as being of only little or no significance. Linden also fails to respond to the argument that the later explanatory statements made by Ellen White do not stand in "direct contradiction" and "glaring contrast" to her original views except in a purely formal, verbal sense. And as long as "any shut-door view" is regarded by historians *a priori* as "fanatical" on theological grounds alone (p. 115), there is little hope that historical research on the shut-door doctrine will bring about "a scholarly presentation, based on the naked facts" (p. 116,

emphasis supplied).

In addition to repeating his known views, Linden presents a series of new interpretations which unfortunately lack sufficient historical and textual support. In his most serious contention, Linden charges James White with manipulating his wife's visions almost beyond recognition (pp. 38-49). However, his evidence is badly put together, and the references given are either misleading or false. The question arises, "Is this the supposed 'definitive presentation' we are promised in the introduction?" It is an imposition to be confronted by what is at best a rough draft for a literary analysis of Ellen White's earliest visions.

As this reviewer's unpublished essay on the shut-door problem repeatedly comes up for discussion and also receives an extended review in the book, it may be of interest to note that, had it not been for its "middle-of-the-way-interpretation" (p. 116) of Ellen White's role in the shut-door years, Linden would have regarded it as "the definitive work on this topic" (p. 117). He finds my criticism of the apologetical approach to Ellen White so "gratifying" and "important that it deserves being written in golden letters" (pp. 112-113). But then he charges me with being a kind of sophisticated crypto-apologist who could not write impartially due to external pressure. Therefore, Linden says, I desperately tried to accomplish the impossible feat of trying to save the face of Ellen White, while facing the facts about her (pp. 115-119). As a rule, Linden gives enthusiastic support wherever I seem to agree with the

critics ("most significant study" and "a great eye-opener") but heavily scolds me whenever I sound like the apologists ("very unconvincing" and "biased and untenable reasoning"). In fact, *1844 and the Shut-Door Problem* appears to be intended as an involved rebuttal to what Linden amiably calls the "ecumenical solution" set forth in my . . . *And the Door Was Shut*.

In the past, apologists and critics bitterly fought over the question of whether or not the Adventist pioneers, particularly Ellen White, believed that the "door" had been "open" or "shut." Participants generally felt and consistently acted like the Roman gladiators fighting in the arena: only one would survive the battle, while the other one had to die (unless they both died because of their mutually inflicted wounds!). Then there was a third alternative: to combine the valuable insights of both positions while honestly recognizing their respective weaknesses. As a result, the door now appeared to have been left ajar—seemingly closed but ready to be opened wide by the gentle force of the Spirit who blows where he wills.

At last, a genuine solution seemed to have become available that offered the real prospect of bridging the gap between both perspectives, not by covering up some facts for the sake of "union" and "compromise," but rather by facing them squarely. Now, some who feel uncomfortable in the draft may try to close that door again. They might succeed—unless someone greater has put his foot in the door.

## Exodus in the Antipodes

To the Editors: Norman H. Young and *Spectrum* are to be congratulated for his superb article "Adventism in the Antipodes" (Vol. 18, No. 5). Young opens up some very important areas for investigation by top administrators, should they be willing, as to why there should be an unprecedented exodus from denominational employment among ministers and teachers, and dissatisfaction within church ranks in general.

In my own experience as many as 12 ministers, with whom I was personally associated, resigned between 1981 and 1986 for one reason or another. Many are now employed in areas as diverse as real estate, insurance, librarianship, travel tours, Red Cross, teaching, sewing machine sales, and farming. A thorough investigation may uncover the reasons for the hurts, frustration, and cynicism apparent throughout the constituency in Australia and New Zealand.

Richard Smetheram  
Pastor  
Gisborne, New Zealand

## Contra the Contras

To the Editors: Herold Weiss' "Letter From Managua" (Vol. 18, No. 5) is the first report of substance that I have seen in any Adventist publication about Adventists in revolutionary Nicaragua. Thank you for giving space to a topic which I don't believe has received the attention it demands.

Weiss notes that the Nicaraguan people have suffered both at the hands of the Sandinistas and the U. S.-backed *contras*. Yet however misguided the Sandinistas may be at times, Weiss' report of the freedom enjoyed by Adventists since the crisis of 1982 would seem to give the lie to U.S. propaganda that the Sandinistas are totalitarian thugs hell-bent on crushing the human rights of their people.

The *contra* war raises an ethical dilemma for Americans which virtually every religious community sensitive to the central biblical themes of peace and justice has addressed. But to my knowledge Adventists have been almost entirely silent. Some may see such silence as proper avoidance of religious entanglement with politics. I believe instead that it reflects a failure to take the gospel seriously enough to see its relevance to this dimension of life. As

citizens of a state, whatever we do or don't do has political significance whether we like it or not.

