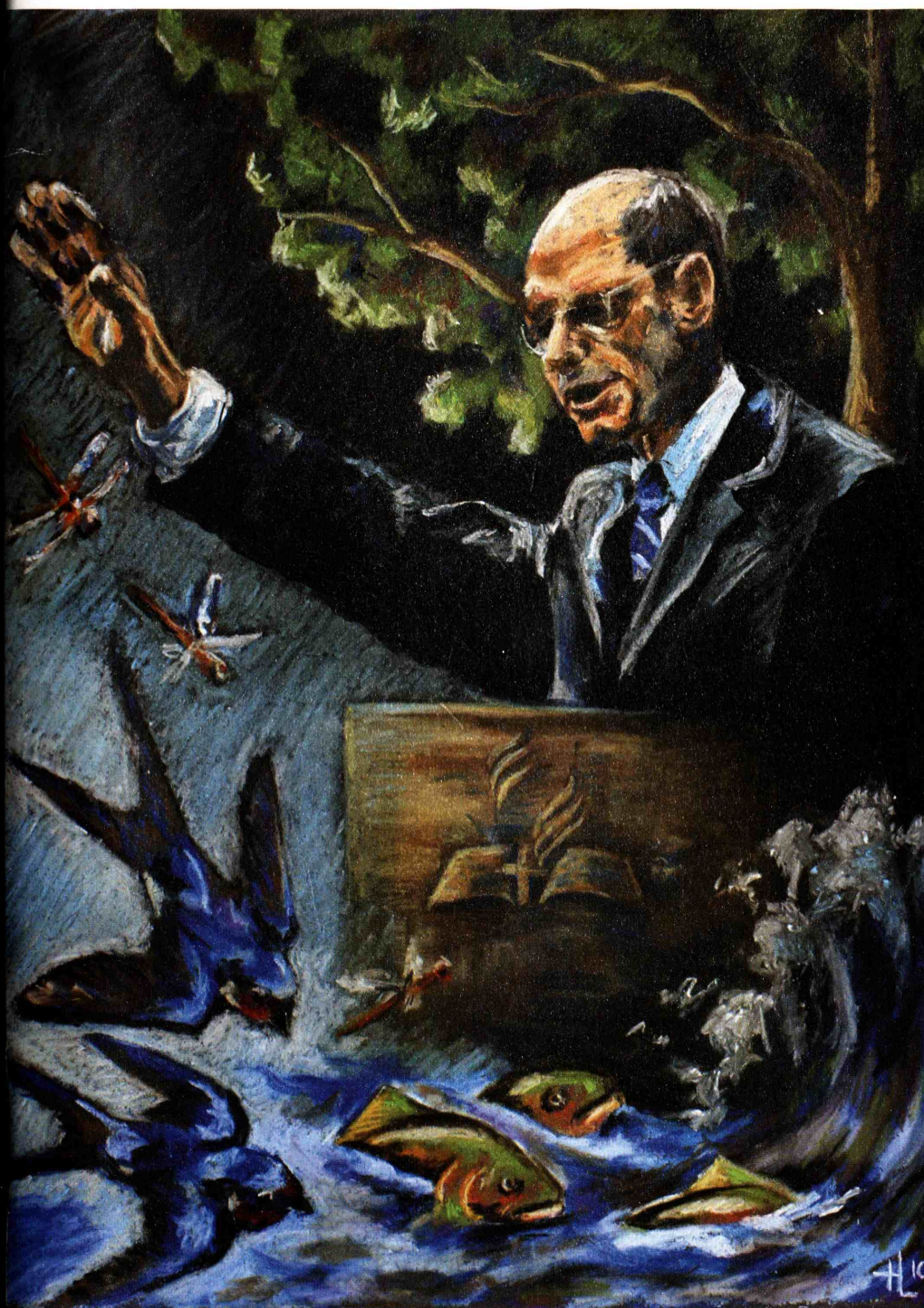
 *community through conversation*

# SPECTRUM



## **Why Revise Belief #6?**

The Backstory  
on the  
Newly-Elected  
Presidents

## **Models of Origins: Creationist Options for Adventists**

Adventism's  
Historic  
Witness  
Against  
Creeds

## **Memoirs of a Chinese Historian**



# community through conversation SPECTRUM

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Born and raised in the Sierra Nevada foothills of California, Heather Langley grew up amazed by nature's attention to detail, precision, and beauty. A recent graduate of Wheaton College in Massachusetts, Heather received her B.A. in English and Studio Art with a concentration in design. Her interests and studies have taken her around the world, including Italy, the UK, and Tanzania. In her travels, nature serves as her solace and inspiration and provides her with a sense of constancy in an ever-changing world.

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Upon learning of the Adventist Creation debate, the artist wished to convey an outsider's perspective in pictures. Here, she hopes to paint the issue in a descriptive, colorful, and altogether thought-provoking light.

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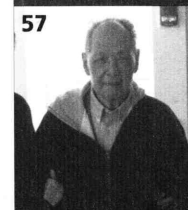
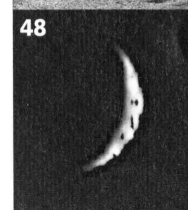
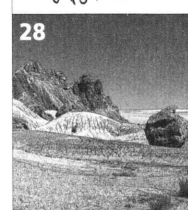
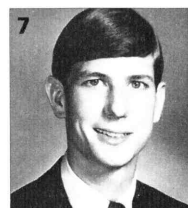
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## EDITORIAL ■ from the editor

### Why Revise Belief #6? | BY BONNIE DWYER

One of the most significant actions of the 2010 General Conference session in Atlanta was the vote to revise Fundamental Belief #6 and place it on the agenda for approval in 2015.

Looking for official answers to the question of why this revision is necessary, I found the July issue of *Reflections* from the Biblical Research Institute helpful.

Gerhard Pfandl summarizes the meetings and actions of the past decade in an article titled: "Creation Debate in the Seventh-day Adventist Church." He describes the three years of meetings with theologians and scientists in Colorado and elsewhere around the world and says that the first conference in 2002 revealed "the seriousness and breadth of differences concerning questions of origin that are present in the SDA community today." I guess that could be called reason number one.

Then he describes the document "An Affirmation of Creation" that was written at the end of those meetings by the organizing committee and taken to the Annual Council in 2004 for a vote. This document contains the observation that "some among us interpret the biblical record in ways that lead to sharply different conclusions...including the idea of theistic evolution." He also notes "concern about the alleged ambiguity of the phrase 'in six days' found in Fundamental Belief #6, resulting in 'uncertainty about what the church actually believes.'" Call that reason number two—the ambiguity of "in six days."

Pfandl says it was significant that the 2004 Annual Council action "called on all school boards and teachers at our schools to uphold and advocate the Church's position on origins." But he notes, "Unfortunately, this recommendation has not been sufficiently followed up."

Apparently this is reason number three because he says,

"It is hoped that this action of the world church (in 2010) will encourage the boards and teachers of our schools and universities to ensure that teaching on origins supports and affirms the church's Fundamental Belief #6.

In conclusion, he writes, "Without the Creation week, the Sabbath becomes a Jewish institution; and if death existed long before the appearance of man, then there was no Fall in Eden and therefore really no need for salvation."

This linchpin view of Sabbath or domino theory of how ideas fall is thus where we begin our five-year discussion of origins.

Is Pfandl correct in his assumptions? When we see evidence of sin on a daily basis, would a different understanding of Creation or the Fall truly mean there was no need for salvation?

Fortunately, for us and for this discussion, we now have one of the most comprehensive books about Sabbath ever written by an Adventist to help us in the Biblical study which is crucial to the conversation. In this issue we feature Sigve Tonstad's "The Meanings of the Beginning," Chapter Two from his book *The Lost Meaning of the Seventh Day*. This is but a small taste of the book that is already in its second printing. There is obviously much more in the book, where Tonstad goes from Genesis to Revelation in his consideration of the Sabbath. He discusses clock time versus creation time, examines Paul's comments about God creating "in the twinkling of an eye," and discusses the implications of Creation to the character of God. Incidentally, he never assumes that the Bible's account has to be improved upon by us, or else the Sabbath loses its meanings for all humanity.

For "Back in the Day," Brian Bull and Fritz Guy put themselves in the place of the original listeners to Genesis as they address the topic of a day, as we think about the days of Creation.



Considering the scientific ideas that are called upon for discussion by the revising of Belief #6, we turn to Warren Johns, who agrees with a six-day Creation but disagrees with the need to rewrite Belief #6. He says there are concrete reasons why revising the Belief sets us up for problems down the road.

If you think we've been having this discussion about Creation for a long time, you are correct. Ron Graybill reminds us of the past conversations. Have we learned anything that would be of help now? A blizzard of questions came to my mind when the vote to rewrite the Belief passed:

*Belief #6 is written in the words of Genesis. Why aren't the words of the Bible good enough?*

*Is rewriting it just a way of reaffirming the belief in Creation?*

*Is there more at stake?*

*What will be accomplished by rewriting the belief?*

*Will rearranging sentences solve the diversity of belief among us, clear up the ambiguity of "six days," and alter what is taught in our schools?*

*Will new words help those who value science and the contribution of evolutionary ideas to change their minds?*

*Do we have new scientific findings that help us explain a young earth better today than when the belief was written?*

Given this blizzard of questions, perhaps it is good that we have five years for the conversation.

And finally, the most important question is how do we make sure that our Bible study and conversation help us go forward.

Some commentators have suggested the Adventists are responsible for the Creation-science movement. If that is so, we owe it not only to ourselves but to the world to make this conversation a positive and productive one. ■

**Bonnie Dwyer** is editor of *Spectrum* magazine.

## New York's Best-Kept Secret

### Fall Highlights:

**Sept 18**

Jon Paulien, LLU. *Making Sense of the Book of Revelation*

**Oct 9**

Laura Vance, Warren-Wilson Univ. *Changing Mormon and Adventist Sexual Norms*

**Oct 23**

Catherine Taylor. *Biblical Principles for Building Safe Communities*

**Nov 20**

Christoff Weigel. *The Christian Airplane: Faith and Logos in Adventist Buildings*

**Dec 11**

Michael Campbell. *Adventism and Fundamentalism*

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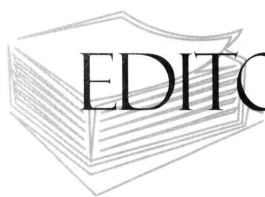
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Check our website for last-minute information about the streaming of the September 11 meeting.





## Radical Grace and Biblical Realism | BY CHARLES SCRIVEN

**T**he new General Conference President's inaugural sermon in Atlanta sent me back to the Bible. Many people, perhaps most, welcomed the sermon. Others winced. When the president denounced "contemplative" and "centering" prayer—perhaps for seeming, to him, like some "new-age" distraction—the young woman two seats down from me began to cry.

It was clear that the new president would speak his mind, even if it roughed up a few people. But the prophets did that, too, and so did Jesus. You can't argue that candor is unacceptable. Candor is prophetic stock-in-trade.

The real issue is *substance*. And when church members disagree on substance, knowing *how* to read the Bible is essential. So I wrote on these matters for this magazine's blog. Convictions define Christian life, and my question was: how shall we justify these convictions, and on what basis shall we adjust them when they seem off-center, out of kilter?

First, I explained why fundamentalism is a dead end. Then I said that the Gospel answer to my question is focus on Christ, Christ risen and Christ present today through the Holy Spirit. The answer, in other words, is radical grace, for it is radical grace—God's unswerving mercy and forgiveness; God's transforming presence—that Christ embodies and proclaims.

You can go to <http://www.spectrummagazine.org> for the complete essays. Here, what I want to emphasize is that the justification of our convictions hangs on a method of Bible reading that is neither acceptable to fundamentalists nor beholden—this is also crucial—to prevailing secular assumptions. I want to describe it here. After others who lean toward the Radical Reformation point of view, I will call the method Biblical Realism. If

embraced, it would spare us some of our infernal disputatiousness and true up our witness, the wider world.

**Biblical Realism is, first of all, a readiness to read Scripture in accord with the *lived faith* of the believing community.** The modern world has bequeathed us a substantially secular outlook. Bible scholars steeped in this outlook have developed what is called the "historical critical method" of Scripture study, and the deliverances of that method can, in truth, be very helpful. But lived faith is an experience of grace. Faith expresses the *conviction* that grace is real and that the God of grace actually hears us when we pray. Grace is the way things are; it is not just an artifact of human imagination.

Insofar as secular assumptions deny the reality of grace, or the reality of the God who is gracious, those assumptions cannot govern our Bible interpretation. It is true that modern knowledge matters. We need not think that the Bible contains all we need to know: to learn more about astronomy or anesthesiology or French, we may embrace other sources. But for answers concerning the significance and potential of the human spirit, we must let the Bible speak even when it may be alien to contemporary sensibility. Lived faith privileges the Bible because lived faith is evidence for the grace—and the reality—of the God whose story the Bible tells.

**Second, Biblical Realism relativizes creeds and creed-like statements of official belief.** Statements of faith may function as helpful summaries of the convictions that underlie a religious community's frame of mind and way of life. But the Bible—no creed and no written statement of belief—is the ultimate written authority for the church. The story the Bible tells is the true determinant of authentic Christian belief.

Even the most time-honored creeds fall short. The famous ones from Nicaea and Chalcedon in the fourth and fifth centuries emerged out of a storm of theological bickering that was often speculative and sometimes violent: its path was strewn with corpses as well as damaged reputations. What is more, the disputants who came finally to (a sort of) agreement overlooked the greatest mistake of the era, namely, the church's slide into obeisance before the political authority of the Roman Empire.

More attention to Scripture might have stopped the slide. It now seems certain, in any case, that both Testaments call the faithful to profound skepticism with respect to imperial power. The fact that this was missed underscores the point that the Bible is the church's single most important document, and that statements of faith are dangerous unless they are taken to be provisional and open to correction.

**Third, Biblical Realism concentrates on what the Bible concentrates on—the story of God's dealings with humanity, and the vocation to which God calls us.** Theologians veer easily into speculative theorizing about mysteries that admit of no solution. The Bible makes, to be sure, startling claims. It says God liberated Israel, but Moses was crucial; it says Jesus was our brother, but was also the "exact imprint" of God. Yet the Bible takes little if any interest in *explaining* these things or in lessening mystery through ever-finer increments of verbal precision. Instead, the Bible tells the story of how the divine-human connection has played out in actual human lives and invites readers to become part of that story themselves.

All this suggests the necessity of keeping doctrine within its bounds as what the poet Kathleen Norris calls "an adjunct and response to a lived faith." If doctrine becomes a means of excluding people who are engaged in the practice of discipleship, that signals a distortion in understanding. It is a distortion that borders on

idolatry and has nothing at all to do with the faithfulness that is God's primary concern.

The Bible story comes, of course, to a decisive turning point, a grand ideal. It is not, even for itself, a catalogue of proof-texts, but rather the inspired (as we Christians say) account of a journey. On the journey the turning point, or grand ideal, is Christ—Christ risen and Christ present through the Holy Spirit—and the living Christ is the Bible's interpretive key. Here is the single, most important lever for determining what in Christian life and thought is true, or justifiable, and what is not.

These points reflect what the Bible itself has to say. They also demolish fundamentalism, whose key features fall to ruin under the weight of the evidence. Based upon Scripture itself, Biblical Realism says No to flat, mechanical readings of Holy Writ. Based on Scripture itself, Biblical Realism calls for constant theological self-examination, and thus says No to doctrinal rigidity and arrogance. Based on Scripture itself, Biblical Realism stresses the story of the incarnate God, and thus says No to inward-looking separatism: you engage the world, you don't run from it.

Fundamentalism stands refuted. And although Fundamentalism remains attractive to certain people, the refutation is unassailable.

But what matters just as much, Biblical Realism directs our attention to *life*, to *practice*, to *discipleship*. Previous Adventist generations locked themselves into pitched battle over whether the sanctuary in heaven was literal or figurative. Biblical Realism would have steered them away from such a speculative preoccupation. And that would have moderated Adventist disputatiousness. But besides liberating us from irrelevant and distractive quarrels, a turn to discipleship would assist us in remaining "faithful," as Stanley Hauerwas has written, "to the character (the story and skills)" of authentic Christian life.

Radical grace—in us—would have a chance. We would fight less. We would love more. ■

**Charles Scriven** chairs Adventist Forum.

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## FEEDBACK ■ letters, e-mails, and comments

### Women, Creation, and Corrections

#### Praising Adventist Women

YOUR SPRING 2010 ISSUE on Adventist women was, simply put, the best overall issue *Spectrum* has ever produced. With personal depth, worldwide breadth, intrepid commentary, brisk writing, vibrant layout, and transcendent hope, you provided a snapshot of women's successes, challenges, and opportunities. Kudos to all involved.

CHRIS BLAKE  
Lincoln, Nebraska

KUDOS TO Beverly Beem and Ginger Harwood for demonstrating our church's radical feminist roots in the 1850s and 1860s! Twenty years ago, I read some of those *Review* articles as I researched the amazing story of the licensed female preacher Sarah A. Hallock-Lindsey, who once attracted more people into her evangelistic tent on the Southern Tier than Barnum and Bailey's Circus got into their competing tent (see *Adventist Heritage*, vol. 11, no. 2, Fall 1986). As the authors twice mention Sarah in their delightful article, they may be interested to know that recent research has revealed that even after her husband John died in 1881, Sarah continued preaching into the 1890s in southern New York and northern Pennsylvania. She died on December 29, 1914 at age 82 and is buried in Newfield (near Ulysses), Pennsylvania, where she grew up. Ellen White and many of the men at the 1881 General Conference session who discussed the motion to ordain qualified female preachers had, in fact, heard Sarah Lindsey preach. I have certainly been greatly blessed by all the "Marys" whom God has called to preach during my lifetime.

BRIAN E. STRAYER  
Berrien Springs, Michigan, Via the Internet

#### Teaching Creationism

AS A FULL-TIME teacher (now retired) in the biological sciences in SDA colleges for some four decades, I am increasingly distressed at the rising tide of conflict that has surfaced between some of our church administrators and college scientists regarding the Creation process. New discoveries in science, due to advanced technology, have widened our view of the universe and challenged some traditionally held truths about the Creation timelines and the age of our planet. This was bound to happen as the searchlight of knowledge lit up the darkened skies, explained ancient rock formations, clarified glacial crystals and revealed the secrets of the ocean floors.

Most SDA scientists have found themselves in the growing dilemma of trying to support what has become an increasingly controversial position. In the end, one must run faith and beliefs through the crucible of reality rather than the other way around. We now acknowledge the existence of dinosaurs, the vastness of the universe created by God over eons, carbon dating, DNA and the human genome. None of these discoveries has threatened our basic beliefs about God or our educational processes.

The manner in which many of our current scientists have tried to match these discoveries with traditional Creation theology has been to increasingly qualify their classroom discussions with phrases like "According to the Genesis account" or "Based on the traditional view of the church" or, more directly, "According to the Bible." I do not believe that our scientists have abandoned the Bible principle of "Intelligent Design" but rather have tried to reconcile the growing evidence of a long-term earth life with the Mosaic view that is increasingly challenged by new knowledge.

*Continued on page 44...*



## Getting the Backstory on the Newly-Elected Presidents



Above, left and right: Photos of Ted Wilson from his senior high school yearbook, the 1968 Takoma Academy *Takoman*.

Center: Photo of a recent reunion of Ted's class. Because he was unable to attend, the class president created a cardboard cutout of Ted. "Flat Ted" went to all the events of the weekend and was included in all the photos. In this photo "Flat Ted" has on a baseball cap and he is the third from the left on the back row.

### Reflections on a Life-long Friendship with the New GC President

BY JIGGS GALLAGHER

LET ME INTRODUCE YOU to my best friend, Ted Wilson. I don't use the word "friend" lightly. Sociologists say that if we develop three to five strong friendships over the course of a lifetime, we're doing very well. Many of the people we call friends are more accurately acquaintances, colleagues at work, Facebook "friends," and the like. True friends

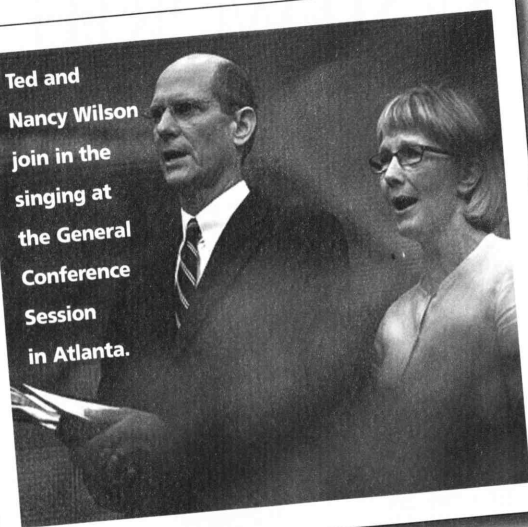
are something else altogether.

Ted and I met in fifth grade at John Nevins Andrews School in Takoma Park after his family moved from California to Maryland when his father became a departmental director in the Columbia Union.

We became fast friends and shared the experience of growing up through high school at Takoma Academy. Ted went off to La Sierra College for his freshmen year (I almost joined him there, but attended Columbia Union College.) Then he came back a year later, and we both graduated from CUC.

Our young lives in Takoma Park were blissful by today's standards. We talked of schoolwork, girls, music, politics, popular culture, possible careers, and yes, religion and theology. We were both among six or seven "youth evangelists" who spoke at the Takoma Park Church for an evening series in 1967; we were half of a male gospel quartet (Ted was baritone, I was bass) formed by Ted's mother. He was a positive person with a great sense of humor and a great deal of compassion for people—all people, Adventists and otherwise.