For the past seven years the Reagan administration has been fighting a proxy war against Nicaragua. (Though we may hope differently, the precarious cease-fire in effect at the time of this writing doesn't appear to be leading to fundamental changes in the situation.) The administration has apparently violated our nation's own laws to conduct this war, a war which so egregiously violates the minimal standards of moral international behavior that the U. S. refused even to argue its case in the World Court. Moreover, we still pour billions of dollars year after year into training and equipping the army of El Salvador, which has kept control over the population in part through covert sponsorship of the murders of tens of thousands of civilians.

I know from personal contact with a Salvadoran Adventist pastor that Adventists have suffered from the death squads and repeated bombings of villages in guerilla-held territories which have been underwritten by U.S. tax dollars. But even if there were no Adventists suffering in Nicaragua or El Salvador, should we not be doing something to stop or relieve the suffering that we bear partial responsibility for inflicting?

We may not expect our government to act Christianly in international relations, but surely it should be within the realm of our concern to call it to change a militaristic Central American policy that has been immoral, illegal, and ineffective. Perhaps more importantly, could we not do more in the way of humanitarian aid to counter the suffering our government has caused?

Adventists have always recognized that despite its glorious promise there is a beast-like dimension to the American empire. The expectation of Sunday laws someday should not blind us to the possibility that the beast may manifest itself in other ways.

Doug Morgan  
Doctoral student  
University of Chicago

## In Praise of SDA English Professors

To the Editors: I found the article "Do Adventist Colleges Have a Future? A Symposium," most insightful, especially the contributions of Drs. Knittel, Jones, and Stafford.

I was, however, surprised to read the editorial comment about Dr. Otilie Stafford which asserted that she "has

probably taught more students who are now professors of English on Adventist college campuses than anyone before her." There is no question that Dr. Stafford has contributed mightily to the shaping of her students. Her high standards, both academic and aesthetic, have been of real impact on numerous English majors, minors, general students, and colleagues during her many years at Atlantic Union College and in her guest teaching stints at Loma Linda University and Andrews University.

But your editorial comment emphasizes numbers. The individual who best fits your description is Dr. John Waller, former chair of the English Department at Andrews University, where he is still an active teacher. As the individual most responsible for shaping the programs in English at Andrews, programs which have graduated close to 300 master's students alone over the past 28 years, Dr. Waller has inevitably instructed numerous students, graduate and undergraduate, from all over the world, many of whom have gone on for doctoral work and/or are now teaching in SDA colleges around the globe. My quick tally of SDA college/university English departments in the U. S. and Canada indicates that Dr. Waller has been a teacher of some 40 percent of the present English professors. Dr. Merlene Ogden, also of the Andrews University English department, comes close in matching this figure, as does Dr. Edith Stone, former chair at Columbia Union College and long-time teacher in the Andrews English department.

All of these teachers, including Dr. Stafford, deserve our praise and respect (as do other English teachers, from elementary through university levels in SDA institutions around the world) for their enrichment of their students' lives and for their willingness to stick by their tasks, even when unappreciated by a Seventh-day Adventist audience not as committed as they have been to excellence in language, writing, and literature.

Delmar Davis, Dean  
School of Graduate Studies  
Andrews University

## Rescuing the Colleges

To the Editors: Your recent articles regarding declining enrollment in Adventist schools (Vol. 18, Nos. 3, 4) focus on current demographic trends. Perhaps the time will soon come for Adventist education, at least at the college level, to seriously experiment with unconventional instructional methods that could reduce tuition rates and increase enrollment. There has been widespread experimentation over the past few decades with videotaped instruction, "computer assisted" instruction, and similar alternate methods.

While the need for academic excellence is, and rightly should be, a high priority, Adventist schools do not intend to limit their appeal to wealthy students able to pay top dollar. However, experimental courses requiring higher student initiative are doomed from the start if they must compete for student energies with traditional courses with high "external" pressure from the instructor. For this reason, a switch to alternate instruction would need to be nearly total to be viable. For a single, independent college, such a step would be extreme. Students can choose the college that best fits their needs, but within an entire system of Adventist colleges for one or two of the most troubled colleges to take such a step would be less extreme.

Alternative instruction methods, especially the lower cost ones requiring higher student initiative, would require relatively reduced numbers of faculty to take a role primarily as educational "coaches" rather than fountains of information. A structured "barter" system of student-to-student tutoring might be necessary to supplement teacher-student counseling. For these reasons, it would seem that if in the future some Adventist colleges are in serious trouble Adventist higher education should explore the possibilities for increased enrollment through radical reduction of tuition costs made possible through alternate methods of instruction.