Ted and Nancy Wilson join in the singing at the General Conference Session in Atlanta.



I could see that from the beginning.

We did fun things like editing the 1970 CUC yearbook in a marathon three-day, day-and-night session. On New Year's Eve of 1970, we hopped a Trailways bus in downtown D.C. and rode to New York to be in the studio audience at Johnny Carson's live Tonight Show. We hiked from the Port Authority Bus Terminal across Times Square, which was already teeming with people, at 9 or 10 that night, and on to Rockefeller Center and the NBC studios. Then after the show, at 1 a.m., we walked back through the cold and the debris to the bus depot and slept on the 4-hour ride back to D.C.

Another adventure was returning his uncle's Porsche from Maryland to Loma Linda. His uncle was a physician who spent a year in the army in Vietnam in 1969–70, and he lent the car to Ted. After exams were over at CUC in April (literally, at 4 p.m.), we piled in the car and started driving west. By 5 a.m. we were at the arch in St. Louis, which we walked up to but obviously couldn't go in at that hour. A homeless man asked us for money, and Ted offered him a sandwich his

mother had packed for us. When we had to get a mechanic's help in New Mexico, he witnessed to the man on the tow-truck ride. The man was visibly touched.

When we were at Takoma Academy, his father Neal was elected vice president of the GC for North America.

There was much talk about town that he would one day be GC president (which did in fact happen in 1978). Keep in mind that this was the 1960s in the Washington area; we were all steeped in talk of a Kennedy "dynasty" as people eyed Robert Kennedy and his brother Ted as possible presidents following the tragically short administration of JFK. So naturally those of us at TA talked of Ted's ultimate succession to the GC's highest office. It was part joke and part wish fulfillment, and Ted could laugh about it as well. In our senior yearbook, he complimented me on my editorship of the school paper and suggested that I would one day be editor of the *Review and Herald* (predecessor to the *Adventist Review*). He wrote, "Maybe I can be a columnist for your *R&H*! Probably not 'President's Report' though! Ha-Ha!"

I remember talking with him on hot summer nights in front of my house about what we both wanted to do with our lives. At one point he was thinking about a career in Egyptology—archeology basically focused on ancient Egypt. Not surprising for a boy who called Cairo his home for the first eight years of his life.

God's ministry was never far from his heart, even as an academy and college student. And he was in a hurry! After finishing his double major in religion and business administration at CUC a year early, graduating in 1971, he attended the Theological Seminary at Andrews, receiving his M.Div. degree by 1973.

Not satisfied with this level of education, he set out for Loma Linda University and earned a master of science degree in public health. Then he settled into the ministry as pastor of a church in Patchogue, Long Island, NY. I visited him there once, when my life was in a bit of turmoil, for a weekend—just to get my head clear and my bearings straight. Ted had a way of doing that for people. He was still single at this time, and I remember on that Friday night a (single) lady (church member) showed up at his door with a casserole. He was very popular!

Ted married his lovely wife Nancy (née Vollmer), whom he met at Loma Linda when she was getting her degree in physical therapy. The couple located in suburban New York City, and Ted directed Metro Ministries there for several years while also getting his doctorate in religious education at New York University. They began a family which now includes three lovely and accomplished young ladies (Emilie, Catherine and Elizabeth) and their husbands and children.

Most of his career has been spent overseas, beginning with service in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, during the 1980s. After a two-year stint in the General Conference Secretariat in Silver Spring, he headed the church's work in Russia (based in Moscow) after the fall of the Soviet Union.



Returning again to the United States, Ted served as president of the Review and Herald Publishing Association in Hagerstown. He was elected a general vice president of the church in 2000 at the GC session in Toronto, and re-elected to the post in 2005.

All through this time, through various media and technology, we stayed in frequent touch, first through letters and phone calls, and later through e-mail. His work often took him to Loma Linda, and because I was living in Southern California by that time, we almost never failed to get together once a year or so for a meal, for church or even for a quick half-hour chat. He would often visit my ailing mother and have prayer with her. On her death in 2007, he cleared his morning calendar during Annual Council to conduct her service.

Our adult lives have taken us both in vastly different directions. I have not worked for the denomination since 1988. I'm probably what many people would call a liberal Adventist, whatever that means, and of course Ted is not. I eat meat, and he's a life-long vegetarian. I've been divorced and remarried—and, thankfully, he has not. I have a gay daughter who's legally married to a woman here in California.

However, none of those things matters between us. And he doesn't judge me for any of it. We don't argue about church politics because they couldn't divide the bond of friendship we share. His generous spirit and spiritually supportive personality continue to buoy me in my life's journey, as they have throughout my life.

Knowing him as I do, over his lifetime and mine, gives me a unique window into the soul of this man. I have been with him as a child, as a teen and

as an adult, under pressure and during good times. I know his deep commitment to God and to the Church, and his burning zeal for taking the Adventist message to as many people as possible, as quickly as possible.

Ted knows the challenges, and he knows that he needs God's special guidance in taking up the duties of this job, as would any human being elected to such a pivotal position. Of course, I wish him and his family well, and I would wish an extra dose of wis-

dom that could come his way for him to make good, far-sighted decisions during his term of office. I would wish for him always to see the big picture, to put the souls of the flock and of the wider world constantly before God.

Knowing him as I do, I know that would be his prayer as well. ■

**Jiggs Gallagher** is a grant writer for California State University, San Bernardino. He holds a master's degree in journalism from Columbia University.

## The Fall to Grace:

### *Dan Jackson and the Road Less Traveled*

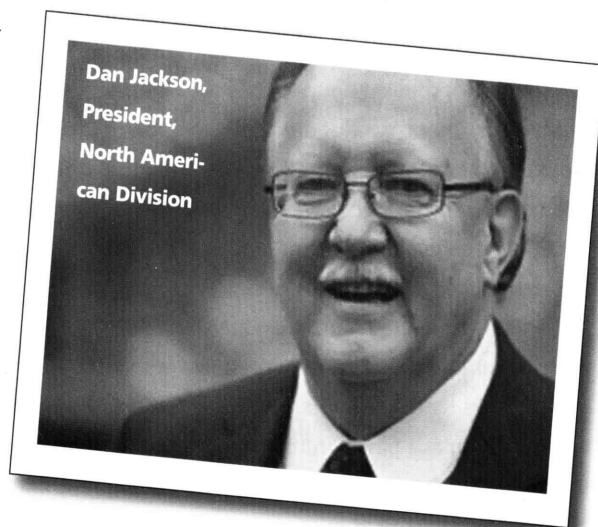
BY LYNN NEUMANN MCDOWELL

DANIEL JACKSON KNOWS a thing or two about grace. Not just the theological concept, but the kind that comes from traveling through pastoral and organizational life in a different way. He was not, for example, born into a nurturing, fifth-generation Adventist family. Jackson's journey into Adventist institutions started with a trip to the Canadian Union College (CaUC) cafeteria, or perhaps more accurately, a clumsy trip on its stairway while carrying a tray fully loaded with food.

The scrawny 14-year-old surveyed the mess around him, red-faced and mortified at the first impression he was making. Each of his first three meals in the cafeteria had ended up on the floor. But rather than being surround-

ed by hoots and jeers, the teenager found hands reaching out to help him up. And so Daniel Jackson began the long journey from Edmonton juvenile delinquent-in-training to leader of one million plus ethnically and theologically diverse Adventists in North America—the first Canadian president of the North American Division (NAD).

"Danny," as he was known at CaUC even when he pastored Canada's college church nearly thirty years later, has always been a favorite son, except, perhaps, to his estranged father. His home life had not been easy; his mother deposited Jackson at CaUC





**Photos from the Jackson family albums: Left, Dan and Donna Jackson talk with their first child, daughter Dena, in 1971. Middle, known as the Human Jukebox, tenor Dan sang in quartets (here in 1965) and aspired to become a member of the King's Heralds Quartet. Right, preaching in 1968, Jackson points to a favorite text from Jeremiah.**

against the iron will of his father, who was a union organizer, two weeks after she decided, for her son's spiritual future, to start a new life without an abusive husband. She took a job at an Adventist nursing home on Vancouver Island to support herself and help her son financially with his Adventist education.

Perhaps the youngest student at the Canadian church's western boarding high school and college, Jackson soon became known for his indomitable spirit, his quick wit, and his fun-loving sense of adventure. When Lee Patterson, a recently converted 17-year-old carnival hand, showed up at CaUC to finish high school, two kindred spirits hailed each other. The teenagers became friends through thick, thin, spur-of-the-moment road trips, and life-long careers in church leadership.

"What I've admired more than anything about Danny is that he's a people person," says Patterson, who worked under Jackson as a pastor in the Manitoba-Saskatchewan and British Columbia Conferences, and as BC's

representative on the national Executive Committee after Jackson became president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada (SDACC) in November, 2001. "I've never known an organization or church that Dan's worked at where he's not considered Number One. He wins the admiration and trust of the people around him. I think it's because of his honesty."

Nowhere has that honesty found a more day-to-day, trust-building application than in committee work. "Dan believes in the saying, 'There are no friends in the board room,'" says John Ramsey, Treasurer/Vice-president, Finance, of the SDACC, who followed Jackson from the Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference to the SDACC. "We can be friendly and have trust," explains Ramsey of Jackson's take on the adage, "but with Dan, you say what you have to say in the room—not outside—and you back it up. There are no 'old boys' sliding by. Dan is never one to go around politicking before a meeting."

Jackson's sense of open inclusive-

ness extends to cultural issues. "He knows we're all 'off the boat,' or our parents or grandparents were," observes Ramsey, referring to Canada's continuing heritage of wave immigration and its challenges, "but he's also balanced with trying to get the best job done." One of Jackson's last acts as leader of the SDACC was to create a full time Native Ministries Coordinator/Evangelist position, launched on June 1, 2010, after careful study.

"He's not one to back down from any issue," continues Ramsey. "He'll do the research—with professionals, if necessary—and make a decision, and he doesn't look back. He's decisive."

"Danny's not afraid to step out when he believes something is right, even if it's different," affirms Patterson in response to a story about Jackson's decision regarding a proposal to bring a woman to the Canadian college church pulpit in the wake of the 1995 decision not to ordain women pastors. Her subject focused on the historic roles of women in the church. "Do it," said Jackson, on the spot, to the sur-

prised young woman who was petitioning. "Build a whole weekend around it, not just a worship service and sermon," he added. Then Jackson did what good administrators do: he let the young woman take charge and made her responsible.

That enabling leadership style and inclusiveness is Jackson's trademark. Indeed, he has already broadened the NAD president's usual circle of advisors to include university presidents. The advisors had their first meeting in early July. "He gets people to work by finding what's important to them and letting them contribute," says Denise Herr, Chair of CaUC's English Department. She also served on the college church's Worship Committee and discovered, at Jackson's prompting, that she could write skits. "The Worship Committee has never been so creative," adds Larry Herr, of CaUC's Religion Department, who was a professor and head elder during Jackson's tenure at the CaUC church.

Herr sketches Jackson's persona: "The first thing I noticed about Dan was his energy. The second thing was his language, both body and spoken. He did not walk and gesture like a typical pastor unless he wanted to. And he spoke with very few of the typical pastoral clichés. You KNEW he was speaking from a strong sense of reality. He was not manipulating anyone or anything."

"Unfortunately, Dan tends to move around a lot," reflects Herr. "Maybe all that energy doesn't like to stand still. But I was stunned, disappointed, and not a little angry when he decided to move to Ontario. My emotions are likewise mixed with his present move out of Canada. We're losing a big supporter of CaUC and a huge facilitator

of creativity." That view is echoed by many, including Denise Herr, who observes that CaUC's relationship with its board has never been better.

"I hope," reflects Larry Herr, "that all that energy and openness doesn't get lost in all the committees and formal activities of his new position." There was no sign of that during a phone interview in which Jackson spoke candidly on a range of topics, including doubts he had had over the years about his personal ministry.

"I felt I had a calling," says Jackson, "but I didn't know that I fit in. But every time I tried to quit, some circumstance intervened. My mother's faith and courage have been a blessing, and they've plagued me, too. You can't walk away from that sort of thing; my mother made a very firm commitment. I always related to Jeremiah: If you can't contend with the footmen, how will you run with the horses? In other words, 'buck up, old chap. Either fish or cut bait.'"

"God puts us all on a path," says Jackson, providing a glimpse of the everyman quality that has always endeared him to co-workers. "I'm trying, but I ain't perfect," he says, using grammatical imperfection with the innate sense of a born leader, "and those who know me best can testify."

"I have some strong beliefs," continues Jackson with fervor. "A lot of people don't agree with me, but that doesn't mean they are the enemy or the scum of the earth, or that they have a target on their chest. Let's talk in a respectful manner and come to resolution. We are not the enemy. We need to work together, sit down, and talk openly and kindly. That may be painful, but if we haven't learned those basic Christian graces—to treat

each other with dignity and kindness—we are just blowing it."

There is a remarkable congruence and consistency in attitudes toward Jackson among the people interviewed. Jackson's healthy realism is reflected in his determination that the NAD must have a "self-differentiated identity." "We can't be the South American Division, or Australia," says Jackson. "The NAD has great complexity. But I see way more hope than anything else in North America." A big part of that hope is focused on young people, and Jackson's been known to borrow a wet suit to baptize a high school student who wanted to be baptized in a private service witnessed by his friends in the North Saskatchewan River.

"He has a real burden for young people," says Alberta businessman Eric Rajah, co-founder of A Better World,<sup>1</sup> a humanitarian organization with a unique business model. "It's not just in words. He will take risks along with them." In 2008 when Rajah appealed for volunteers to help 16,000 internally displaced people taking sanctuary at a camp in Nakuru, Kenya, twelve Parkview Adventist Academy students responded, and Jackson and his wife, Donna, a trained social worker, signed on as sponsors. Jackson was told that because the church insurance policy would not cover his trip because of the danger, he should not go. "Well, if I don't make it back alive," Jackson responded with thoughtful determination, "I can be replaced." Risk, as far as Jackson is concerned, wasn't the issue. "I can't ask people to proclaim Christ, strengthen the believers, and serve humanity"—the SDACC's stated vision—"if I don't do it myself," he says.

Indeed, all interviewees agree that



Jackson walks the walk. Joan Tenasiychuk, editorial assistant of *The Messenger*, whose career at the SDACC office spans three presidents, characterizes Jackson as a capable, decisive and sure leader, but above all, fair—one who listens to all sides of a debate. “He makes an effort to connect with everyone in the office when he is there,” she states. “We love our president. It was devastating to find out that he’s leaving. But we think he’ll do great.”

“NAD members and leaders will be in for a surprise”, says Rajah, who has served for the past seven years with Jackson on the SDACC Committee. “If committees or people think they can stifle the mission of the church through man-made traditions, archaic policies, political agendas and irrelevant procedures, watch out!”

Rajah, who admits to differing on several occasions with Jackson, is nonetheless resolute in his praise. Jackson leads by influence, not authority, and at the end of the day, whether they’ve clashed or not, they walk away good friends, Rajah states. “What I’ve learned a lot about from Dan is humility,” as he offers a prized missive from Jackson—a harbinger of inclusiveness, a gesture of humble grace:

*Hey Eric,*

*I am just now getting to responding to some of the greetings I received last week. Both of us continue to shake our heads at what has happened. I do want to thank you for your leadership in the great compassionate cause that is “A Better World.” Eric, you have taught me so much about caring for other people. Thank you for putting up with the slow processes of the church and for your constant focus on “doing things better.” Both you and Ray [Loxdale, another key member of A Better World] have been a huge blessing to me and*

*will continue to be. I think that you need to be seen and heard on a broader level, so don’t think that you are getting out of anything. Thanks again for your greeting. God bless you, Eric... Dan ■*

## Notes

1. A Better World is a privately-funded humanitarian organization established by Eric Rajah and Brian Leavitt in 1990. Run entirely by more than 1,400 volunteers, the model provides seed money and staff support to projects that are structured to become self-sustaining. Though 98 percent of ABW’s members are not Adventists, 100 percent of them regularly stayed for Jackson’s spiritual reflections after their daily debriefings when the SDACC president participated in six ABW trips. ABW and the Kendu Bay, Kenya project, one of 47 around the globe, were profiled by Adventist Review as the April 5, 2001, cover story.

**Lynn McDowell** writes from Angwin, California. She served on the church board when Jackson pastored at Canadian University College Church. She was also young enough to look up to and remember him as a restless teenager at Edmonton Central Church.

## Yes, Creation Affirms a Literal Reading of Genesis

BY LAWRENCE T. GERATY

THIS ARTICLE IS the final report on the series of presentations on creation made in Atlanta, Georgia, under the auspices of the Geoscience Research Institute (GRI) during the Fifty-ninth Session of the General Conference of SDAs. (Three reports on the series appeared on the *Spectrum* website and are viewable there.)

As a general rule the presentations

were long on assertions and short on evidence. The point of the series, as Charles Scriven opined on the *Spectrum* blog, was simply to review “what we believe and why we believe it.”

The most comprehensive presentation was by Richard Davidson who answered the question, “Does Genesis Really Teach a Recent, Literal, Seven-Day Creation Week and a Global Flood?” To no one’s surprise, his answer was in the affirmative in each case.

JoAnn Davidson and Rahel Davidson Schafer both dealt with God’s care for animals—something that the theory of evolution would call into question.

Nikolaus Satelmajer and Rollin Shoemaker emphasized the relationship of the Sabbath doctrine to Creation, emphasizing that the Sabbath was created for the benefit of humanity. John Baldwin dealt with the question of why a good God permits evil. Two scientists employed by the Geoscience Research Institute at Loma Linda University spoke on “Lions in the Garden of Eden” and “DNA and Design,” while Southern Adventist University scientist Lee Spencer discussed “How Many Dinosaurs were on the Ark?” and “Paleontology and the Bible: Science in Action.”

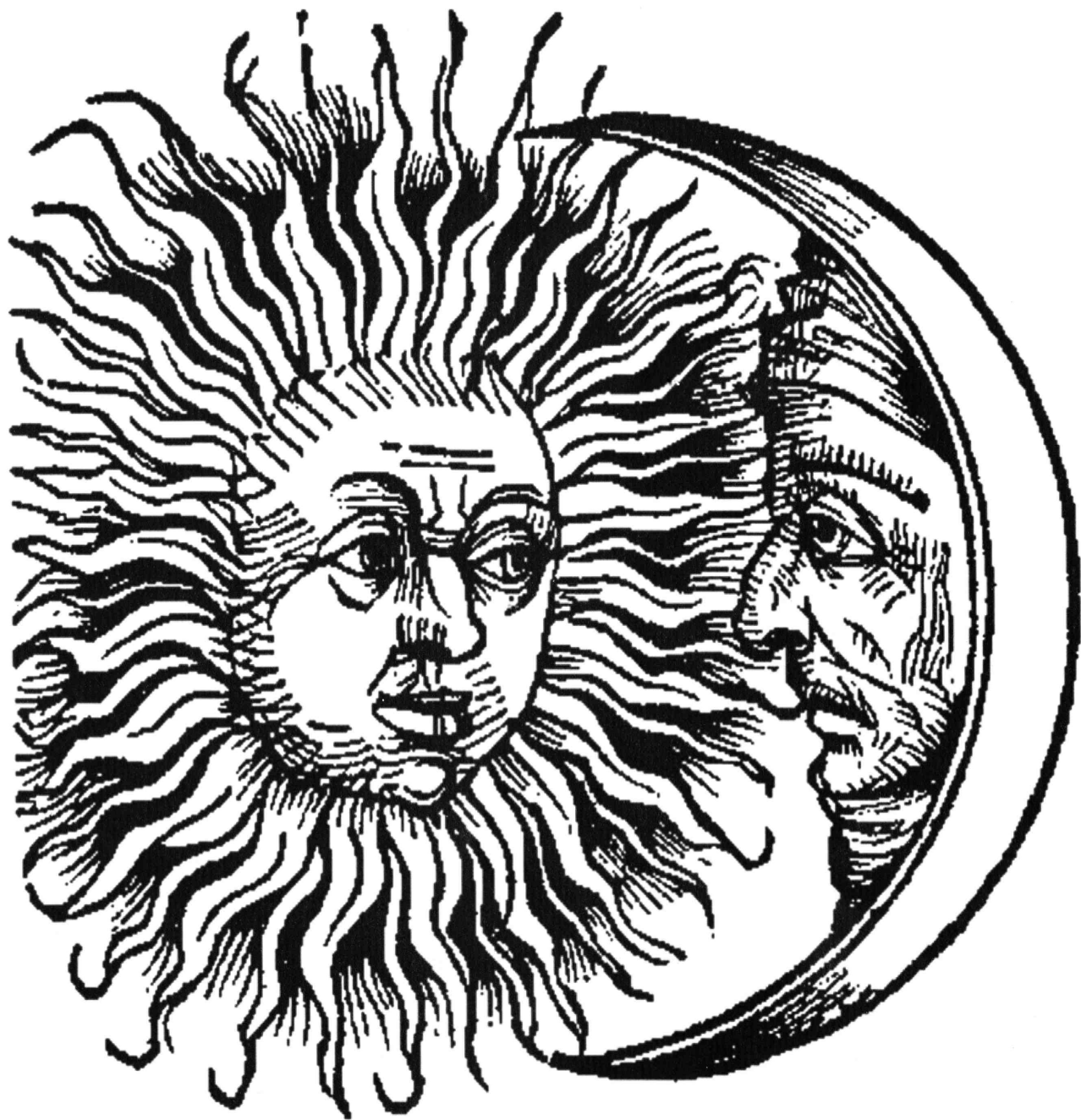
The most unusual presentation came from Kwabena Donkor who talked about the relationship of evolutionary thought to spiritualism and the end of time. After tracing the development of evolutionary thought he claimed that mysticism and pantheism are influencing modern expressions of Christianity such as “the emerging church” and the writings of popular authors such as Richard Foster.

The best attended presentation was

*Continued on page 27...*

...and there was *evening* and there was *morning*, the first day...the second day...the third day...the fourth day...the fifth day...the sixth day...and on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he *rested*...

# BIBLE



# BEGINNINGS

# The Meanings of the Beginning | BY SIGVE TONSTAD

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A more auspicious beginning for the seventh day than the one that is put forward in the first book of the Bible is hard to imagine: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation" (Gen. 2:1–3). Accepting that the seventh day makes a spectacular entry, it is well to ask whether the first impression will be sustained once we look more closely at the text, the context, and the meanings that we might infer concerning the seventh day in the Creation account.

## First Impressions

In the compact verses in Genesis the writer's claims with respect to the seventh day fairly stumble over each other, one assertion surpassing the next, appearing to endow the seventh day with an enchanting aura of distinction. First of all, the writer does not hang the seventh day on nothing, nor is the writer content merely to anchor the seventh day to a great occasion in the maze of human history. Instead, Genesis ties it indissolubly to the foundational event of human and creaturely existence.<sup>1</sup> The seventh day is a feature of Creation; indeed, it is the capstone of Creation and comes forth at the dawn of history as the first signifier of the character and meaning of Creation. Second, this Creation must be understood as an achievement that is the exclusive prerogative of God. It features God's sovereign action, engaged in a pursuit for

which there is no corresponding human activity. Third, the seventh day is not introduced accidentally or haphazardly. Rather, the seventh day is an immediate fact of Creation, belonging to it and completing it, a day without which Creation remains in limbo.<sup>2</sup>

The elements of deliberation and purpose are described in two sets of carefully worded pairs. In the first of these pairs, the writer of Genesis states that "on the seventh day God *finished* the work that he had done, and he *rested* on the seventh day" (Gen. 2:2). This is a report of the completion of God's activity without any attribution of significance. In the second pair, Genesis announces that "God *blessed* the seventh day and *hallowed* it" (Gen. 2:3). This reports a specific act concerning the seventh day. Here God marks out the significance of the occasion so as to take the matter of its interpretation into God's own hands. If the first of these pairs is retrospective, the second looks forward, and is an indicator of permanence. By the act of hallowing the seventh day God drives the stake of the divine presence into the soil of human time.

According to the plain reading of the text, the seventh day was given immense prestige from the very beginning. Divine purpose and action are involved in a way that give the seventh day significance far beyond anything situational or temporary. The action of the Creator in the Genesis account brings a degree of distinction to the seventh day that represents a formidable deterrent to denigrating it.

## Assessing the Text and its Context

Just as the seventh day in many ways has become an ideological and theological orphan, so the modern world has lost touch with the text describing the beginning. The sense of looking at an alien thought world applies not just to the way scholars have analyzed and dissected the biblical narrative during the past two centuries. What



has happened to the perception of the biblical text itself is probably less important than the seismic shift in the worldview of its readers. The modern account of evolution speaks of chance, not purpose; it envisions a process without an agent that initiates, guides, and completes it; and it reflects a view of reality in which the seventh day has no meaningful point of contact.

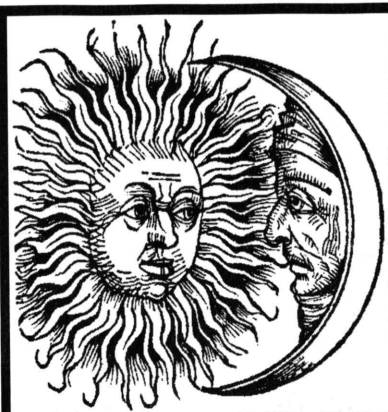
The text itself has also become an object in motion and not a fixed point. Scholars have scrutinized the first five books of the Bible, probing for its nature and origin. The consensus that gradually emerged—and to some extent still prevails—holds that the first five or six books in the Bible derive from several sources, each with its own unique characteristics and each originating at different periods in history. Scholars have attempted to delineate the multiple layers in the finished composition, much like archaeologists excavating a mound try to identify the various strata left behind by the site's inhabitants. Eventually the nameless authors behind the various textual strata have come to be identified by a single letter of the alphabet.

In this reconstruction, known as "the Documentary hypothesis," at least three hands are seen at work in Genesis, designated respectively as J, E, and P. Behind these letters lie characteristics of the imagined author, and between them, at assorted suture lines in the biblical narrative, scholars see the handiwork of anonymous redactors. J, assumed to be the oldest of the primary sources, is known for his fondness for the divine name Yahweh, and the letter J therefore represents the "Yahwist."<sup>3</sup> E, for his part, knows

God primarily as Elohim, and thus is dubbed the "Elohist." P, the more important character in the present context, is seen as a much later person or group with a priestly orientation. In this scheme chronological progression in the Bible story follows a different trajectory and sequence than the composition of the text itself.

As to chronology, the "classic" version, in the view of the influential Old Testament theologian Gerhard von Rad, places the material in the so-called J source at approximately 950 BCE, the E source one or two centuries later, while P is relegated to the time after Israel's Babylonian exile, about 538–450 BCE.<sup>4</sup> Increasingly aware of the complexity and pitfalls of this reconstructive task, however, even von Rad hedges his bets, making the precise timing of the writers less critical, "because they are in every instance only guesses and, above all, because they refer only to the completed literary composition. The question of the age of a single tradition within any one of the source documents is an entirely different matter. The youngest document (P), for example, contains an abundance of ancient and very ancient material."<sup>5</sup>

P is important in the present context because the first mention of the seventh day is frequently attributed to the P source. Then again, P is not all that important, partly because P is no more than a scholarly construction and partly because, even where P is recognized, it is admitted that the alleged P contribution "contains an abundance of ancient and very ancient material."<sup>6</sup> On this logic it is the antiquity of the material, not the role or the time of the mysterious P, that counts.



# 1

**THE SEVENTH  
DAY IS THE  
CAPSTONE OF  
CREATION AND  
COMES FORTH AT  
THE DAWN OF  
HISTORY AS THE  
FIRST SIGNIFIER  
OF THE  
CHARACTER AND  
MEANING OF  
CREATION.**



# 2

THE SEVENTH  
DAY IS AN  
IMMEDIATE FACT  
OF CREATION,  
BELONGING  
TO IT AND  
COMPLETING  
IT, A DAY  
WITHOUT WHICH  
CREATION  
REMAINS IN  
LIMBO.

Other developments tend to lessen further the relevance of these fixtures of Old Testament criticism. A sense of weariness, even futility, has been felt in circles occupied by the pursuit of dating the various parts of the Old Testament. The once neat theory has been shaken by realities that not only affect minor details but many of the underlying assumptions as well. Textual elements once said to belong to one source or period are suddenly found embedded in the wrong layer to the extent that the paradigm threatens to unravel. Such instances have led a few scholars to question the basis for the old theory because the existing scholarly maps are in conflict with the actual textual terrain. Instead of the tendency to see the books of the Bible as a composite of textual fragments welded together into a disparate and incoherent whole, the trend is now to see its unity, or, at the very least, there is a renewed appreciation for the indicators of unity.<sup>7</sup>

In the field of biblical studies the source criticism of the Old Testament, largely a Protestant enterprise, seems to have run its course nearly to exhaustion, doomed equally by a flawed premise and by the fact that it left its proponents with very little to say. Alternative approaches seek to let Scripture speak again in its own voice. Projects useful for the present inquiry are literary approaches that are more attentive to Scriptural narrative,<sup>8</sup> and approaches that treat the Bible as more than a human phenomenon, broadly known as a "canonical" reading of Scripture.<sup>9</sup>

Above all, in the present context, it is indispensable to pay heed to neglected voices of Jewish scholarship. These voices are generally less

burdened by the strictures of Protestant critical scholarship. Jewish students of the Old Testament are also somewhat less likely to judge a text on the basis of its alleged source, and the perception of textual unity is thereby more prevalent in Jewish scholarship. M. H. Segal, for instance, counters the source theory by asserting that "with the exception of some unimportant additions, the book of Genesis is a work of a unitary character composed by one author who derived his materials from the living tradition of his day."<sup>10</sup> Another Jewish scholar immersed in Genesis, Umberto Cassuto, finds Genesis to be a thoroughly integrated piece of literature.<sup>11</sup> Based on his analysis of the first chapter of Genesis, Cassuto traces a network of *heptads*, groupings of "sevens," crisscrossing the story of Creation in such a meticulous design that the compositional unity of the story and its relation to the seventh day seem to be two sides of the same coin.<sup>12</sup> Both of these distinctive features—the seventh day and the related groupings of "sevens" in the composition of the first chapter of the Bible—point to compositional unity, setting the biblical account of Creation apart from other ancient attempts to describe the origin of the world.

While not entirely disparaging of the source hypothesis, Nahum Sarna, who also writes from a Jewish perspective, states that "it is beyond doubt that the Book of Genesis came down to us, not as a composite of disparate elements but as a unified document with a life, coherence and integrity of its own. For this reason, a fragmentary approach to it cannot

provide an adequate understanding of the whole."<sup>13</sup>

Crucial to the argument of scholars who divide the text is the notion that the seventh day is not an ordinance of Creation.<sup>14</sup> In a chapter entitled "The Sabbath in the Old Testament," H. P. Dressler claims that "the Sabbath originated in Israel as God's special institution for His people."<sup>15</sup> The Creation link is severed in this interpretation because the Genesis account is thought to refer only to "the seventh day" and not to the Sabbath.<sup>16</sup> Despite the fact that God *sabbathed* on the seventh day in the words of the text (Gen. 2:2), the verbal counterpart to the noun "Sabbath," the term should not, in the view of Dressler, be taken to mean that God made of the seventh day a Sabbath for humanity.<sup>17</sup> Throughout, the tenor of the argument is to see the Sabbath as something other than the seventh day of Creation.<sup>18</sup> Whatever the seventh day may have been, the reasoning goes, the Sabbath is a later idea, an ordinance of Moses and an obligation enjoined only on Israel. Moreover, the weightier mandate of the Sabbath in the Old Testament is said to derive from the commandment in Exodus rather than from the narrative of God's rest at Creation.<sup>19</sup>

The view summarized above is not a conclusion that rides easily on the back of the biblical narrative. For this outlook to prevail, the reader must tear asunder what the text of Genesis sees as a seamless whole. In the primary account there is no wedge between the seventh day and Creation, and the hallowing of the seventh day at Creation cannot be seen as anything other than the consecration of the Sabbath.<sup>20</sup>

The fact that Genesis leads the biblical narrative, not some other book, is as important as the unity of Genesis. "That the Bible begins with Genesis, not Exodus, with creation, not redemption, is of immeasurable importance for understanding all that follows," writes Terence E. Fretheim.<sup>21</sup> The Old Testament takes as its point of departure *human* beginnings, not the beginning of Israel. Israel figures prominently in the project of restoration with which much of the Old Testament is preoccupied, but the first chapters of the biblical narrative have the broadest conceivable scope.

This scope is universal, affirming the value of the earth and all its inhabitants without regard for ethnicity or nationality (Gen. 1:28–30). Universality is the premise from which the biblical narrative proceeds and the goal to which it

leads. Any attempt at narrowing this scope yields a truncated reading. Rolf Knierim speaks cogently against the tendency to take a narrow, Israel-centered view.

*If Yabweh is not, in principle and before everything else, the God of all reality, he cannot be the one and only God because he is not God universal. Yabweh may be Israel's God in oneness and exclusivity, but if he is not Israel's God because he is first of all God of all reality and of all humanity, he is a nationalistic deity or an individualistic idol, one among others, actually a no-god. Without the critical notion of universality, the affirmation of Yabweh's oneness and exclusivity does not substantiate the affirmation of his true deity.*<sup>22</sup>

With respect to the earliest mention of the seventh day in the Bible (Gen. 2:1–3), it is now possible to summarize important contextual parameters. These are the unity of Genesis, the priority of Genesis over Exodus, and the fact that Creation underlies the entire account, all of which makes the Bible the story of one God and one indivisible humanity. Seeing the seventh day in this broad context makes it clear that it is not solely an Israelite concern. Umberto Cassuto contends that "Scripture wishes to emphasize that the sanctity of the Sabbath is older than Israel, and rests upon all mankind."<sup>23</sup> So closely is the seventh day linked to Creation that to Jon D. Levenson "the text of the Hebrew Bible in the last analysis forbids us to speak of the theology of creation without sustained attention to the sabbatical institution."<sup>24</sup> The reverse is also true: There is no meaningful theology of the seventh day that does not begin with Creation.

Most remarkable, perhaps, is the growing realization that the seventh day leans on nothing else than the Bible for its origin and meaning. This may be called negative evidence, the silence of other sources. Numerous attempts have been made to detect some kind of seventh day precursor in the languages and ruins of the Near East, but to no avail. On this point there is an unusual degree of agreement among the vast majority of scholars. Roland de Vaux, a leading Roman Catholic authority on the ancient Near East, holds that the seventh day goes back to the very beginning of the religion that we find in the Bible.<sup>25</sup> Brevard Childs notes that "there is general agreement that the Sabbath has very early roots in the tradition."<sup>26</sup> John L. McKenzie concurs that "nothing like it is found elsewhere,"<sup>27</sup> that

is, outside the Bible. On the basis of available evidence it does not appear that the other nations of the ancient Near East observed a seventh day. Niels-Erik Andreassen affirms that "so far no Sabbath has been found in extra-biblical sources."<sup>28</sup>

The silence of other records thus leaves the Bible as the main if not the only witness to its origin and meaning, and it is the biblical witness that must guide our appraisal of the seventh day.

## The Meanings of the Seventh Day in the Creation Account

Already upon its first entry in the Bible, the seventh day comes endowed with an imposing portfolio of meanings, embodying notions of purpose, power, and personhood—of relationship, love, and presence. It pronounces the word of blessing on human existence, and this word is in itself forward-looking, speaking of things to come that are not yet fully revealed.

### A Deliberate Act

The Hebrew Bible says that "on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done" (Gen. 2:2). Those who translated the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek were so puzzled by this turn in the text that they unceremoniously wrote that "God finished his work on the *sixth* day" (Gen. 2:2, LXX), an editorial twist that goes well beyond the accepted rules of translation. Only a few scholars note the solemnity in the text—and the astonishment that ought to follow. John Skinner writes that the seventh day is introduced "with unusual solemnity and consciousness of language," noting also that "the writer's idea of the Sabbath and its sanctity is almost too realistic for the modern mind to grasp."<sup>29</sup> Aware that the seventh day is a "first" in the Bible and a remarkable first at that, Gordon J. Wenham notes that the seventh day "is the very first thing to be hallowed in Scripture, to acquire that special status that belongs to God alone. In this way Genesis emphasizes the sacredness of the Sabbath."<sup>30</sup>

If the seventh day comes as a surprise, it is only one of a litany of surprises in the biblical account of Creation. Unlike the Babylonian creation epic, the biblical story does not have what scholars call a *theogony*, a story of how the gods came into existence. The biblical account begins with God, prior to whom is nothing. God is the beginner and the One who brings everything else into existence. Cassuto writes that

[t]hen came the Torah and soared aloft, as on eagles' wings, above all these notions. Not many gods but One God; not theogony, for a god has no family tree; not wars of strife or clash of wills, but only One Will, which rules over everything, without the slightest let or hindrance; not a deity associated with nature and identified with it wholly or in part, but a God who stands absolutely outside of it, and nature and all its constituent elements, even the sun and all the other entities, be they ever so exalted, are only His creatures, made according to His will.<sup>31</sup>

Of the things God brings into existence in the account of Creation, then, the seventh day stands apart, charged with the holiness of the Creator in a solemn, deliberate act and a signature statement of God's purpose.

### A Distinctive Prerogative

God has no beginning, but there is also no beginning without God. When the very first sentence of the Bible declares that "in the beginning God *created* . . .," the author employs a word with a specific acting subject. The word for "create," *bārā'*, refers to an attribute that is unique to God. In the Old Testament the verb *bārā'* is never used with any other subject than God, and there is no corresponding human activity.<sup>32</sup> Creation is God's trademark, a statement of copyright that need not fear any competition because there cannot be any. By placing the seventh day as the culminating event of creation, the Bible dismisses offhand any notion that nature accounts for itself. Instead, the wonder of Creation reverberates throughout the biblical consciousness from first to last.<sup>33</sup> "And God said," Genesis repeats again and again, indicating that nothing happens apart from the divine agency (Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26).

Other specifics in the Genesis account set it apart from the outlook of other cultures. The sun was the highest deity in Egypt, Babylon, and Assyria, with other heavenly bodies cast in supporting roles. These cultures credited the origin of the world to visible heavenly objects, but the Bible explicitly repudiates this. Heavenly bodies are not introduced until the fourth day (Gen. 1:14–18). "The sun, the moon and the heavenly bodies are what they are only because the Creator has called them into existence. Their very names, Sun (*Shemesh*) and Moon (*Yareah*), by which Israel's neighbors designate certain gods, are avoided; instead, they are almost contemptuously described as the greater light and the lesser light," writes Walther Zimmer-



li.<sup>34</sup> In the Genesis account the heavenly bodies have no personal qualities, and their function is limited to separating day and night as mere instruments.

Creation, then, is the foundational event of human existence. In a seminal book written in the nineteenth century, John N. Andrews drew the line between Creator and creature, writing that the seventh day "keeps ever present the true reason why worship is due to God....The true ground of divine worship, not of that on the seventh day merely, but of all worship, is found in the distinction between the Creator and his creatures."<sup>35</sup>

A few decades before Andrews' study, the Danish philosopher and theologian Søren Kierkegaard swung his rhetorical axe over the philosophical and theological leaders of his day because they assumed an outsize role for humanity and a lesser role for God. Kierkegaard spoke of "the infinite qualitative difference" between God and human beings, upholding a distinction that is of a similar order as that urged by Andrews.<sup>36</sup> The human side must desist from encroachment into God's domain; it must come to its senses with respect to its limitations; it must talk less and listen more. Picking up on this theme seventy years later, Karl Barth, with an explicit attribution to Kierkegaard, insisted that human beings must come to terms with the fact that "God is in heaven, and thou art on earth." Holding this distinction in the foreground, Barth urged that the relation "between such a God and such a man, and the relation between such a man and such a God, is for me the theme of the Bible and the essence of philosophy."<sup>37</sup> This outlook fits well with the connection between Creation and the seventh day. It is a conclusion

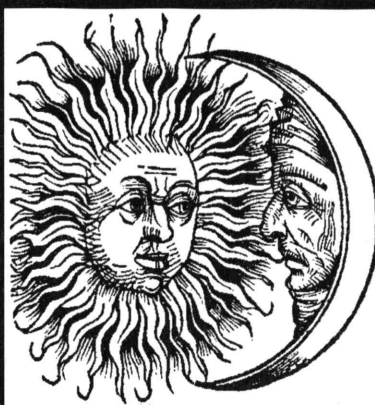
firmly within the bounds of the Genesis account. This affirmation, however, does not stand alone.

### A Sign of Personhood

Genesis says that "God finished the work that he had done" (Gen. 2:2), thus highlighting an aspect of this account that is often overlooked. The account reports both a beginning and a completion. Barth notes that "God does not continue His work on the seventh day in an infinite series of creative acts."<sup>38</sup> The cessation and completion are markers of personhood and of a definite purpose. Extending this thought, Jacques Ellul, the prolific French sociologist and theologian, emphasizes an understanding of Creation that attributes more than a causal role to God. A mere causal function does not have the means to stop the process. "A cause cannot cease to be a cause without ceasing to be," writes Ellul. "It must produce its effects to infinity. God is not a cause, then, for we are told that he decides to rest."<sup>39</sup>

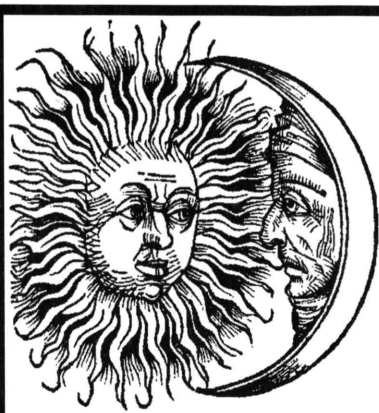
This is a striking observation because hardly anything sets the biblical story apart as much as the thought that God *finished* God's work. Let it be that the first steps in Creation could come about in a variety of ways. Could it be completed? It could be started. Could it be stopped? It could begin. Could it be finished? If other explanations might suffice to get a creative process started, the biblical account makes it clear that the process had a purpose in mind and could be halted when that purpose had been fulfilled.

The Bible says that "the heavens and the earth were finished....And on



# 3

THE HALLOWING  
OF THE  
SEVENTH DAY  
AT CREATION  
CANNOT  
BE SEEN AS  
ANYTHING  
OTHER THAN  
THE  
CONSECRATION  
OF THE  
SABBATH.