Norman Smith  
Morrison, Colorado

## In Defense of SDA College Education

To the Editors: We read with great interest Dolores Londis' article "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" (*Spectrum*, Vol. 18, No. 4). As enrollment management personnel at Andrews University we have daily contact with hundreds of students coming and going from Adventist education. We would like to respond to several issues addressed in this article.

First of all, we appreciated her interest in Adventist education. We really feel there is an incorrect perception about the quality of Adventist education in general. There is an underlying assumption that because it's Adventist, it's inferior. Throughout the years there has been a shift in attitudes of society, which Adventists tend to follow, from a service-oriented approach to the individual ethos of gaining wealth and power. Such a shift is not consonant with Adventist colleges. One might ask, should Adventist colleges respond to this trend? We don't think so.

One of the student comments you reported that we found



most disturbing was the suggestion that religion classes in Adventist education are an adequate substitute for the personal study of the Bible. Linda seemed to think that getting A's in all her religion classes should guarantee a complete personal understanding of the Bible and an enthusiasm about religion. Any student can formally study a subject in the classroom and receive an A and have very limited experiential knowledge of that subject. A person's salvation is not worked out by an institution but by the free choice of each individual. No doubt, many Bible classes could be improved inside and outside the Adventist system. This certainly doesn't justify a person not being able to support doctrinal issues directly from the Bible.

Admissions requirements at Adventist colleges was another issue mentioned. The suggestion that it is easy to gain acceptance is true because the mission of Adventist colleges includes providing the opportunity for every Adventist student to obtain a college education. But that doesn't guarantee a diploma. Not everyone has the ability to complete a program. Only 52 percent of entering students at Andrews University actually finish a degree program.

As far as our graduates are concerned, we have lists of students who are accepted into more than one "big name" university, some with full fellowships. It is also interesting to note that 93 percent of our students are employed or go to a graduate program after the baccalaureate degree. This figure does not include those who have chosen to be full-time mothers or those unavailable for survey. There is no lack of opportunities for academic advancement because a person has attended an Adventist college.

A comment made by Robert about "free time" of his friends at Adventist colleges to play tennis, swim, et cetera, does not reflect upon the academics at Adventist colleges. It's totally unrelated. A balanced life is a free choice. Like Robert, there are many students at Andrews and other Adventist colleges who lead a similar rigorous academic life.

The article mentioned that two younger students are still internalizing their commitment to Adventism. This is not surprising as this is very typical of this age group. It is during the college years that values are questioned and students determine their value system. If the ultimate goal of the students is a forever relationship with Jesus, how appropriate it is to surround yourself with professors and fellow students who foster this same desire. This is in contrast to being in an environment where Jesus' name is commonly taken in vain.

We could not agree more with the comment made by John about Adventist colleges seeming not to care about where he went to school. Because of the current restrictions based on geographical boundaries placed on Adventist colleges, we can recruit only in limited areas. We are interested in students being informed about all Adventist colleges. We hope to see in the near future Adventist colleges able to contact all students without restrictions.

We feel that a lot of good education is occurring in Adventist colleges. Perhaps a follow-up article would include an interview with students who have chosen Adventist colleges after attending public high schools or universities. Andrews has several students you could choose from.

The final observation we would like to note is a statement from the May 1988 *Youthworker Update*. In a recent Gallup poll done for the Princeton Religion Research Center college graduates from the late 1970s and early 1980s were surveyed regarding their happiness. There were striking differences between the feelings of graduates from public colleges and graduates of private Christian colleges. The percentage reporting they were "very happy" with life was 36 percentage points higher among the church college graduates. We believe happiness is a Christian college!

Curt Dolinsky  
Debbie P. Case  
Enrollment Management  
Andrews University

## *Dolores Kennedy Londis Responds*

According to a *Spectrum* article (Vol. 18, No. 2) by Tom Smith, an associate executive secretary of the North American Division Board of Higher Education, from 1981 to 1987 enrollment of North American Adventist colleges and universities dropped by the equivalent of 2,748 full-time students. In 1986 alone Smith reports a drop of 300 freshmen, despite a decrease of only 48 graduating academy seniors from the previous year. Also, the percentage of church members in Adventist schools dropped from a high of 20.6 in 1961 to its 1987 level of just 12 percent.

To get behind these statistics to the feelings and insights of students, I spoke with, questioned, and listened for hours to several Adventist youth who attend non-Adventist institutions. Although the group of students with whom I met do not, of course, represent a statistically significant cross section of the country, their reasons for looking outside the church came down to what the thousands interviewed in the Seltzer Daley Report said was their highest priority for improving Adventist education: greater academic quality. Whether or not we want to agree with them, we *must* listen and *hear* what students are saying if we want to reverse the current trends.