# 4

THE BIBLICAL  
ACCOUNT  
BEGINS WITH  
GOD, PRIOR  
TO WHOM  
IS NOTHING.  
GOD IS THE  
BEGINNER AND  
THE ONE  
WHO BRINGS  
EVERYTHING  
ELSE INTO  
EXISTENCE.

the seventh day God finished the work that he had done" (Gen. 2:1–2). These words make the idea of finishing stand out in bold print. It represents a picture of Creation that has no parallel. The seventh day speaks of a completed work to highlight that God had a definite, limited design in mind. From beginning to end the events of Creation bear the marks of momentous decisions, and the entire narrative is driven by a vigorous sense of deliberation and purpose, exemplified especially in the creation of human beings. "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.' So God created man, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:26–27). Mere chance could not direct creation toward such heights, nor was such a possibility seriously proposed until recently.

Ellul's observation shows that God's personhood lies at the heart of this account. A person is at work. An impersonal power would not be free to terminate the process. The impact of the seventh day stands out more by the fact that God completed God's work than by what was begun. While God's *power* certainly is the implied premise of Creation, the rest on the seventh day serves as an expression of God's personhood more than of God's infinite power.

## A Relational Marker

The recognition of God's personhood in the Creation account and in the hallowing of the seventh day leads to a fourth inference. The text says that God *sabbathed*. Most English versions say that God "rested" (Gen. 2:2). "Resting," however, conveys an aura of passivity that seems anticlimactic in this

context, and it is a word that does not precisely capture the original idea. It has been shown repeatedly that the word "desisted" or "ceased" is a better fit, and either of these words have a richer connotation.<sup>40</sup> A suggestive mental picture is one of arrival: a ship gliding into the harbor after a long voyage, a train coming to a halt at a station. The meaning of ceasing is better appreciated by keeping in mind what went before it. In addition to the transition from activity to quietude, there is the expectancy of one person longing to see the other. If resting has the connotation of a car that has been parked, ceasing shows the moment of arrival itself. In the context of the creation account the ceasing points to the joy of being with someone.

The relational implication of the seventh day is often overlooked, dwarfed by the tendency to prioritize God's power, sovereignty, and majesty as more representative features of Creation. Power and sovereignty are attributes of God, but from God's side it is not power that is projected most forcefully in the institution of the seventh day. When God ceases the work of creating, hallowing the seventh day, we see God coming into an enduring relationship with Creation. "By resting on the seventh day, God is thereby shown to have entered into the time of the created order," says Fretheim.<sup>41</sup> Intimacy threatens to eclipse majesty in this scenario; at the very least we are led to see God's desire for intimacy in the seventh day to the point that God's awesome power and majesty are veiled and held in the background so as not to intimidate human approach.

There is a need to take this insight a step further because theological tradition has so one-sidedly stressed divine

majesty that the relational element is rarely seen. Perceiving the seventh day as a relational marker enriches the theology of Creation, promising to rectify the distortion in which the emphasis on sovereignty implies detachment. Jürgen Moltmann grapples with the neglected side that is brought to view in the seventh day, suggesting that “the God who rests in the face of his creation does not dominate the world on this day: he ‘feels’ the world; he allows himself to be affected, to be touched by each of his creatures. He adopts the community of creation as his own milieu.”<sup>42</sup> Humility does not negate majesty, and the self-emptying intimation in the seventh day does not reduce divine sovereignty to nothing, but humility and self-emptying are nevertheless the bigger surprises, the most unexpected and also the most neglected features baked into the seventh day in the Creation account. As Michael Welker notes, “the creating God is not only the acting God, but also the reacting God, the God who responds to what has been created.”<sup>43</sup> The seventh day has an interactive character and intent, too, incarnating God in the ongoing experience of human beings.

### An Expression of Love

God’s ceasing on the seventh day calls for a fifth observation that probes into the motive behind Creation and the seventh day. What could be the motive for the seventh day and the great ceremony surrounding its introduction? Karl Barth writes perceptively that the characteristic of God that is revealed “in the rest of the seventh day is His love.”<sup>44</sup>

What would lead God to set a limit to creative activity and to mark the occasion by the hallowing of the seventh day? Clearly, if by ceasing the Creator stoops to the level of the creatures because God’s love “does not seek its own” (1 Cor. 13:5, NKJV), “is not self-seeking” (NIV), or “never seeks its own advantage” (NJB), one cannot avoid the impression that the love revealed is recognizable even in the currency of contemporary notions of love. The beings whose existence is celebrated in the rest of the seventh day are enormously significant to God. Indeed, “the reason why He refrains from further activity on the seventh day is that He has found the object of His love and has no need for any further works.”<sup>45</sup>

This is a staggering thought. On the one hand, God’s love thus expressed magnifies human value, showing forth in bold print the worth of human beings to God. On the other hand, the seventh day thus understood

brings God’s love into focus at Creation, placing love at the front and center of God’s character and activity from the very beginning. In the New Testament John makes love the centerpiece of his description of God. “Whoever does not love, does not know God,” he writes, “for God is love” (1 John 4:8). In the light of the seventh day at Creation, however, the proposal that “God is love” should not be seen as a late disclosure. Love is God’s defining attribute from the beginning. From first to last love is the wellspring from which all other actions radiate and around which all else coalesces.

According to the testimony of Genesis, and as noted in Barth’s remarkable statement, what is most important to know about God at Creation is that God is love. The seventh day signifies what is most essential to know about God. Therefore, right from its debut the seventh day is not a peripheral afterthought. God ceases from working in order to enjoy the company of the person God has created, suggesting that the seventh day speaks as much about the value of human beings to God as of God’s valuation of human life. What lies in the foreground of the seventh day’s first mention in the Bible is God’s gift, not human obligation. It is as if we hear God speaking, “I am ceasing on the seventh day not only that you may acknowledge and love me, but in order to make it known that I recognize and love you.”

### An Affirmation of Presence

Where theologians have struggled to agree on a unified theme in the Old Testament, they have often seemed like the blind men attempting to describe the shape of an elephant, each mistaking their part for the most important clue to the whole. While most of the proposals have merit as descriptions of significant themes, the suggestion that the Old Testament favors a theology of presence deserves particular distinction. More than anything else, faith in Yahweh means trust in the divine presence. On this point Edmond Jacob writes that “it is not the idea of eternity which is primary when the Israelites pronounce the name Yahweh, but that of presence.”<sup>46</sup> Samuel Terrien holds that “[t]he reality of the presence of God stands at the center of biblical faith.”<sup>47</sup> He adds that the divine presence “is always elusive,”<sup>48</sup> but this qualification can be left for later. It is the idea of presence that needs to be noted at this point, partly because it stands in contrast to the prevailing sense of

God's absence, but mostly because the reality of God's presence lies at the heart of the divine ceasing on the seventh day.

In setting the seventh day apart, we do not see God standing at a distance from Creation, winding up the clock and then leaving things to take their own course. The God of the seventh day is a near and present God, a Person who is committed to Creation and One who is involved in Creation up close and personal.<sup>49</sup> Presence is a primary idea because in Genesis history begins with God's presence, and the reality of divine presence is emphatically affirmed in the seventh day. The universal question—Who are we?—often gets this answer: We are the result of chance, and there is no one there to whom we can turn or to whom we may attribute our existence. Yet the seventh day answers: We are created in the image of God. We are not the product of accident, and we are not "orphans in a world of no tomorrows," as Joan Baez once sang.

### A Day of Blessing

The solemn words that confer a unique status on the seventh day in Genesis "contain the idea of selection and distinction."<sup>50</sup> Wenham finds it paradoxical that "the day on which God refrains from creative activity is pronounced blessed," concurring, however, that the blessing on the seventh day makes it a blessing to those who come under its sphere of influence.<sup>51</sup> This is a key point: Skinner explains that "[a] blessing is the utterance of a good wish; applied to things, it means their endowment with permanently beneficial qualities."<sup>52</sup> Viewed in this light, "the Sabbath is a constant source of well-being to the man who recognises its true nature and purpose."<sup>53</sup>

Blessing, therefore, stands in the foreground, closely intertwined with God's love and God's presence that are part and parcel of the seventh day. Moreover, "foreground" is meant literally because the seventh day—bringing the full measure of God's presence, love, and blessing—marks the beginning of human existence in Genesis. Barth observes that the seventh day does not come at the end of a week of toil and labor for human beings as though its primary purpose is to offer a measure of respite after days of toil. Rather, since "God's seventh day was man's first,"<sup>54</sup> the seventh day sets life's priority for human beings in the most tangible way. Better yet—and much closer to the point—the seventh day brings to view God's priorities. Seeing that

human time "begins with a day of rest and not a day of work,"<sup>55</sup> the spiritual pursuit, living life in a relationship with the Creator that is mutually meaningful, stands out as the primary meaning in life.

Abraham Joshua Heschel, the Jewish theologian, educator, and philosopher, disavows a theology of the seventh day that places it within a utilitarian framework, that is, seeing the seventh day as a day of rest that follows work, allowing the batteries to be charged in order that more work may be done. To our minds rest follows work and is necessitated by work. But "to the biblical mind," writes Heschel, "the Sabbath as a day of rest, as a day of abstaining from toil, is not for the purpose of recovering one's lost strength and becoming fit for the forthcoming labor. The Sabbath is a day for the sake of life."<sup>56</sup> This highlights a notion of blessing to which modern life has become a stranger and one which only a sustained process of rehabilitation will remedy.

### A Sign of Revelation

The first seventh day must be seen as an expression of God's view and decision, irrespective of any human response. Skinner writes that the Sabbath "is not an institution which exists or ceases to exist with its observance by man; the divine rest is a fact as much as the divine work, and so the sanctity of the day is a fact whether man secures the benefit or not."<sup>57</sup> He can say this because the text we are exploring is descriptive of what God does, and not explicitly prescriptive as to what human beings ought to do. "The first Sabbath is cosmic, only hinting at what its significance will be to man," says Shimon Bakon.<sup>58</sup> The Genesis account of the seventh day is written in the indicative and there is no imperative attached to it.<sup>59</sup> Whether or not human beings will join God in God's rest can only be anticipated and argued tentatively. Where the seventh day is conceived as a human obligation, it might show how important God is for human life and for the meaning of existence. When, on the other hand, the seventh day is left to speak from the concise scaffolding of its first mention in the text in Genesis, the seventh day tells of the importance of human beings to God, and its primary message is not human duty but divine commitment. In its forward-looking stance, the seventh day embodies the notion of revelation. Indeed, its intent to reveal may be the most important member in its portfolio of meanings even though it is also the most subtle. The forward-looking stance intimates a posture of anticipation, and yet the content of



the revelation remains outside the field of vision. God's enduring intention is in view, but it is not fully known.

The Bible says that at the end of the creation week, "God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31). More is implied in this statement than meets the eye. Perceptive Jewish interpreters see it not only as a description of a perfect state, but also a statement that anticipates disruption.<sup>60</sup> "Very good" is an evaluative statement, where "very" suggests that there might be gradations of good, and "good" indicates awareness of its opposite, of what is *not* good, even of evil. As the story in Genesis soon will show, there will also be an opposing view, expressing the opinion that all is not "very good." The meaning of the seventh day is not fully appreciated unless the dissenting voice, too, is heard. In the garden of bliss where the seventh day is first set apart, there is also a serpent. ■

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## Footnotes

1. Rolf Rendtorff (*The Canonical Hebrew Bible: A Theology of the Old Testament*, trans. David Orton [Leiden: Deo Publishing, 2005], 13) says that the Creation account describes "an absolute beginning; there is no previous history."

2. Nahum Sarna (*Genesis* [The JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989], 14) states that "[t]he seventh day is the Lord's Day, through which all the creativity of the preceding days achieves fulfillment."

3. The entire enterprise of source analysis has been driven by German Protestant scholarship. In German the "Yahwist" source becomes "Jah-

wist," and thus the letter J instead of Y.

4. Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis*, 2nd ed., trans. John H. Marks (London: SCM Press, 1963), 23.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*

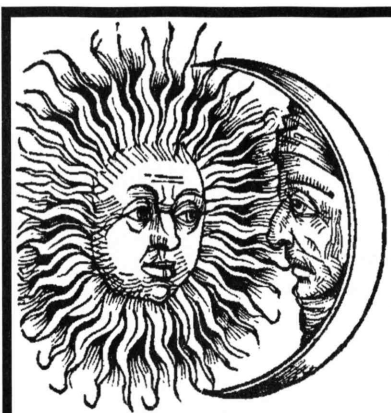
7. One such example is found in Rolf Rendtorff, *Das Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Problem des Pentateuch* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1977). Rendtorff contends for a unitary but late composition.

8. One example of a "unitary reading" that lets the story speak as it stands is found in *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. Robert Alter and Frank Kermode (London: Collins, 1987). In a highly personal evaluation of source criticism and the "Documentary hypothesis," Pamela Tamarkin Reis (*Reading the Lines: A Fresh Look at the Hebrew Bible* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002], 1–14) argues in favor of a unitary reading along lines that guide the present approach.

9. Brevard Childs has been a leading advocate for a "canonical" approach to Scripture, as in *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979). "Canon" as understood in the present context does not envision an arbitrary collection of texts. Rather, as expressed by Samuel Terrien (*The Elusive Presence: Toward A New Biblical Theology* [New York: Harper & Row, 1978; repr. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2000], 32), "the books of the Hebrew Bible and of the New Testament imposed themselves upon Jews and Christians as the regulating standard of their religious commitment and ethical behaviour. Canon was originally not a dogmatic structure imposed from without by institutionalized collectivities but an unspoken force which grew from within the nature of Hebrew-Christian religion."

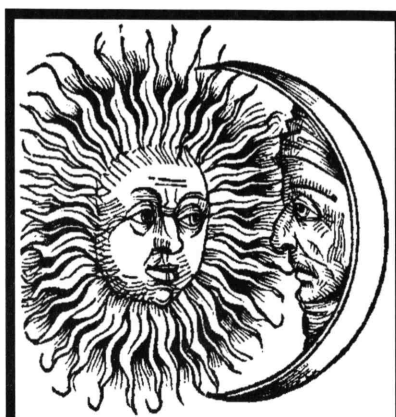
10. M. H. Segal, "The Religion of Israel before Sinai," *JQR* 52 (1961): 46. Segal concludes that "the book of Genesis embodies the living traditions of Israel in Egypt, and may well be a work of the Mosaic age and of the great prophet and legislator himself" (p. 48).

11. Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, Part I, trans. Israel Abrahams



# 5

WHEN GOD  
CEASES  
THE WORK OF  
CREATING,  
HALLOWING  
THE SEVENTH  
DAY, WE SEE  
GOD COMING  
INTO AN  
ENDURING  
RELATIONSHIP  
WITH CREATION.



# 6

KARL BARTH  
WRITES  
PERCEPTIVELY  
THAT THE  
CHARACTERISTIC  
OF GOD  
THAT IS  
REVEALED  
“IN THE  
REST OF THE  
SEVENTH DAY IS  
HIS LOVE.”

(Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1961); *idem*, *The Documentary Hypothesis and the Composition of the Pentateuch*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1961). In the latter book Cassuto offers a synopsis of his more extensive work in Italian disputing the main pillars of the Documentary Hypothesis.

12. Cassuto, *Genesis*, 12.

13. Sarna, *Genesis*, xviii. Tamarkin Reis (*Reading the Lines*, 15–26) finds the apparent disparity between what is generally thought to be two stories of creation as analogous to the same story being told from two different perspectives and not necessarily by two different authors.

14. Thus, D. A. Carson (“Introduction,” in *From Sabbath to Lord’s Day*, 16) states, “We are not persuaded that Sabbath keeping is presented in the Old Testament as the norm from creation onward.” A. T. Lincoln (“From Sabbath to Lord’s Day: A Biblical and Theological Perspective,” in *From Sabbath to Lord’s Day*, 346) confirms that the decision with regard to whether the Bible anchors the Sabbath in Creation “will be of paramount importance to the argument about the relation between Sabbath and Sunday.”

15. H. P. Dressler, “The Sabbath in the Old Testament,” in *From Sabbath to Lord’s Day*, 23.

16. Dressler (“The Sabbath in the Old Testament,” 28) faults an interpretation that another eye, differently conditioned and motivated, will see as the most natural. “Unless the reader equates ‘the seventh day’ and ‘Sabbath,’ there is no reference to the Sabbath here.” Likewise, von Rad (*Genesis*, 60) professes that “nothing at all is said” in the Genesis account of Creation about an enduring Sabbath ordinance. Claus Westermann (*Genesis 1–11*, trans. John J. Scullion [London: SPCK, 1984], 237) claims not to find here “an institution, and not even a preparation for the Sabbath, but rather the later foundation of the Sabbath is reflected in these sentences.”

These views, I suggest, have more to do with how the text is heard than with what is said.

17. Thus Dressler (“The Sabbath in the Old Testament,” 28) states, “There is no direct command that the seventh day should be kept in any way.”

18. *Ibid.*, 27–30.

19. Lincoln (“From Sabbath to Lord’s Day,” 343–412) quite consistently uses “the Mosaic Sabbath” as the preferred designation of the seventh day in his discussion of the subject.

20. As will be explored more in-depth later, the rationale for the Sabbath in the Exodus account of the Ten Commandments is that “in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it” (Exod. 20:11).

21. Terence E. Fretheim, *God and the World in the Old Testament: A Relational Theology of Creation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), xiv.

22. Rolf Knierim, *The Task of Old Testament Theology: Substance, Method and Cases* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 14.

23. Cassuto, *Genesis*, 64.

24. Jon D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994 [1988]), 100.

25. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, vol. 2, trans. John McHugh (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), 479. de Vaux, accepting the paradigm of source criticism, finds the seventh day in all “layers”: “It is mentioned in the Elohist Code of the Covenant (Ex 23:12), in the Yahwistic Code (Ex 34:21), in the two redactions of the Ten Commandments (Dt 5:12–14 and Ex 20:8–10), and in the Priests’ Code (Ex 31:12–17), i.e. in all the traditions of the Pentateuch” (p. 479).

26. Brevard Childs, *The Book of Exodus* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), 414.

27. John L. McKenzie, *A Theology of the Old Testament* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1974), 79.

28. Andreasen, *Rest and Redemption*, 23; cf. *idem*, *The Old Testament Sabbath: A Tradition-Historical Investigation* (SBLDS 7; Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature, 1972); *idem*, “Recent Studies of the Old Testament Sabbath: Some Observations,” *ZAW* 86 (1974): 453–469.

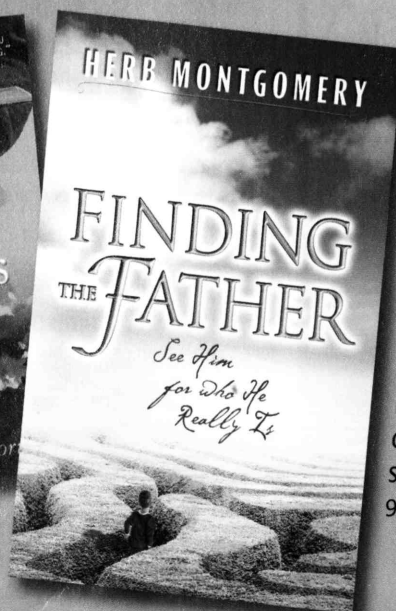
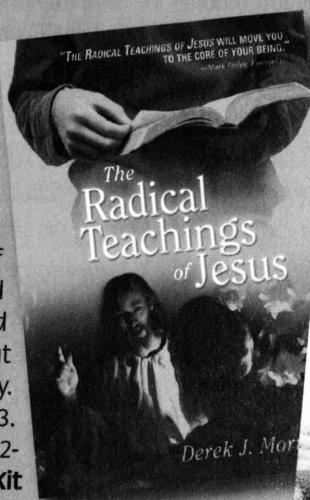
29. John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1910), 35.

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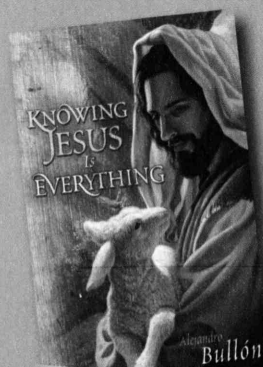
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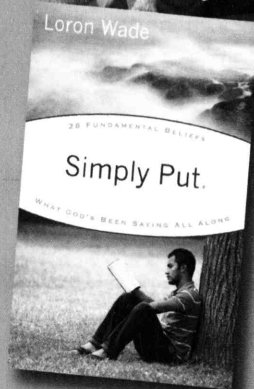
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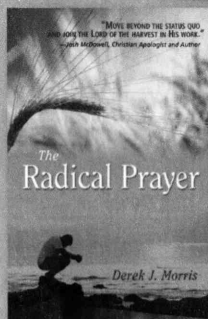
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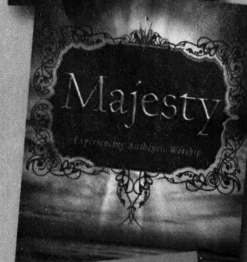
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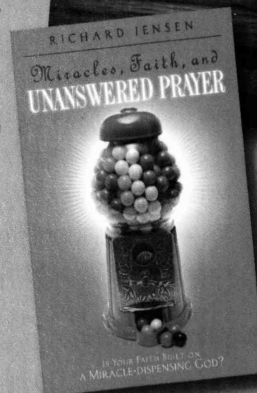
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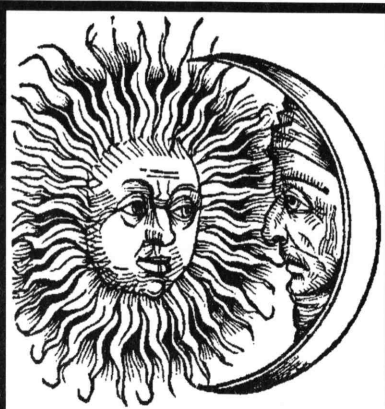
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# 7

THE  
SEVENTH DAY  
TELLS OF THE  
IMPORTANCE  
OF HUMAN  
BEINGS  
TO GOD, AND ITS  
PRIMARY  
MESSAGE IS NOT  
HUMAN DUTY  
BUT DIVINE  
COMMITMENT.

30. Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15* (WBC; Waco: Word Books, 1987), 36.

31. Cassuto, *Genesis*, 8.

32. Walther Zimmerli, *The Old Testament and the World*, trans. John J. Scullion (London: SPCK, 1976), 22; cf. Thomas J. Finley, "Dimensions of the Hebrew Word for 'create' (*bārā'*)," *BSac* 148 (1991): 409–423.

33. While scholars agree that the Hebrew *bārā'*, "to create," is only used with God as the subject, there is considerable debate as to the meaning of God's creative activity. Is it creation *ex nihilo*, making the world out of nothing, or does it point to God's ordering of chaos? Levenson (*Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 3, 47) claims that "we can capture the essence of the idea of creation in the Hebrew Bible with the word 'mastery'" rather than creation out of nothing. This debate has had profound implications for Jewish understanding of the reality of evil, as we shall see in the next chapter.

34. Zimmerli, *Old Testament and the World*, 23.

35. John N. Andrews, *History of the Sabbath and First Day of the Week*, 3rd ed. (Battle Creek: *Review and Herald*, 1887 [repr., Sunfield, MI: Family Health Publications, 1998]), 515.

36. Søren Kierkegaard, *Practice in Christianity*, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991 [org. Danish version 1848]), 131.

37. Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 6th ed., trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns (London: Oxford University Press, 1968 [1933]), 9–10. Barth's position on this point is first articulated in the preface to the second edition in 1921.

38. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. III, part 2, *The Doctrine of Creation*, trans. Harold Knight, G. W. Bromiley, J. K. S. Reid, and R. H. Fuller (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1960), 457.

39. Jacques Ellul, *What I Believe*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 153.

40. S. R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis* (London: Methuen & Co., 1904), 18; Skinner, *Genesis*, 37. This view is strengthened greatly by etymological considerations. Gnana Robinson ("The Idea of

Rest in the Old Testament and the Search for the Basic Character of the Sabbath," *ZAW* 92 [1980]: 42) finds that the root *šbt* "has the basic meaning of 'coming to an end' and in the non-sabbatic context it is never attested in the sense of 'rest from labour.'"

41. Fretheim, *God and the World in the Old Testament*, 63.

42. Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press, 1985), 279.

43. Michael Welker, *Creation and Reality*, trans. John F. Hoffmeyer (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 10.

44. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. III, part 1, *The Doctrine of Creation*, trans. J. W. Edwards, O. Bussey, and Harold Knight (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1958), 215.

45. Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III.1, 215.

46. Edmond Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament*, trans. Arthur W. Heathcote and Philip J. Allcock (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1958), 52.

47. Terrien, *The Elusive Presence*, xxvii.

48. *Ibid.*

49. Thus Gerhard von Rad (*Old Testament Theology*, vol. 1, trans. D. M. G. Stalker [London: SCM Press, 1975], 148) states: "It would be sheer folly to regard this resting of God's which concluded the Creation as something like a turning away from the world by God; it is in fact a particularly mysterious gracious turning towards his Creation."

50. Skinner, *Genesis*, 38.

51. Wenham, *Genesis*, 36.

52. Skinner, *Genesis*, 38.

53. *Ibid.*

54. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III.2, 457.

55. *Ibid.*, 458.

56. Heschel, *The Sabbath*, 14.

57. Skinner, *Genesis*, 35.

58. Shimon Bakon, "Creation, Tabernacle and Sabbath," *JBQ* 25 (1997): 84.

59. Andreassen, *Rest and Redemption*, 75.

60. Pinchas Kahn, "The Expanding Perspectives of the Sabbath," *JBQ* 32 (2004): 243.



the one by the new GC President, Ted Wilson, titled "God's Literal, Six-Day Creation—The Church's Position." Wilson concluded that the reason we are SDAs is to remember who our Creator is, so the Sabbath is crucial to who we are; we hold to a literal creation because of the three angels' messages in Revelation. He stated specifically that "our position is based on a literal reading of Genesis," and that the church's sixth fundamental belief statement needs to include the following wording: "literal, recent six days" and "global flood." In the question period that followed, Wilson was asked if he would in the future set up yearly programs for scientists to get together and have discussion. He responded that GRI provides such opportunities, including field study tours, as does his Faith and Science Council, but that he would, indeed, look for more engagement with teachers especially.

Two presentations were also made by knowledgeable non-specialists; four, by GRI staff scientists; two, by scientists teaching in SDA higher education; and two, by popular conservative theologians associated with the General Conference.

After attending virtually all of the Yes, Creation! presentations, let me close with a few observations of my own:

1. Thanks are in order to Tim Standish and the GRI for a very helpful series of pertinent talks. I could have hoped for more diversity of Adventist views such as took place at the Denver Science and Religion Conferences in 2002–2004, but instead, most conclusions were expectedly traditional; and certainly a church entity has a right to promote its

views. By and large, speakers treated the evidence honestly and respectfully, and that is important if they are to be credible.

2. Since most conclusions were that there are no scientific models helpful to a literal reading of Scripture and that traditional Adventists should not expect any help from science in their search for truth, this raises the issue of the role of GRI, especially in the new Wilson administration, who made clear in his various presentations during the week that all the truth we need we already have in a literalistic interpretation of the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White. I would suggest that since most human beings, even Adventists, are presumably rational in their thinking, just the presence of GRI is an appropriate church attempt to support rationality. And that can certainly be defended!

3. The concerted attempt during the week to bolster a literalistic interpretation of Genesis 1 by setting in motion a process to change the biblical language in Fundamental Belief #6 to an extra-biblical literalistic interpretation of that language with the apparent motivation to rid the church of anyone with a different interpretation cast a pall on those thinkers in the church who are attempting to follow Ellen White's counsel that both books of God's revelation, Scripture and Nature, should shed light on each other. It left us wondering what has happened to the traditional denominational commitment to the concept of "present truth." Again, we are contra Ellen G. White who has told us there is still more to learn!

4. Finally, what is the role of Adventist higher education? Among other goals, I thought it was to help our young people develop their critical faculties so they could stand on their own in any situation and not be merely the "reflectors of the thoughts of others." This requires helping students to look at all the evidence and current interpretations and paradigms, including their pros and cons, their strengths and weaknesses, so students can make up their own minds, guided by the Spirit in a context which is loyal to the church and its teachings. I'm sorry to say I didn't hear anything like that during any of the meetings of the recent General Conference Session. I may be among those consigned to "wandering in the wilderness" for a generation till God can raise up a generation following mine that will take His people into the Promised Land. ■

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**Lawrence T. Geraty** is a retired Near Eastern archaeologist and university president. He is currently executive director of the La Sierra University Foundation, chairs the board of LLBN-TV, chairs the city of Riverside's International Relations Council, serves as a commissioner on the California Post Secondary Education Commission, and is a member of the Adventist Forum Board of Trustees.

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### **If You Want to Know More:**

**For more information** about the Yes,

Creation! conference, please visit

<http://fscsda.org/yearly-meetings/yes-creation>

**For audio recordings** of the presentations from the conference, please go to [www.audio-verse.org/sermons/series/297/yes-creation-.html](http://www.audio-verse.org/sermons/series/297/yes-creation-.html)

**For the full 3-part report** on the General Conference in Atlanta, please visit the author's blog posts at [www.spectrummagazine.org/freetagging\\_nodes/yescreation](http://www.spectrummagazine.org/freetagging_nodes/yescreation)

# FUNDAMENTAL

## Integrating Two Statements

*The motion to reconsider Fundamental Belief #6 reads as follows:*

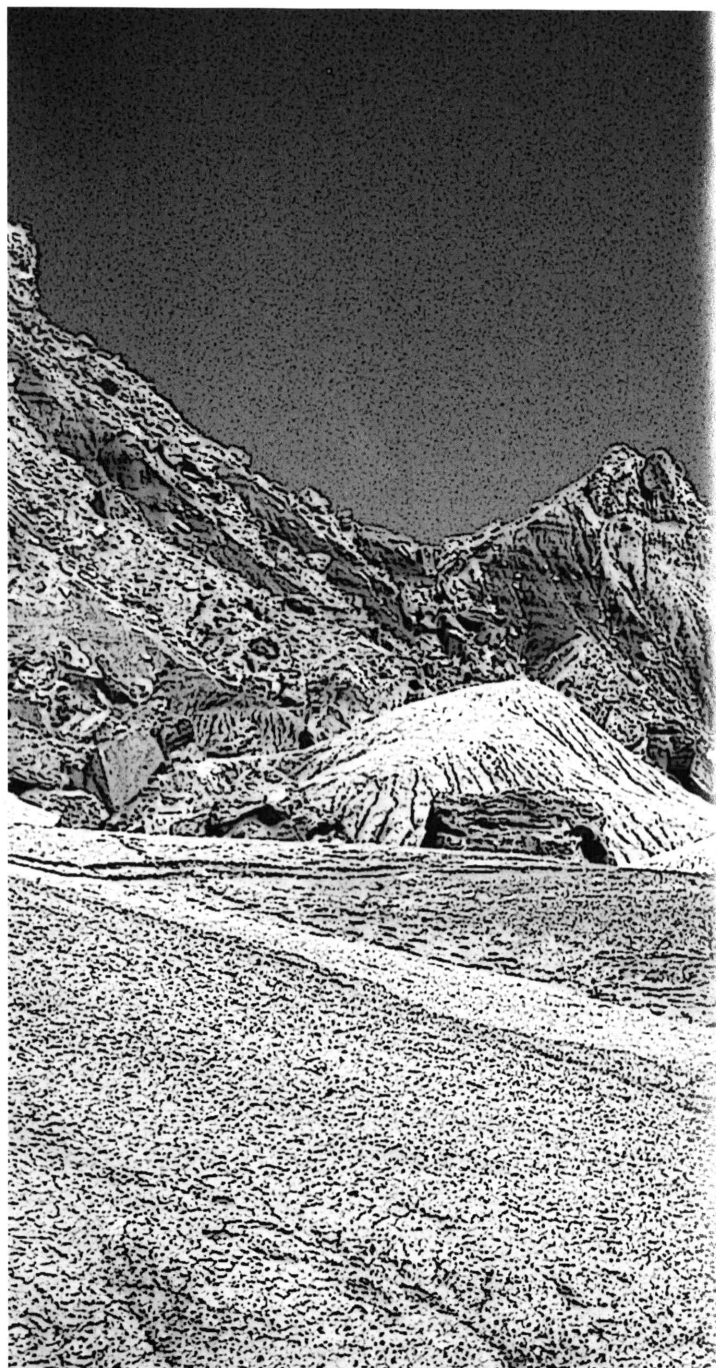
"That the General Conference administration be requested to initiate a process to integrate Fundamental Belief #6 and the reaffirmation of Creation statement, as is provided for in the 2005 General Conference session protocol for amending a fundamental belief."

### **Key Concepts from *Response to an Affirmation of Creation—Reaffirmation***

3. "We affirm the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the historicity of Genesis 1–11: that the seven days of the Creation account were literal 24-hour days forming a week identical in time to what we now experience as a week; and that the Flood was global in nature."

4. "We call on all boards and educators at Seventh-day Adventist institutions at all levels to continue upholding and advocating the Church's position on origins. We, along with Seventh-day parents, expect students to receive a thorough, balanced, and scientifically rigorous exposure to and affirmation of our historic belief in a literal, recent, six-day creation, even as they are educated to understand and assess competing philosophies of origins that dominate scientific discussion in the contemporary world."

<http://adventist.org/beliefs/statements/main-stat55.html>

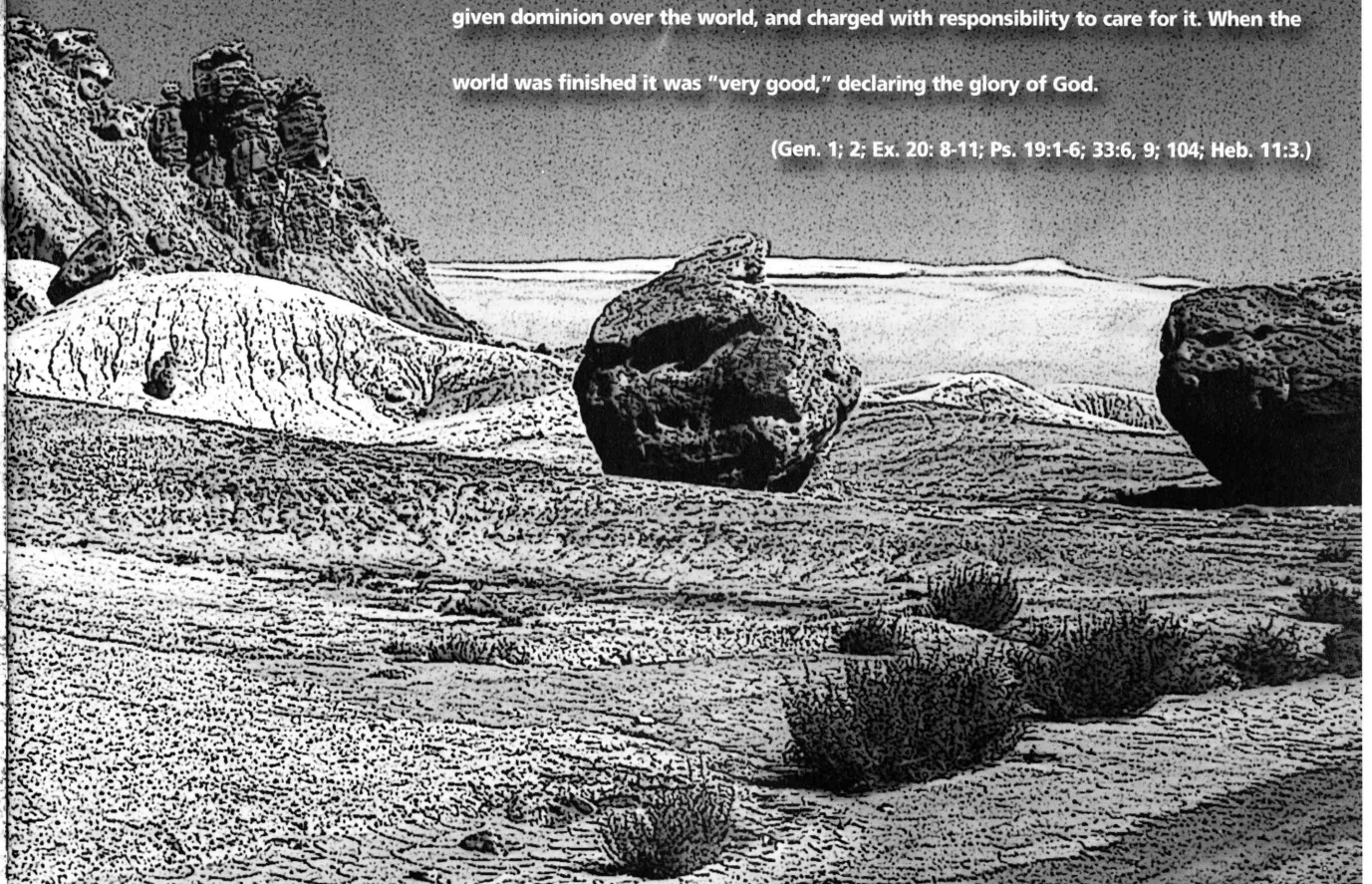


# BELIEF #6 TO BE REVIEWED

## 6. CREATION

God is Creator of all things, and has revealed in Scripture the authentic account of his creative activity. In six days the Lord made "the heaven and the earth" and all living things upon the earth, and rested on the seventh day of that first week. Thus he established the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of his completed creative work. The first man and woman were made in the image of God as the crowning work of Creation, given dominion over the world, and charged with responsibility to care for it. When the world was finished it was "very good," declaring the glory of God.

(Gen. 1; 2; Ex. 20: 8-11; Ps. 19:1-6; 33:6, 9; 104; Heb. 11:3.)



1 GCC(St. Louis)/05GCS to JP

2  
3 152-05GCS PROTOCOL STATEMENT ON ADDITIONS OR  
4 REVISIONS TO THE STATEMENT OF  
5 FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS  
6

7 VOTED, To approve a Protocol Statement on Additions or Revisions to the Statement of Fundamental  
8 Beliefs, which reads as follows:  
9

10 In adding to and/or revising the Statement of Fundamental Beliefs it is imperative to involve the world  
11 church as much as possible in the process. Any suggestion should be based on a serious concern for the well-being  
12 of the world church and its message and mission, be biblically based, and informed by the writings of Ellen G  
13 White. Considering the importance and necessity of involving the world church in the process of additions and/or  
14 revisions to the Statement of Fundamental Beliefs, any suggestion for possible changes should reach the office of  
15 the President of the General Conference not later than two (2) years before a General Conference Session.  
16

17 If the perceived need for additions and/or revisions to the Statement of Fundamental Beliefs is initiated by  
18 the world field, the matter should be carefully discussed at each administrative level. In the evaluation of the  
19 suggested change the governing body at each level shall establish an appropriate process for evaluation, seeking  
20 wide input. The process at each level shall result in the governing body either recommending the proposed change  
21 to the next level of administration, or abandoning any further consideration of it. In this way the recommendation  
22 for changes in the Statement of Fundamental Beliefs arrive at the General Conference. Once the suggestions reach  
23 the General Conference, or if the suggestions originated at the General Conference, it shall appoint an ad hoc  
24 committee to coordinate the process and facilitate the dialogue.  
25

26 The following procedure shall be used by the General Conference in seeking the consensus of the world  
27 church in favor of or against the proposed change:  
28

29 1. The General Conference will coordinate and facilitate the process of discussion through Presidential  
30 and the members of the ad hoc committee.  
31

32 2. A preliminary draft approved by the Spring Meeting or Annual Council will be sent to the Divisions for  
33 reactions and comments. It should be discussed at the Union and Conference/Mission levels and printed in the  
34 local church papers.  
35

36 3. Involve Theology/Religion Departments and Seminaries.  
37

38 4. Discuss it at the Biblical Research Institute Committee and other pertinent committees.  
39

40 5. Publish a draft in the Adventist Review, the Ministry, and place it on the Internet for comments  
41 and reactions from church members.  
42

43 6. The GC ad hoc committee will receive all the suggestions from the world field and prepare the  
44 final draft to be submitted to the Annual Council for further discussion before it is placed on the agenda of the  
45 General Conference Session.  
46

47 7. Only the General Conference in session can approve additions or revisions to the Statement of  
48 Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Contd  
Revised 07-03-05jeu

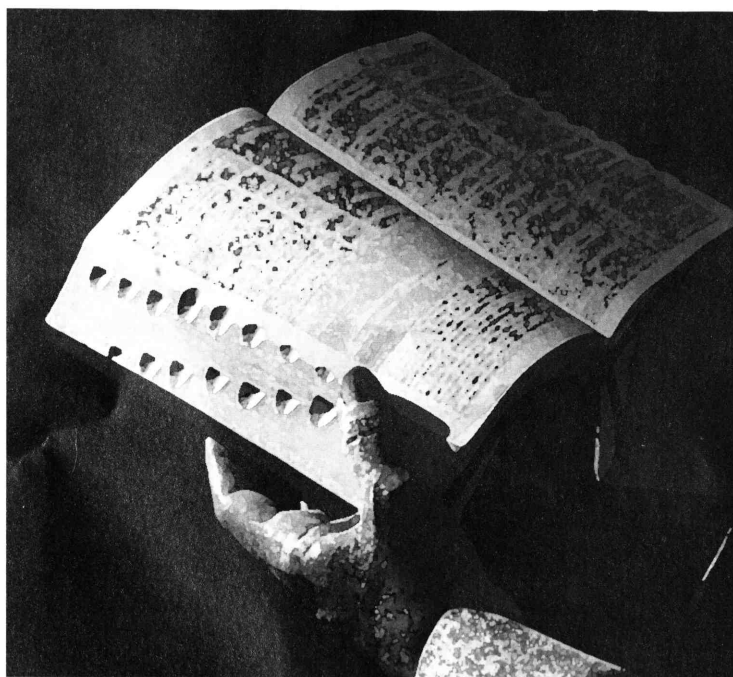


## Adventism's Historic Witness Against Creeds | BY RON GRAYBILL

When God's Word is studied, comprehended, and obeyed, a bright light will be reflected to the world; new truths, received and acted upon, will bind us in strong bonds to Jesus. The Bible, and the Bible alone, is to be our creed, the sole bond of union; and all who bow to this Holy Word will be in harmony. Our own ideas must not control our efforts. Man is fallible, but God's Word is infallible. Instead of wrangling with one another, let men exalt the Lord. Let us meet all opposition as did our Master, saying, 'It is written.' Let us lift up the banner on which is inscribed, The Bible our rule of faith and discipline. — Ellen G. White<sup>1</sup>

Ellen White's declarations that the Bible must be our only creed tempts one to paraphrase the Gettysburg Address. The Seventh-day Adventist Church was apparently conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that the Bible must be its only creed. Today, however, the church may be demonstrating that no church, so conceived and so dedicated, can continue to maintain those principles.