## Ode to a Northern Star

To the Editor: You have published an appreciation of a beloved Adventist professor, Walter Utt (Vol. 18, No. 4). I wish to draw your readers' attention to another influential Adventist teacher, less known in the United States than he deserved. Word has come from Norway that Carsten Johnsen is no more. He died July 30, 1987, at the young age of 73.

When I met him for the first time fresh out of high school 15 years ago his name already had a legendary flavor in Europe. The story was told that he memorized the dictionary from A to Z when he was a student of Latin, English, French, and German at the University of Oslo. He had become a linguist *par excellence*, using the hoarded treasures of these languages almost like a child playing happily with newly acquired toys, admittedly sometimes to the despair of students who could never quite concede their limited grasp of their own mother tongue.

During his early student days he read the *Conflict of the Ages* series by Ellen White. After that he never looked back. If Ellen White was a modern-day prophet, Carsten Johnsen considered it his life's great fortune to get his education in the school provided by her books. He gave up his inborn enthusiasm for romanticism and dedicated his life to what he called "the rock-bottom realism of Seventh-day Adventism." He took up his ministry with a sense of apostleship and prophetic mission. For him Adventism was nothing if not the last-day vindication of God's character and reputation.

Wherever he went he seemed curiously comfortable, deliberately oblivious to the barriers of European nationalism or administrators zealously defending their turf. In the early part of his ministry, his subject was French, English, or German grammar and syntax; during the later years, his classes focused on philosophy and ethics. A blend of friendliness and solemnity pervaded his classes at Onsrud and Tyrifjord in Norway, Vejlebjerg in Denmark, Bogenhofen in Austria, Collonges in France, Pacific Union College and Andrews University, in Ethiopia, Jamaica, and Kenya.

He received two doctoral degrees at universities in Montpellier in France, one written in French and one in English. A third dissertation was completed and publicly defended, but by then he saw no more use for academic qualifications.

A painstaking journey through the annals of human thought had convinced him that underneath the conglomerate of conflicting views and philosophies there was a striking unity; a fellowship of unbelief inspired by an intoxicated overconfidence in human reason. As the number of Adventists holding advanced degrees kept swelling, he

watched incredulously as one after the other seemed to find the old faith called into question by their scholarship. His own examination of the records had resoundingly confirmed the trustworthiness of the truths, painted in such striking colors by the early Adventists, particularly in the writings of Ellen White. He thought it beside the point to take issue with the newcomers' handling of the facts. It was the spinelessness, the lack of backbone, concealed behind an aura of scholarship, that troubled him.

He felt ill at ease among Adventist "intellectuals." He would rather talk about childlikeness, the love of mothers—and the countless disguises of self-glorification. During his 10 years as professor of philosophy at the SDA Theological Seminary at Andrews University he was conspicuous by his absence at the commencement ceremonies. He loved his students and shared their joy, but to him the academic regalia and processions were rooted in a tradition altogether different from the simplicity, solemnity, and brotherhood of equals found in the New Testament.

His books cut to the core of these concerns. The University of Oslo Press recognized the scope and importance of his approach to anthropology by publishing one of his doctoral dissertations, *Man—the Indivisible*, for a wide readership. He developed his theme further in *The Maligned God, Agape and Eros, God—the Situation Ethicist, The Writing in the Sand*, and *Day of Destiny*. They all demonstrated a curious blend not found in any other contemporary Adventist authors, of indebtedness to the *Conflict of the Ages* theme of Ellen White, and a familiarity with the history of ideas.

I first met him at a study center for Europeans and Americans affiliated with Andrews University, that he established in the south of France. Soon my teacher became my friend. The deepest impressions and most lasting memories were made during many an afternoon, lying on our backs on sun-scorched hills, while he shared his burden for the Advent movement, its people, purpose, and problems.

During the last few years of his life he wrote many letters that were never answered. He almost despaired that the church was about to put the academic before the spiritual, administrative matters before pastoral concerns, and professionalism above personal ministry.

We realize that we shall not hear from him again in this life. But while his typewriter is resting, his testimony lives on: "Nightfall may yet come to the earth and to the human family. When that happens, lift your eyes to the portals of Orion. Heaven is no mere ethereal vapor, swept away by the winds of reality. It is not the chaff of illusions, easily consumed by the flames of spiritualism. No, heaven is a soberminded realism."

In this way he transformed his day of separation to a vision of the day of reunion.

Sigve Tonstad, MD  
Loma Linda, California

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