At least since 1980, when the current statement of 27 Fundamental Beliefs (now 28 Fundamental Beliefs<sup>2</sup>) was formally adopted, the church has had a creed. Even before 1980 the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* contained three sets of statements which might be considered "creedal." There was the "Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists," the "Doctrinal Instruction for Baptismal Candidates," and the "Baptismal Vow."<sup>3</sup> Still, those statements were all concise and brief, and were given either specific, limited functions, or a very loose, ambiguous function. For instance, when one looked at the reasons for which church members might be disfellowshipped, one finds that "denial of faith" in the "cardinal doctrines" of the church, or teaching doctrines contrary to the same, were grounds for dismissing members from fellowship.



Still, nowhere were the "cardinal doctrines of the church" officially equated with the summary of the "Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day-Adventists" in the form in which it appeared in the *Manual*.

Another important factor which distinguishes the pre-1980 statements from the type of creed against which Ellen White and our pioneers protested is that earlier statements were not formed to settle controversy or denounce heresy within the church. Indeed, L. E. Froom observes that variant opinions on doctrinal questions were the very reason why, for long periods of time, statements of fundamental belief were omitted from our annual yearbooks.<sup>4</sup>

Earlier Adventist statements of belief had always expressed the broad, general consensus of the church. They had, unlike many creeds, emerged in periods of calms and brotherly agreement, not in periods of suspicion and crisis. There is, of course, no way of knowing whether our

pioneers would approve the statements of faith we have already adopted, or the ways in which the church now seeks to make them more specific and detailed.

The 1980 Fundamental Beliefs represented the first use of creedal formulas to guard any passage beside the fundamental one the door to church membership through baptism. Fritz Guy has admirably described the origins of that statement.<sup>5</sup>

I tried, in 1980, as a delegate to that General Conference, to mitigate the creedal flavor of that statement by proposing the preamble which became a part of it.<sup>6</sup> I scrawled it on a spiral notebook page one night and introduced it on the floor the next day. With very little change, it reads today:

*Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. These beliefs, as set forth here, constitute the church's understanding and expression of the teaching of Scripture. Revision of these statements may be expected at a General Conference session when the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth or finds better language in which to express the teachings of God's Holy Word.<sup>7</sup>*

Originally, I had said in my proposed draft that these statements "can and should be revised," which was changed to "revision of these statements may be expected." The book, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe... A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines*, published by Ministerial Association in 1988, shows just how little that preamble meant to those who were seeking a more stringent creed. In that book, which had chapters on each of the new 27 Fundamental Doctrines, no mention whatever was made of the preamble.

The Adventist witness against creeds goes back to William Miller. F.D. Nichol notes that Miller was not overwhelmed by controversy which arose in the early Advent Movement. Nichol goes on to point out Miller's "keen insight into human nature and his knowledge of church history." Miller knew that in "past ages, when church authority was strong, controversy could sometimes be suppressed and a false appearance of calm be made to prevail. He neither possessed nor desired such authority," Nichol tells us. Miller's own words are then quoted:

*There is no sect or church under the whole heaven where men enjoy freedom or liberty, but there will be various opinions. And our great men, leaders, and religious demagogues have long since*

*discovered [this], and therefore some creeds, bishops and popes. We must then, either, let our brethren have the freedom of thought, opinion and speech, or we must resort to creeds and formulas, bishops and popes.... I see no other alternative.<sup>8</sup>*

Millerites had been cast out of their former churches, not because they were proven wrong from the Bible, but because their beliefs were not in harmony with church creeds. But, unfortunately, the majority of the Millerites themselves, at the Albany Conference in 1845, drew a circle of narrow orthodoxy around their beliefs, excluding those who believed in the seventh-day Sabbath, the visions of Ellen White, and the ordinance of footwashing. That is how Sabbathkeeping Adventists acquired their original antipathy to creeds, an antipathy which echoes down to the present day.

It is little wonder Ellen White later wrote that the "creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils" should not be regarded as evidence for or against "any point of religious faith."<sup>9</sup> Still, the tension between this distrust of creeds and the need for some agreed-upon definition of Adventist doctrine became apparent early. At the organization of the Michigan Conference in 1861, a simple "church covenant" was proposed declaring that those who signed it associated themselves together as a church, took the name Seventh-day Adventist, and covenanted to "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus Christ."

**"We must, then, either let our brethren have the freedom of thought, opinion and speech, or we must resort to creeds and formulas, bishops and popes...I see no other alternative."**

—William Miller

J. N. Loughborough, speaking with the majority, favored the covenant, and did not feel that it meant that Adventists were "patterning after the other churches in an unwarrantable sense." Loughborough, nevertheless, took the occasion to voice his trenchant opposition to creeds:

*The first step of apostasy is to get up a creed, telling us what we shall believe. The second is to make that creed a test of fellowship. The third is to try members by that creed. The fourth is to denounce as heretics those who do not believe that creed. And, fifth, to commence persecution against such.<sup>10</sup>*

About the same time, Loughborough supplied the *Review* with a long list of anti-creedal quotations from various religious figures and ecclesiastical manuals. In one of the many statements, the Puritan divine Richard Baxter noted two things which, down through the ages, have "set the church on fire:"

*First, enlarging our creed, and making more fundamentals than God made; and second, composing, and so imposing, our creeds and confessions in our own words and phrases.<sup>11</sup>*

A landmark in the development of Adventist statements of faith was reached in 1872 when Uriah Smith anonymously authored a pamphlet titled *A Declaration of the Fundamental Principles Taught and Practiced by the Seventh-day Adventists*. Smith's introductory remarks are worth quoting quite fully:

*In presenting to the public this synopsis of our faith, we wish to have it distinctly understood that we have no articles of faith, creed, or discipline, aside from the Bible. We do not put forth this as having any authority with our people, nor is it designed to secure uniformity among them, as a system of faith, but is a brief statement of what is, and has been, with great unanimity, held by them. We often find it necessary to meet inquiries on this subject and sometimes to correct false statements circulated against us, and to remove erroneous impressions which have obtained with those who have not had an opportunity to become acquainted with our faith and practice. Our only object is to meet this necessity. As Seventh-day Adventists we desire simply that our position shall be understood; and we are the more solicitous for this because there are many who call themselves Adventists who hold views with which we can have no sympathy, some of which, we think, are subversive of the plainest and most important principles set forth in the word of God.<sup>12</sup>*

As strong as Smith's disclaimers were, the argument still had a certain ambivalence to it. He did, in fact, intend to secure a measure of uniformity among Adventists through his little pamphlet, at least he hoped to discredit the claims of some who said they were Adventists and yet held views with which Adventists had no sympathy. Still, his statement was an exercise in moral suasion rather than an effort on the part of the church to force the issue through "official" declaration and subsequent enforcement of the statement.

It is interesting to observe that Smith's pamphlet formed the basis for most of the subsequent statements of Adventist belief, and echoes of his language may be found in

many of the statements issued prior to 1980. Compare, for instance, these statements on Scripture:

*Uriah Smith, 1872:*

*That the Holy Scriptures, of the Old and New Testaments, were given by inspiration of God, contain a full revelation of his will to man, and are the only infallible rule of faith and practice.*

*Church Manual, 1976:*

*That the Holy Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament were given by inspiration of God, contain an all-sufficient revelation of His will to men, and are the only unerring rule of faith and practice. (2 Tim. 3:15-17.)*

As time went on, Adventists continued to reflect on the consequences of creeds. In 1874, Uriah Smith listed what he saw as the source of confusion and schism within Protestantism. Three great errors were at fault, he declared. First, a wrong principle of interpretation; second, an effort to bring the Bible to support what we have pre-determined to believe, and third, reforming in part, and then barring the way to all further progress by a human creed. For Smith, this last is perhaps the worst error of all, for it was a step backward toward the spiritual tyranny of Rome.<sup>13</sup>

However, someone may argue, is it necessary to rehash our fundamental beliefs in every generation, to study and discuss without ever being able to freeze anything into an enforceable standard of doctrine? Don't we have some "nonnegotiable" beliefs? Of course there are some irreducible fundamentals in Adventism, but the larger question remains: whether any doctrine, however nonnegotiable and irreducible, ought to be defended and enforced through the decisions of ecclesiastical councils.

In 1879, *The Review* reprinted an article which insisted on the right of every man accused of teaching false doctrines to appeal to the Scripture and be tried by the Scripture; and on the duty of every church which recognizes the Scripture as the only final authority in matters of religious doctrine to test all teaching by Scripture, and be always ready to defend its historic faith from Scripture and abandon whatever in that faith it cannot so defend.<sup>14</sup>

Can we really maintain this noble position once we have asked administrators to evaluate their employees by our creedal statements? Should the church be asserting itself on scientific questions more specifically and more restrictively than the Bible itself does?

Another milestone on the path toward our present position was passed in 1883. The year before, the General Conference had recommended that a committee prepare a church manual. In a gesture of genuine good faith and openness, the proposed manual, containing some 30,000 words, was published serially for discussion and criticism in eighteen *Review and Herald* articles, from June 5 to October 9, 1883. The proposed manual declared that "it should never be regarded as a cast-iron creed to be enforced in all its minor details upon members of the S. D. Adventist church."<sup>15</sup> Even so, the manual idea was defeated at the 1883 General Conference session.

The committee explained why the church turned away from the proposed manual:

*It is the unanimous judgment of the committee, that it would not be advisable to have a Church Manual. We consider it unnecessary because we have already surmounted the greatest difficulties connected with church organization without one; and perfect harmony exists among us on this subject. It would seem to many like a step toward the formation of a creed, or a discipline, other than the Bible, something we have always been opposed to as a denomination. If we had one, we fear many, especially those commencing to preach, would study it to obtain guidance in religious matters, rather than to seek for it in the Bible, and from the leadings of the Spirit of God, which would tend to their hindrance in genuine religious experience and in knowledge of the mind of the Spirit. It was in taking similar steps that other bodies of Christians first began to lose their simplicity and become formal and spiritually lifeless. Why should we imitate them? The committee feels, in short, that our tendency should be in the direction of simplicity and close conformity to the Bible, rather than in elaborately defining every point in church management and church ordinances.<sup>16</sup>*

Late in the 1880s Adventists for the first time read *Review* articles mildly favorable to creeds. L. A. Smith, son of Uriah Smith, wrote on the "Value of a 'Creed,'" but argued not so much for a formal official creed as against the idea that it is immaterial what a person believes so long as he agrees on a few simple basics of Christianity. "If there is anything which Scripture plainly teaches," Smith declared, "it is the importance of possessing a clear and definite faith, or summary of religious beliefs; in short, a 'creed' in harmony with the truths God's word has revealed."<sup>17</sup> Smith did not stress that this had to be something officially enacted by the church—that was not the point at issue in this article.

A year later the younger Smith returned to the same theme, pointing out that in actuality, every person has a creed: "His creed is simply his belief."<sup>18</sup> Obviously, Smith was not using the same definition of "creed" that we are using in this article.

In this atmosphere of renewed interest in creeds, the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* of 1889 carried a statement of the Fundamental Principles of Seventh-day Adventists, offered as an informational statement of consensus. (The statement cropped up again in the *Yearbook* of 1905 and appeared in every edition from 1907 to 1914.)

An outburst of Adventist comment on creeds occurred in early 1890, sparked, apparently, by the bitter and well-publicized struggle then in progress over the revision of the Presbyterian creed.<sup>19</sup>

The discussion began with a reprint in the *Review* of an article by a non-Adventist clergyman, Rev. J. M. Manning. Manning defended the use of creeds. If positive statements of Christian doctrine are neglected, Manning argued, the "descent to religious indifference" is swift—the very opposite of the argument which was advanced in 1883 when the General Conference rejected the proposed church manual. Manning continued:

*Such creeds are a safeguard against error. Having learned them in early childhood, and knowing that they contain the substance of the gospel, we are not deceived by new forms of error constantly springing up around us.... As good businessmen have their familiar tests by which to detect adulterations and counterfeits, so we have in a Christian creed, thoroughly learned and faithfully applied, a ready test by which we may distinguish all false gospels from the true. We know what human doctrines to accept and what ones to reject. We can tell the movements in society about us which are opposed to Christ, and those which are a development of his kingdom. It is needful to our self-respect that we hold some positive religious belief. Indecision makes a man weak, suspicious, untrustworthy.... Our use of that colloquial phrase, "on the fence," shows how we forfeit all title to respect by being without clear and pronounced beliefs.<sup>20</sup>*

*But the larger question remains: whether any doctrine, however non-negotiable and irreducible, ought to be defended and enforced through the decisions of ecclesiastical councils.*

Manning went on to argue how important a creed is for purposes of instruction. It "stimulates the mind to hold a



positive faith; to stand pledged to something which we feel bound to defend, which obliges us to search the Scripture, for the universal acceptance of which we toil and pray." Again, the argument directly opposes the view taken by the General Conference. While the General Conference session saw creeds as a diversion from Scripture, Reverend Manning believed they would lead to a searching of Scripture.

The very next week the *Review* carried a markedly different opinion on creeds, penned by W. A. Blakely, editor of the *American State Papers* and a close associate of Adventist religious liberty workers. Blakely opened with a definition: "Creeds and confessions of faith are the designations given to the authorized or official expressions of the Church at large, or of some denomination or sect of the Church."<sup>21</sup>

Blakely pointed out that creeds naturally spring out of theological arguments and controversies within the church, since there is a "natural inclination of humanity to desire to prevail in an argument," especially where "one party considers that their views are the all-important thing, and at the same time that the views of the other party are extremely dangerous, and ought, by all means, to be suppressed." Then Blakely discussed the various objections to creeds. First, he pointed out that just because the views expressed in the creed are voted by the majority of some council, that does not necessarily make the view correct. "Is the truth," Blakely asked, "to be determined by the votes of a majority in a conference, council or synod, especially when a percentage, sometimes large and sometimes small, do not fully understand the subject under consideration...?" Next, Blakely observed that the tendency of creeds "has invariably been to embitter the controversy, to multiply sects, to suggest and foster intolerance, and to transform persons who are naturally amiable, into acrimonious and malevolent persecutors." Blakely admitted that this language might be strong, but insisted that it was nevertheless true.

Waxing Jeffersonian in eloquence, Blakely asserted that

*just as soon as freedom of thought is hindered, just so soon and to just that extent progress and development are checked. The mind of man is the greatest and most wonderful creation of God. It was created for use.... And whenever any council, synod, conference, presbytery, or ecclesiastical power whatever dictates as to what a person shall believe, or what he shall not believe, that body is assuming prerogatives possessed by no earthly power.*

The path to our current statement of fundamental belief began in 1930, when the African Division requested that a statement of Adventist beliefs be restored to the *Yearbook*, from which it had been absent since 1914.<sup>22</sup> Division leaders wanted something they could present to government officials in countries in which Adventist missionaries sought to work. Thus the statement initially grew out of a need to inform outsiders about our beliefs.

In response to this request, the General Conference Committee appointed a group to prepare such a statement for the *Yearbook*. It was actually, however, Elder F. M. Wilcox who drafted the statement, which was published in the 1931 *Yearbook*.<sup>23</sup> No special committee action authorized the specific wording of the statement. The process was simple and noncontroversial because the statement was a general statement of a broad consensus directed at outsiders. It was not a razor designed to cut a fine line between orthodox and heterodox believers.

A *Church Manual* became a reality the following year, and it included a "suggested" outline for examination of baptismal candidates. In 1941 an Autumn Council approved a Summary of Fundamental Beliefs, and, in 1946, the General Conference assumed jurisdiction over the statement when it declared that it could no longer be changed except at a General Conference session.<sup>24</sup> Step by step, Adventist statements of belief have become ever more formal, ever more official.

Adventist experience with creeds has been so limited that it may be useful to go outside our own denomination for further evidence concerning their effect. In 1976, Harold Lindsell published his militant book, *The Battle for the Bible*.<sup>25</sup> Nothing could illustrate more clearly the dangers of counting as an ally everyone who contends (as Lindsell did in that book) for a "high view" of Scripture. For our purposes here, the most instructive chapter is Lindsell's attack on Fuller Theological Seminary and its alleged drift toward liberalism. Fuller replied to Lindsell in a special issue of its alumni journal, *Theology, News and Notes*.<sup>26</sup> From this exchange emerges a tale from which Adventists might profit.

Lindsell criticized the seminary for changing its statement of faith, which formerly declared that the Bible was without error "in the whole or in the part." In Fuller's reply, William LaSor, an Old Testament professor, deftly pointed

*Continued on page 54...*

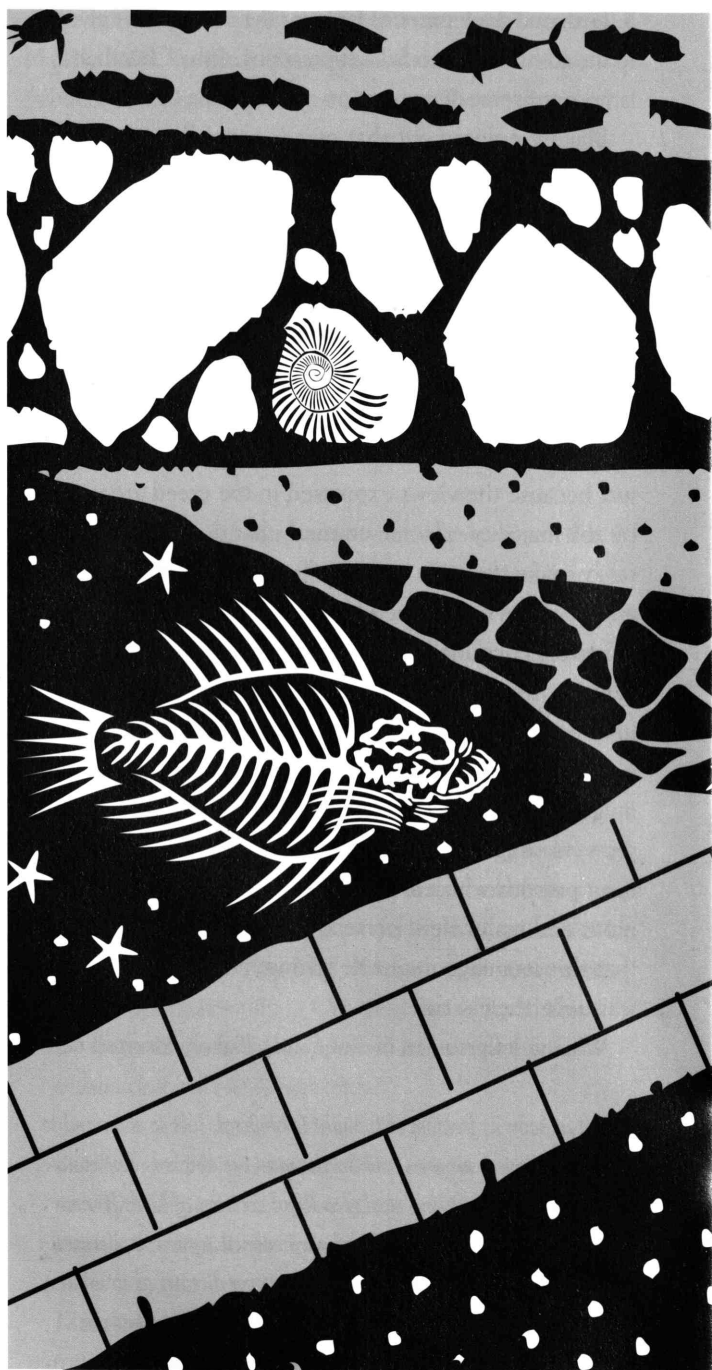
## Models of Origins: *Creationist Options*

for Adventists | BY WARREN H. JOHNS

Two buildings on two Adventist university campuses are of special interest in light of the recent General Conference action on creation. The first building is on the Andrews University campus—Price Hall, named after the “father of Adventist geology,” George McCready Price (1870–1963), and generally recognized as the father of the modern creationist movement in America. The second building is on the campus of Southern Adventist University—Lynn Wood Hall, named after Lynn H. Wood (1887–1976), who can be considered the “father of Adventist Biblical archeology and chronology.” The buildings, the one being the main biology building at Andrews and the other being one of the main buildings for religion at Southern, may not last until the Lord comes, but it is very possible that the names of those buildings will still be in use until the Second Advent. How the honorees after whom the buildings are named relate to the recent General Conference action will become apparent as we proceed.

### The Biblical Basis for This Study

Adventists have much to offer those within and without the Church in terms of a doctrine of creation that indeed is the foundation for all of Adventist theology. It is based in part upon the concepts that: a) God is the source of all things, material and spiritual; thus he is the Creator of all; b) God is not responsible for sin, but it was introduced into this world by Adam and Eve, our first parents, in the garden of Eden, the account of the Fall being historical, not mythological; c) the Bible provides an authoritative, authentic, and trustworthy account of both the origin of this world and the origin of the universe in Genesis 1–2, this account also being



not mythological, but historical in the sense of ancient and not modern history; d) the days of creation are best understood as normal days, and creation week marks the beginning of time, but not the beginning of the universe; e) the Sabbath is the climax of Creation and testifies to God's power and holiness in creating that which is ultimately good—that which is intended for good purposes; f) God's revelation in nature allows the human mind to arrive at truth when reconstructing the history of the world, but the act(s) of creation itself will forever

remain mysteries that the human mind cannot fathom; and g) since God is the author of both the Bible and the book of nature, there will always be an underlying perfect harmony between the two, although not readily seen by the human observer.

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate that there are several viable models for understanding earth history and origins that fall within the above parameters of our belief in Creation. These suggested models are designed to deepen our faith in a Creator-God and heighten our

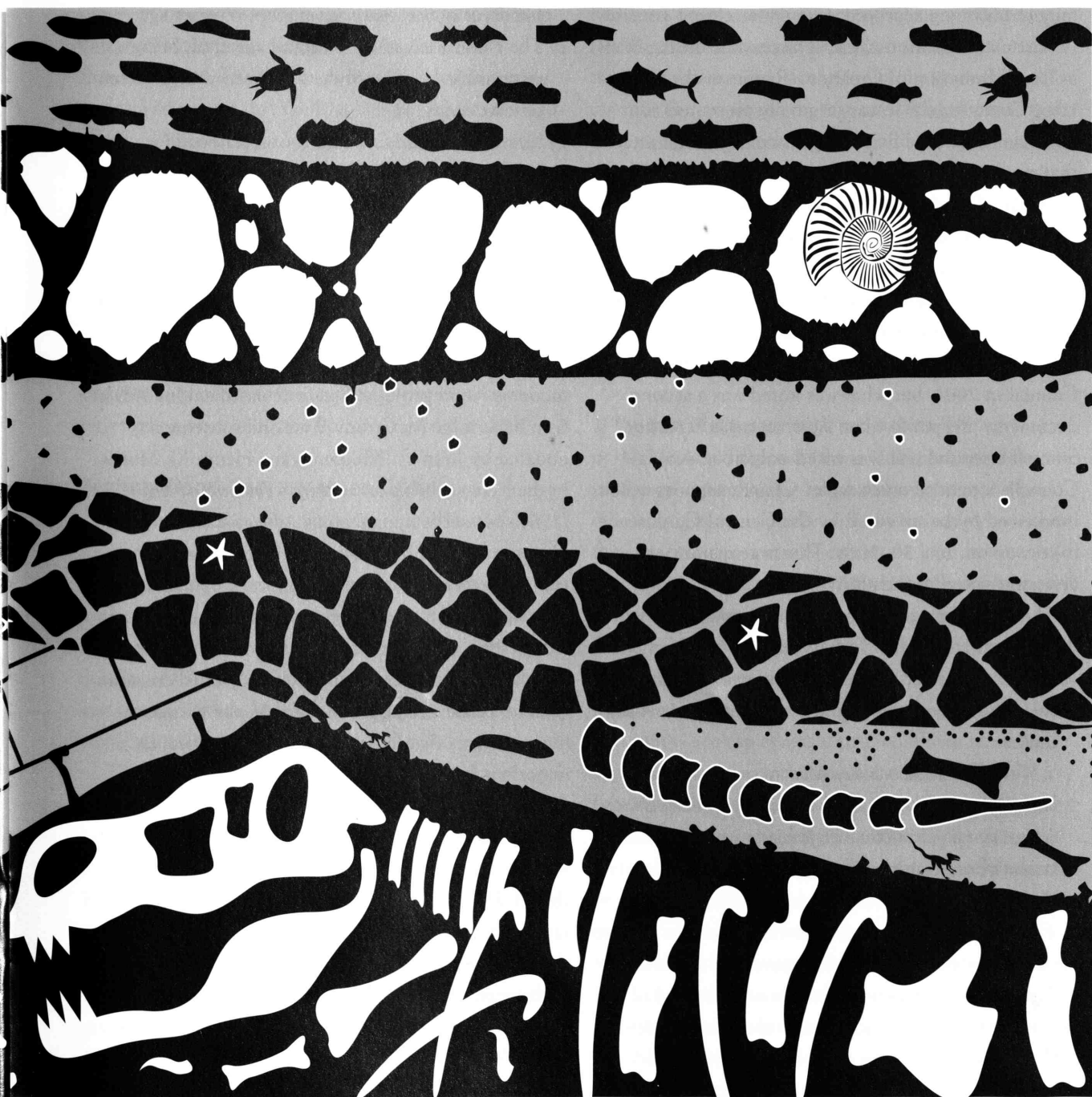


ILLUSTRATION BY LAURA LAMAR AND MAX SEABAUGH

respect for the trustworthiness of Scripture in demonstrating that Scripture does have something to offer in unraveling the mysteries of origins. A second purpose is to demonstrate the hazardous position taken when we attempt to incorporate wording on the age of the earth and the universal Flood into our theology of Creation.

### **Essence of the "Affirmation of Creation" Statement**

The document "An Affirmation of Creation" was presented to the 2004 Annual Council and recorded in its minutes as being accepted. It contains eleven concisely-written affirmations (readily accessible on the Web as "An Affirmation of Creation—Report of the Organizing Committee"). It was originally presented as a document authored by the eight-member committee that organized the three major conferences on creation (2002, 2003, 2004). The document was not presented as a recommendation voted upon by the 135 attendees at the third Faith and Science Conference. That's because the document in its original form never received a majority vote at the conference. The original document was not even voted upon at the Annual Council in 2004, but what was voted was a second document, "Response to an Affirmation of Creation." Since the second one was voted only at an Annual Council, it needed much wider Church support which it received by being voted by the General Conference in session on June 30, 2010. The large majority of delegates voted in the affirmative.

This second document consists of six points, of which these two set forth the Church's position on Creation:

1. *We strongly endorse the [previous] document's affirmation of our historic, biblical position of belief in a literal, recent, six-day creation...*
3. *We reaffirm the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the historicity of Genesis 1–11: that the seven days of the Creation account were literal 24-hour days forming a week identical in time to what we now experience as a week; and that the Flood was global in nature.*

The two documents should be viewed as one because the second is a refinement and summary of the first.

The intent of the two documents is to bring all of Adventist thinking into acceptance of a Flood model for earth history and the rejection of all forms of an old-earth/old-life model that is perceived as opening the

door to evolutionary thought within the Church. It is very true that Darwinian evolution, which requires long ages for genetic changes, cannot co-exist with the concept that most of the earth's fossil record was formed during a one-year event, namely the Biblical Deluge.

Here are the four major premises of a young-earth/Flood-geology model for earth history:

- a) All life on earth was created by fiat within six literal, consecutive, contiguous days.
- b) This Creation event occurred recently, that is, within the last few thousand years—not tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, or millions of years ago.
- c) The Flood was catastrophic and universal, being responsible for most of the fossil record that we can observe today.
- d) Death was introduced into the animal world for the first time by the sin of Adam and Eve. Since the fossil record is composed of dead creatures, these could not have died until after the Fall of humankind.

The above four points are valid if one and only one model is adopted by the Church for understanding Creation and the early history of the earth. That model is Flood geology, first articulated among Adventism by George McCready Price and subsequently updated by John C. Whitcomb and Henry M. Morris in their classic book on creation, *The Genesis Flood* (1961) as well as by numerous Adventist scientists. One can see that the second document attempts to clarify the nature of the Creation week by stating that it is "identical in time to what we now experience as a week." This wording is lacking in the first document. Both documents clearly support young-earth creationism and Flood geology. For example, the first document declares that "a catastrophic Flood... [is] an important key to understanding earth history."

Young-earth Creationism then is inseparable from Flood geology. Simply, a young-earth model cannot exist without a universal Flood that accounts for the fossil record. The present Fundamental Belief #6 on Creation says nothing about the universal Flood, although Belief #8 does mention "the worldwide Flood" as part of the great controversy theme. Why would we need the concept of a "universal Flood" injected into Belief #6, if it is already present in #8? That seems redundant except that the concept of a young earth mandates having the universal



Flood concept if it is to survive. At present Fundamental Belief #6 says absolutely nothing about the age of the earth. The injection of the word “recent” into both statements now for the first time becomes an element heretofore absent from our theology and doctrines; the age of the earth is now part of the foundation of the doctrine of Creation, and the doctrine of Creation is viewed as the foundation for all of Adventist theology. By adding “recent Creation” to Belief #6, it is a given that we are supporting “Flood geology.”

With these two new elements added to Adventist theology, it is now possible to apply the scientific method and accompanying geological tests to the validity of these concepts. They are amenable to scientific testing, just as a statement that the Israelites left Egypt in the fifteenth century B.C. is subject to archeological investigation. However, one need not prove that the Mt. Sinai experience happened in the fifteenth century B.C. in order to hold to the binding claims and divine authority of the Ten Commandments, especially the Fourth Commandment. Why then would we need a statement on the age of the earth in order to uphold the validity of one portion of the Fourth Commandment, namely Exodus 20:11? Heretofore Seventh-day Adventists have never taken an official stand on the age of the earth.

### Testing Flood Geology as an Option

When we are testing any model by scientific methods, we are not exalting science above the Bible and reason above faith. But where one’s theological beliefs intersect with areas that can be investigated, it is legitimate for scientists to confirm or modify or even deny only those aspects of the model that are open to testing. We are not testing the validity of divine Creation, but only the implications of one’s Creation model.

Three simple tests can be applied to “Flood geology,” the concept that all or most of the fossil-bearing geological column was formed in the year of the Flood. We are not even testing the “universality” or “historicity” of the Flood because one can posit a historical, universal Flood without having the Flood form very much of the fossil record at all. We recognize, however, that the universal Flood is an absolute requisite for having a young earth and recent creation. Thus we can test whether the geological column largely is the result of a one-year Flood. The three tests are:

**1) The test of floating logs.** The logs of most tree species easily float in water because they have a specific gravity of less than 1.0 (except for desert ironwood and ebony). In a universal Flood, trees from all ecosystems living on earth would be ripped up and would always rise to the surface in Flood waters, no matter how high the waters rose. Trees of all types and all geological strata would be mixed together forming a floating flotsam and jetsam. But this is never the case. Paleozoic trees are always found below Mesozoic trees, and Mesozoic trees below Cenozoic trees—nicely arranged in order. If there had been a universal Flood uprooting all antediluvian forests, then there would have been just one level of trees deposited as coal at the top of the geological column for the simple reason that trees float. A proof that trees easily float during a catastrophe is evident on this the thirtieth anniversary of the Mount St. Helens volcanic eruption. Many of the trees that were thrown into Spirit Lake are still floating there three decades later—amazingly! (See the *National Geographic*, May 2010.) Thus, the Flood did not uproot all antediluvian Paleozoic, Mesozoic, and Cenozoic forests at the same time to help form the geological column.

**2) The test of dinosaur eggs and babies.** The upper part of the Mesozoic deposits (the middle portion of the geological column) now has abundant evidence of dinosaur eggs occasionally with mature embryos within the eggs found in several localities on four continents—North America (Alberta and Montana), South America (Argentina), Europe (Spain and Portugal), and Asia (India, China, Mongolia, and Korea). Dinosaur eggs have similar structure to bird eggs, so if one extrapolates from ostrich and emu eggs to dinosaur eggs for incubation times, one can estimate two months or more for some dinosaur eggs to hatch. Not only have fossil hatchlings been found in Montana, but also young dinosaurs in nesting colonies, measuring one to two meters in length. This means two to six months would be required for that kind of growth in addition to two months of incubation time. These eggs and hatchlings are found buried in upper Mesozoic deposits. A Flood that destroyed all terrestrial life in approximately forty days cannot accommodate dinosaur nesting activities, so this falsifies the concept that a single catastrophic Flood buried the dinosaurs.

**3) The test of fossil forests with upright trees.** If rooted and petrified upright trees are found in the middle of the geological column, this would then falsify the idea that the Flood formed the entire column. The most striking fossil forest is at Junggar in western China where a Jurassic forest of upright fossilized trees has been found with tree trunks spaced nicely in the same way as in a modern forest. Trees have their roots spreading out in all directions. One tree in particular has the longest fossil root ever found—12.5 meters in length, radiating horizontally from the base of the trunk, in addition to other roots extending in other directions. A catastrophic Flood would have broken off all roots when it ripped trees out of the ground. All trees uprooted by the Mount St. Helens eruption of May 1980 have their roots sheared off next to the trunk. Thus the Junggar forest dating from the “age of dinosaurs” and with dinosaur nests a few kilometers away was not uprooted, re-deposited, and buried by Flood waters because none of its tree roots have been sheared off.

We have three independent ways of determining if the geological column was Flood-produced. In Mesozoic formations (or mid-column deposits) dinosaurs were found to be laying eggs and hatching young, and trees were growing and spreading out roots up to 12 meters or so in length. All these events could not have happened during a 40-day event at the end of which Flood waters reached their crest. Thus Mesozoic deposits are not Flood-related, and underlying Paleozoic deposits are not Flood-related either.

### Testing the Recency of Creation Week

When we apply the tests of time, we are not attempting to determine scientifically how long Creation week was in duration. No dating method can determine the length of the Creation days. We accept their length by faith. But what we can test is the amount of time that has elapsed since Creation. There are many non-radiometric tests for testing the passage of time in the geological record. A “recent” Creation concept that is based upon a date for Creation having taken place a few thousand years ago, not tens/hundreds/millions of years ago, is a testable concept. Two tests are applied.

**1. The test of the Greenland ice cores.** The third of the international Church-sponsored creation conferences was held in 2004 in Denver, Colorado, where a portion of the conference involved a trip to the research center where hundreds of ice cores are stored. Obviously if the

ice cores indeed date to tens of thousands of years in age, as claimed, then a young-earth concept is in serious jeopardy. The suggestion was presented by some of the Church’s scientists that in the lower portion of the Greenland cores precipitation was much higher right after the Flood than today’s rates, and the Flood was presented as being directly responsible for the ice age which is attested to in all ice cores. These cores have bands of dust in the ice in addition to chemical signatures that indicate an annual cycle. Counting these cycles is not much different than counting tree rings. The problem is that the annual signature of chemicals and dust in the ice begin to fade out of the picture or to blur in the lower half of the cores, dated to more than 10,000 years ago. But a newer core first published in 2008 has much more clearly detectable annual cycles (see [www.clim-past.net/4/47/2008/](http://www.clim-past.net/4/47/2008/)). If the 60,000 “annual” bands in this new core are indeed annual, as we are suggesting, then life on earth has been here at least ten times longer than the traditional 6,000 years!

**2. The test of Egyptian chronology.** The idea that the earth is 6,000 years of age was first challenged within Adventism some six decades ago with the advent of radiocarbon dating coupled with the evidence of Egyptian chronology. The Adventist scholar most responsible for introducing Egyptian chronology to the Church was Lynn H. Wood, who in 1937 became one of the first Adventists to obtain a Ph.D. His 1945 paper on Egyptian chronology published in volume 99 of *BASOR* paved the way for extending the Egyptian chronology back to 500 years or more before the Biblical date for the Flood, traditionally dated to 2350 B.C. The chronology that he and others developed has been hotly debated among Egyptologists and other scholars, but only this year the debate has been largely settled by the publication of numerous radiocarbon dates confirming the chronology they developed in the 1940s (see *Science* June 18, 2010). A host of Adventist archeologists and Old Testament scholars succeeding Wood, such as Siegfried H. Horn, Lawrence T. Geraty, Alger. F. Johns, Edwin R. Thiele, Kenneth Vine, William H. Shea, etc., long ago observed the inadequacies of Ussher’s dates for Biblical history and had concluded that a Creation date of about 4000 B.C. was no longer tenable. A model that depends upon Biblical chronology for its support will in the end prove unworkable.

## Alternatives to Flood Geology as the Explanatory Key to Earth History

Our study started with a strong commitment to the doctrine of creation as an integral part of Adventist theology. From this bedrock foundation we can construct models that are useful for harmonizing our theology with our science. One must keep in mind that all such models are human constructions and none of these should be labeled "the Biblical model," because Scripture does not suggest any model. We have already tested the Flood geology/young earth, young life model, and found it wanting. This opens the door wide to the consideration of other possible models. The following Creationist models are arranged somewhat chronologically, according to the times when they first became known and were discussed by conservative scholars in the last two centuries.

**1. Restituted-earth theory.** This concept was originally developed by Thomas Chalmers, a Scottish theologian, in 1814 as a means to explain how Genesis 1 could be reconciled with the findings of modern geology. The "beginning" of Genesis 1 was at an indefinite point in the past when God created all living things, except mankind. This pre-existent earth is described in Gen. 1:2. For some reason this earth became destitute and was re-created 6,000 years ago within six literal days. This is also called the "ruin-restitution theory" or "gap theory."

**2. Day-age theory.** This was the second most popular theory among evangelical Christians in the nineteenth century. Briefly, this theory teaches that each day of Creation week is representative of an eon of time, and the order of creation in Genesis 1 follows roughly the order of life found in the rock record. The seventh day is likewise said to represent an unending period of time because Christ's work as Creator is still continuing, and his Sabbath of rest continues (John 5:16–17; Heb. 4:1–9). Ellen White has spoken clearly against the day-age theory, solely because it undermines the validity of the Sabbath (PP 111–112; TM 135–137). Science has proven that the order of life found in the geological column does not support the order of created life in Genesis 1, in contrast to the day-age view that says it does.

**3. Revelatory-days view.** This theory was a distant third in the nineteenth century among evangelicals who wished to harmonize the findings of geology with the

Bible. This was first advocated in the English-speaking world in the book *Bible and Astronomy* (1857), originally published by Johann Kurtz in German. One of the most prominent and influential evangelical theologians of the twentieth century, Bernard Ramm, adopted this theory in his classic work *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* (1954). Ramm calls the account of Genesis 1 "prophecy in reverse." Moses, the author of Genesis, is given a series of seven visions in seven literal days, in which he saw pictorially how Creation took place—the only human being awarded this privilege. The problem is that Genesis 1 has no linguistic evidence that the account was originally given as a vision.

**4. Local-creation theory.** John Pye Smith's book *On the Relation Between the Holy Scriptures and Some Parts of Geological Science* in its revised 1854 edition was quite convincing in advocating that Genesis 1 was describing a "local" Creation. Why? In theologian Smith's mind the Flood was a local event somewhere in Asia. If the Garden of Eden also was local and creation was local, then it was easy for God to destroy the whole earth at the time of the Flood because the whole "earth" was local! This theory was somewhat popular in the nineteenth century, but was largely overlooked in the twentieth century, except that it has been advocated in part by John Sailhamer starting at the end of the twentieth century (see no. 9 below).

**5. Genesis 1 as theology, not science.** This view also came into prominence in the nineteenth century, but not so much among evangelicals as among moderate to progressive Protestants and Roman Catholics. A dichotomy was made between science and revelation. Genesis 1 is treated as a revelation of the magnificence, power, and activities of Deity, not as a textbook of how the world came into being. Thus Genesis 1 has very little of science. In the twentieth century most German theologians advocated this view, and at the same time did a great service by arguing that the days of Genesis 1 are to be viewed exclusively as literal days, as for example did Hermann Gunkel (see Gerhard Hasel, *Origins* 21:16, 1994).

**6. Fiat-days hypothesis.** This started in 1902 with Hugh Capron's work *The Conflict of Truth*, in which he argued that the six literal days were days of command only, prefaced by the words "Let there be..." Consequently it

took millions of years to carry out the commands, during which time the fossil record was formed. This theory was relatively unknown until Alan Hayward in his book *Creation and Evolution: The Facts and the Fallacies* (1985) thrust it into the evangelical limelight.

**7. Framework hypothesis.** It is difficult to determine who was first in developing this theory, but one of the earliest influential evangelicals to promote it was Henry Blocher (*In the Beginning: The Opening Chapters of Genesis*, 1984, first published in French in 1979). It simply states that Genesis 1 has a highly organized and symmetrical literary structure; the first three days of Creation are days of forming the structures of the cosmos, and the second three days are days for filling the structures with inhabitants. These six steps reverse the condition of Gen. 1:2 when it started as being "without form (or without structure)" and "without inhabitants (or empty)." Days 1 and 4, 2 and 5, and 3 and 6 have striking parallels. Thus the days of Creation are "literary days," not necessarily "literal days."

**8. Intermittent-days theory.** The most popular advocates of this theory are Newman and Eckelmann (*Genesis One and the Origin of the Earth*, 1977). They feel that all the days of Creation being literal are separated by vast geological time-spans. Man and woman are created last, thus agreeing with the geological record. One problem for Adventists is that it is difficult to speak of a "weekly cycle" in Genesis 1 if this theory is true. For Robert Newman, an astrophysicist and a theologian, the Creation days are "consecutive," but not "contiguous."

**9. Preparation of the Promised Land concept.** This view is a combination of the gap (or restitution) theory and the local creation theory. As advocated by John Sailhamer, prominent conservative Hebrew scholar, in his *Genesis Unbound* (1996), this idea starts with a Creation ages ago summarized in Gen. 1:1, followed by a local Creation in Palestine during six literal days a few thousand years ago. The six days then are a description of God's work in preparing the land (Heb. 'eret) for the planting of the Garden of Eden in Genesis 2. The six-day Creation is limited to Palestine. Thus Genesis 1 becomes a prologue to Genesis 2.

**10. Temple theology concept.** While the previous views all became prominent by the end of the twentieth century, temple theology is relatively recent. It describes the Creation story within the context of ancient Near Eastern creation stories, all of which describe an earthly temple as symbolic of the entire cosmos. Thus, the building of ancient temples is analogous to God (or the gods) creating the cosmos. This concept was first applied by an evangelical to the garden of Eden, as being a miniature cosmos, by Gregory K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (2004). Beale has expanded his views to include both Genesis 1 and 2 as descriptive of the creation of two temples—God's temple (the universe) and man's temple (Eden) in his book *The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism* (2008) in its last two chapters. John H. Walton, a colleague of Beale's at Wheaton College, takes the concept of temple theology further than most Adventists would be willing to take it in his book *The Lost World of Genesis One* (2009) by including some evolution in it. Nevertheless, temples in the ancient Near East were dedicated in a seven-day period, thus paralleling the seven literal days of Creation. Both the wilderness tabernacle and Solomon's temple were dedicated in seven days!

**11. Other theories.** Several other theories of lesser importance useful for harmonizing Genesis and geology have been developed: a) The Creation days are both 24 hours and billions of years in length according to Einsteinian relativity applied to Genesis 1. This is advocated by Jewish physicist Gerald L. Schroeder in his book *Genesis and the Big Bang* (1990). b) Genesis 1 presents *kairos* time, which is God's time, and not *chronos* time, which is our time. The Southern Baptist philosopher/mathematician William Dembski, a leader in the Intelligent Design movement, advocates this new idea in his book *The End of Christianity* (2009). c) Two new ideas have not been published as yet, but need to be evaluated. First, the Creation days are liturgical days, not literary days or literal days. The book of the law (the Torah or Pentateuch) was to be read every seven years during the Feast of the Tabernacles. Israelites met for seven days during the feast to hear the Law read, starting with Genesis 1. There were seven liturgical days in which each day may have highlighted one of the seven days of Creation



(Deut. 31:9–13; Neh. 7:73–8:18.) Or second, Creation days may be genealogical days. The first Creation account ends with the words: “These are the generations (Heb. *toledoth*) of the heavens and of the earth when they were created” (Gen. 2:4). Whenever the word *toledoth* is used in the Pentateuch it is always applied to genealogies. If Genesis 1–2:4 is described as a genealogy, then it should be interpreted as if it were a genealogy. Biblical genealogies often have gaps in their sequences; thus Genesis 1–2 may have gaps. It merely describes the high points of God’s creative activity.

### **Do These Models Promote Darwinism and Denigrate the Sabbath?**

One should remember that the above Creationist models were not developed with the intent to incorporate Darwinism into Biblical theology. At least the first four or five models were created in the half century before Charles Darwin first published his theory and were a response to the fact that there exists a highly complex, lengthy geological record. None of the above models looks to Darwinism for its sustenance. This paper introduces a few possibilities that perhaps most readers have not thought of before, but the list of possibilities is not exhaustive. All of these possibilities uphold God as our divine Creator and ultimately our Redeemer. The models that hold most strictly to the literalness of the seven Creation days are nos. 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, and 11c in the above list. The majority of the models support a weekly cycle of seven literal days and thus support the Sabbath (obvious exceptions of those not holding to a literal week are nos. 2, 6, and 8). Temple theology (no. 10), for example, offers unqualified support to the integrity of the seventh-day Sabbath (see John Walton, p. 146–147) and thus should find resonance with most Seventh-day Adventists. That is not to suggest that the Church should adopt any one of the above views. All such options are humanly constructed and thus are open to revision.

### **Implications of This Study**

The most obvious implication is that when the Church attaches statements relative to geology and earth history to its fundamental beliefs, then every time the progress of science revises its understanding of geology and earth history the fundamental beliefs may have to be revised accordingly. This already is beginning to happen with the discovery of 60,000 countable layers in the Greenland ice

core being first reported four years after the 2004 statements were formulated. This puts our theology into the precarious position of being tested by science and being vulnerable to constant revisions. This is a superb example of what happens when we insert a Biblical chronology into our theology; it opens the door to future change, especially as dating methods become more refined and more accurate. The lesson to be learned is this: the theology that is the child of science in any century becomes an orphan in the following century. That is even true of the science of flood geology. On the other hand, a creation doctrine that avoids mentioning the universal Flood and the age of the earth will stand the test of time as long as it adheres closely to statements in Scripture.

### **Conclusion**

We come back to the two Adventist pioneers, George McCready Price and Lynn Wood, in their respective fields of geology and archeology. If they were alive today, what would their reactions be to the voted Creation Statement? Price would obviously endorse it because he was the one who introduced and solidified Flood geology as an earth history model among Adventism. In fact, he would probably be very delighted that his model will now become codified for the first time within Adventist doctrine. How about Lynn Wood? He would undoubtedly be very concerned about incorporating any chronology into Adventist theology because chronologies have a way of being verified through sound scientific methods apart from input from Scripture. He was well aware that his dates for the start of the Egyptian dynasties pre-date the Flood by half a millennium. What if pre-historic chronologies are verified further and further back in time, well before six or seven thousand years? We may not answer that question through the mouthpiece of Wood, but we have a large number of Wood’s successors who are experts in the Old Testament and archeology and who have addressed this and similar challenges. Biblical archeologists use many of the same scientific methods of reconstructing the past that Adventist geologists do. We are willing to listen to our dedicated archeologists when they say that the Bible cannot offer an absolute date for the Flood or building the Tower of Babel, but somehow we don’t trust our dedicated physicists, geochemists, and geologists when they conclude that the Bible does not likewise offer dates for

early earth history that can be verified by science.

This study ends with a cautionary note from L. James Gibson, director of the church-supported Geoscience Research Institute: "The lesson for today should be clear. We must not incorporate extra-biblical sources in our system of faith. For example, we should beware of incorporating into our faith any particular flood model." ■

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## Footnotes

1. Gibson, L. James. "Contributions to Creation Theory from the Study of Nature." *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 14 (Spr. 2003): 148.

## For Further Reading:

1. Gibson, Jim. "Issues in 'Intermediate' Models of Origins." *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 15 (Aug. 2004): 71-92.
2. Guy, Fritz. "Negotiating the Creation-evolution wars." *Spectrum* 20 (Oct. 1989): 40-46.
3. Horn, Siegfried H. "Can the Bible Establish the Age of the Earth?" *Spectrum* 10 (Nov. 1979): 15-20.
4. Johns, Warren H. "Strategies for Origins." *Ministry* 54 (May 1981): 26-28.
5. Roth, Ariel A. "Implications of Various Interpretations of the Fossil Record." *Origins* 7 (1980): 71-86.

The above five articles, which deal with the relationship between the Bible and science, are available on the Internet, the two from *Spectrum* needing a password.

6. Probably the best explanation of why the Church has held three creation conferences and produced follow-up statements is the following account in *Ministry*, June 2005: Pfandl, Gerhard. "In the beginning God...": A Historical Review of the Creation Debate among Seventh-day Adventists. Available at: [www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2005/June/in-the-beginning-god...html](http://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2005/June/in-the-beginning-god...html).

7. The Presbyterian Church in America for more than a decade has had a similar controversy to what is being faced within Seventh-day Adventism. We can profit from studying both sides of the issue, which has been recently discussed in the Presbyterian journal *Modern Reformation*. See the rebuttal by John K. Reed, young-earth creationist and geologist, who is responding to the above article by eight PCA geologists. The original PCA position statement on creation can well serve as a

model for an SDA position statement. (June 2000)

8. For the latest Adventist approach to Flood geology, see Leonard Brand, *Faith, Reason, and Earth History* (2nd. ed., 2009), especially chap. 15, where he candidly admits that "geologic time" is the greatest challenge to Flood geology.

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## LETTERS ■ Continued from page 6

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This is not a moral issue of right or wrong. Scientific discoveries are not subject to a democratic vote, administrative action or the stance of a particular institution. They are what they are and it is assumed that our schools are bound to present such discoveries in the most honest way possible with the most valid documentation now available. Newly discovered science, through the ages, has served to enlighten mankind. These discoveries have not threatened our belief in the gospel nor have they negated the role of the Creator in the beginning of all things. Rather, they serve to increase our understanding of the sequence and order of long-ago events.

These open conflicts, rather than increasing our understanding of the universe, may threaten the very unity and mission of both the church and the college leading to greater polarization of knowledge and faith which the student must ultimately be able to merge. If we can integrate new knowledge while supporting the concept of a Divine Creation, admitting to the new vistas emerging from scientific inquiry, we would serve our students better and perhaps avoid a "Desmond Ford-like" conflagration. It is my hope and prayer that such an understanding will be possible.

LILLIAN MOORE, ED.D.  
Professor Emeritus (ret.)

## Corrections: In the Spring 2010 issue on page 79:

Dr. Richard Hart's title was not fully described. He is president and CEO of Loma Linda University Adventist Health Sciences Center and chancellor of Loma Linda University (one element of LLUAHSC).

Ruthita Fike's title was also incorrect. She is executive vice president of LLUAHSC for Hospital Affairs (in charge of the LLU Medical Center, another element of LLUAHSC).

Also, in the Spring 2010 issue, on page 95:

In the review of Dr. Leona Running's biography, the information about the book that she authored was incorrect. Dr. Noel Freedman was her co-author on the definitive biography of renowned scholar Dr. William Foxwell Albright.

## Sigfried Horn on the Age of the Earth:

*Looking Over the Shoulder of a Former Seminary Dean* | BY LAWRENCE T. GERATY

Given the recent interest within the Adventist Church since the election of a new General Conference president at its Fifty-ninth Session in Atlanta to integrate into Fundamental Belief #6 a literalist interpretation of the biblical language in Genesis rather than the language of Genesis itself as it now exists, my mind went back to the 1960s and 1970s when a previous GC president made a similar attempt to coerce belief in such a literal interpretation. I invite the reader to “look over the shoulder” of Siegfried H. Horn, former Dean of the SDA Theological Seminary, as he records his thoughts at the time in his diary.

On March 29, 1975, he wrote, “During 25 years of Seminary teaching on five continents I have never allowed myself to be pinned down with regard to the age of the earth. Many times students have tried by various means to push me into a corner and attempted to bring me to the point where I would commit myself to date the Creation of the earth or the Flood. My biblical chronology begins with Abraham. For earlier periods we have no chronological data in the Bible, except genealogies which are useless for dating purposes as Saint Paul already recognized in his day, for which reason he exhorted his young fellow workers Timothy and Titus to shun discussions of ‘endless genealogies’ which he classifies with myths, stupid controversies and dissensions (1 Tim 1:4; Tit 3:9).”

“Bishop Ussher’s date for the age of the [earth]—4004 B.C. as Creation date—based on genealogical figures of the Hebrew Bible, is of no value whatsoever, and it is evident that Ellen White was influenced by Ussher’s dates which in her lifetime were still printed in the margins of the English Bibles. Eighteen times she is said to have made statements in her writing that imply in some way that the earth is ca. 6,000 years old. The clearest is perhaps the following which was made in 1864: ‘Many who profess to

believe the Bible record are at a loss to account for the wonderful things which are found in the earth, with the view that creation was only seven literal days, and that the world is now only about six thousand years old.’ SG 3:92”

“I have no problems with her chronological statements, as the one just quoted, because her own son and secretary of many years, W. C. White, wrote Nov. 4, 1912, while Ellen White was still alive, to W. W. Eastman: ‘Regarding mother’s writings and their use as authority on points of history and chronology, Mother has never wished our brethren to treat them as authority regarding details of history or historical dates...Mother never thought that the readers would take the [Great Controversy] as authority on historical dates or use it to settle controversy regarding details of history, and she does not now feel that it should be used in that way.’”

“If every one of her chronological statements would have to be accepted as divinely inspired gospel truth we would indeed be in deep trouble, because she sometimes makes gross chronological errors and contradicts herself.” [Several examples are then given.]

Horn goes on to tell about an invitation from Kenneth Vine, asking him to speak at a LLU symposium on March 6, 1975, on “the problem of the age of the earth and dating.”

Horn accepted only after “he told me that he want[ed] me to present my views and did not want a man who would defend the 4,000 B.C. date for Creation.”

Horn continues: “In the meantime Larry Geraty had read a paper on practically the same subject in Washington in a meeting of the Adventist Forum and consented to have that paper published in the Forum’s magazine *Spectrum*. 22 February 1975, when I was in Loma Linda, Molleurus Couperus, the editor of *Spectrum*, gave me the latest copy which contains Larry’s article, ‘The Genesis Genealogies as an Index of Time’ (*Spectrum*, 1974,

Nos. 1–2, pp. 5–18). I agree with this article 100%, although I told Larry that I questioned the wisdom of having it published, especially for him as a young man who has to build up a reputation. For several years I have been requested by Molleus to furnish him an article like that one but had declined the honor. To present a thesis like this orally is one thing, to put it in black and white is quite another thing.”

“Then, 3 weeks ago, I presented my paper on the La Sierra campus on the question, ‘Can the Bible establish the age of the earth?’ I pointed out that Biblical chronological data cannot establish a single date without the help of secular chronological schemes. For the 1st millennium B.C. our dates are controllable and reasonably certain; for the 2nd mill. dates, such as the Exodus or Abraham’s call, the Biblical chronological data are our only evidence. For the period before 2,000 B.C. there exist no Biblical chronological data, only genealogies and these I do not use for chronological purposes, because I accept Paul’s injunction referred to above.”

Later on, writing on the same date, Horn says, “In talking to Grady Smoot and Dick Hammill about Larry’s article and Hackett’s letter [to Geraty after the article was published], these two men were first inclined to condemn Larry. Grady said, ‘There is nothing new in it.’ I said, ‘That’s it! There is nothing new in it—it’s Biblical and if we are a people of the Book, as we always claim to be, we should not condemn Larry for presenting a defensible Biblical view, although I question whether it was wise for him to have it published.’ They concurred with me.—Larry has in the meantime replied to Hackett’s letter and told him that he too is out to build up the church and that he has confidence in the writings of Ellen White, but also feels that the church is mature enough to face problems which exist and which do not disappear by being ignored.”

Horn concludes his diary entry by saying that he gave Vine permission to publish the talk he gave on this topic at La Sierra, “a thing I would not have done some years ago. But in my age and position I cannot be harmed any more and even would happily step down as dean and retire if asked to do so for holding the belief that we cannot determine the age of the earth. Well, we shall see whether I have sown seeds of a wind that may sprout into a storm by permitting my paper to be published, a paper that reflects the views of the ‘Dean of the Theological Seminary.’”

On October 28, 1976, Horn wrote the following in his

diary: he had just “learned that recently two position papers were produced, sanctioned or sponsored by the GC, one on ‘Inspiration and Revelation,’ which carried Richard Hammill’s name as author, and another anonymous one, written in poor English, on ‘Creation.’ They were supposed to be adopted at the recently held Annual Council as articles of faith. Many or all paragraphs began with the words ‘We believe’—a kind of credo, a thing Adventists have always been shied away from. One of the ‘beliefs’ is that ‘we’ consider Gen 5 & 11 to be sources of biblical chronology. I was glad to hear that many consultants had advised to refrain from bringing these documents before the Annual Council and this advice was fortunately followed. It seems that the present administration tries by hook or crook to raise the view of the 6,000-year-age-of-the-earth to the level of a church doctrine. I hope that this effort will not be crowned with success during the next 45 months. After that the wind in Washington may blow in a different direction. Sanity and reason may then once more reign over bigotry and medievalist intolerance in which our denomination is emersed [sic] right now.”

On April 13, 1977, Horn wrote the following in his diary: “I read some of the articles in the last number of the notorious SPECTRUM today...and learned that at the last Annual Meeting in the Fall of 1976 a ‘CREATION STATEMENT’ had been submitted for adoption which was fortunately tabled. It came from the Geo-Science Institute of which W. Hackett is the President and [name of a scholar] the evil spirit. The second statement of faith reads as follows: ‘2. We accept the chronological data of the first eleven chapters of Genesis as providing the basis for our belief in the biblical chronology.’ I am lucky that such a credo was not adopted during my term of service because I would have been forced either to be a hypocrite or to resign. We are getting more and more into the Dark Ages. It seems to me that Pierson & Co are determined to raise the age-of-the-earth question to the level of an article of faith before they move off the scene of action in 1980. It really is awful.”

A few years before, in the air over Colorado on 16 June 1974, on his way to California for the Third Bible Conference, Horn wrote, “I have a row of 3 seats for myself and spend my time reading 90-manuscript pages on ‘Science and the Genesis Flood’ which is to replace a similar one of the old edition of the 1st volume of the SDA Bible Commentary. The old one was written by George McCready Price and is considered a rather childish exposition, even



by SDA scientists. The new chapter written by Harold W. Clark, retired PUC teacher, is less silly, but still tries to defend an age of the earth of 6,000 years and that all fossils are younger than that."

Later that year, on December 25, 1974, Horn records in his diary his reaction to *Time Magazine's* story, "How true is the Bible." He quotes two statements which he calls "interesting and also true": First, "Believing critics argue—and experience has sometimes shown—that rigid faith is the most vulnerable to complete destruction. In their view, the believer who can live with some doubts is more likely to keep some faith. An occasionally fallible Bible, therefore, is a Bible that paradoxically seems more authentic." Second, "Believers who expect something else from the Bible may well conclude that its credibility has been enhanced. After more than two centuries of facing the heaviest scientific guns that would be brought to bear, the Bible has survived—and is perhaps the better for the siege."

Ten years earlier, Horn recorded the following in his diary, dated 29 March 1964, "The Geo-Science meetings were most interesting. I learned how the Potassium-Argon method, the Uranium-Lead method on the one hand and the C14 and the Amino-Acid method for organic matter support each other. Organic material is thus dated to c. 40,000 yrs & the rocks—fossil-bearing mind you—to billions of years. In the light of this indisputable evidence our scientists...are searching for good answers acceptable to SDAs and cannot find them. Somehow and sometimes we have to retreat from untenable positions, as the Catholics have been forced to do. I am glad I am not a geologist."

**M**ore than a year later, while Horn was in Cooranbong, Australia, he wrote in his diary on 29 December 1965, "In the afternoon we had the fourth meeting of Dr Magnusson, a young science teacher of the college who has two PhDs. He had presented last week the C14 problems which cause him little worries, but the ages of the rocks determined by their radioactivity which puts the Pleistocene age, the last one, one million years back and the fossil-containing Cambrian age 600 million years back, not to talk of some rocks which show to be thousands of millions of years old. We have held to the 6,000 yrs age of the earth so long and are now confronted with facts for which we have no answers and which our men are not prepared to face. I am

glad to work in the relatively safe area of history."

Three years later, Magnusson came to Andrews to lecture, and again Horn was impressed. Writing in his diary on January 27, 1968, he says, "He had no comforting words for the 6,000-year men. Even the evolution theory seems to him rather well-supported by the fossil evidence. It will be interesting to see what will happen in the next 20 years. Will we find an honest way out of our dilemma and retain the respect of our young people, or will we become—more than we already are—a church of oldsters and simpletons?"

Later that year, commenting on a report of GC President Pierson in the *Review* (Oct 10, 1968) about a geo-science trip he had taken where he was again defending the importance and necessity of believing in a 6,000 year history of the earth, Horn wrote in his diary on October 13, 1968, "It is regrettable that a man like Pierson comes out with such a statement on a controversial point. It could easily be the beginning of a witch hunt, as the pope's decision on birth control is now in the Catholic Church. I would not be surprised if they would require us either to teach the 6,000-year age of the world in the future, or get out. It can happen under the administration of ill-trained and narrow-minded men, as we have a few in high places."

After a visit to the Leakeys at Olduvai Gorge in Kenya, Horn wrote the following in his diary on June 4, 1971, "I spent a good 2 hours with the impressive collection of prehistoric material, mostly brought together by the Leakeys from various places in Tanzania and Kenya. I will say more after having seen Olduvai, but one must admit that the stratified beds of artifacts, animal fossil bones and human bone remains make a mighty impressive argument in favor of the evolutionary theory and of a great age of the inhabited earth. The evidence is very strong and whether we can ignore it much longer without looking condemned is a big question in my mind."

So here we have some samples of the views of an archaeologist who loved the truth and delighted in the way his research supported the Bible's historicity, but who had a problem with the way his church leaders were ignoring the mounting evidence for a world that was much older than 6,000 years. The question we face a generation later is: Will we insist on an untenable short age for life on earth or will we be guided by "present truth" as was the habit of our Adventist pioneer forebears? ■

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Lawrence T. Geraty is a retired archaeologist and university president.

# The Six "Creation Days":

*Prologue to God's Rest* | BY BRIAN BULL AND FRITZ GUY

For almost two thousand years Christians have pored over the biblical texts in an earnest effort to understand them. The greatest minds of the church have spent themselves in this consecrated endeavor. Not least among their concerns has been what the Bible teaches about creation. For this they turned especially to Genesis 1:1–2:3, and studies of the "hexaemeron" [six days] loom large among the writings they have left us.<sup>1</sup>

**W**hat exactly were the six Creation days of Genesis 1? If we try to listen to the text as nearly as possible as did those who first heard its magnificent message, do we hear what they heard?

If the author<sup>2</sup> used a particular term, we should look first at the rest of the Genesis 1 (actually Gen. 1:1–2:4a)<sup>3</sup> explanation of Creation to see if the he<sup>4</sup> considered the term important enough to indicate what he meant. Unless we are careful to find and utilize (and thus *limit* ourselves to) the meanings the author provided (when he did), we will inevitably superimpose upon *his* explanation *our* meanings. This will almost certainly burden the ancient theological explanation with modern scientific demands and all the myriad problems that inevitably follow. The author explained what he intended his hearers to picture when he used such terms as "heaven" (Hebrew *shamayim*, "sky," 1:8) and "earth" (*'eret*, "land," 1:10). Did he do the same for the "Creation days"?

The Hebrew word for day is *yom*. "With 2,304 Hebrew occurrences and 16 Aramaic, it is the fifth most frequent noun in the OT" and "is thus by far the most common expression of time."<sup>5</sup> It had much the same broad semantic range as the

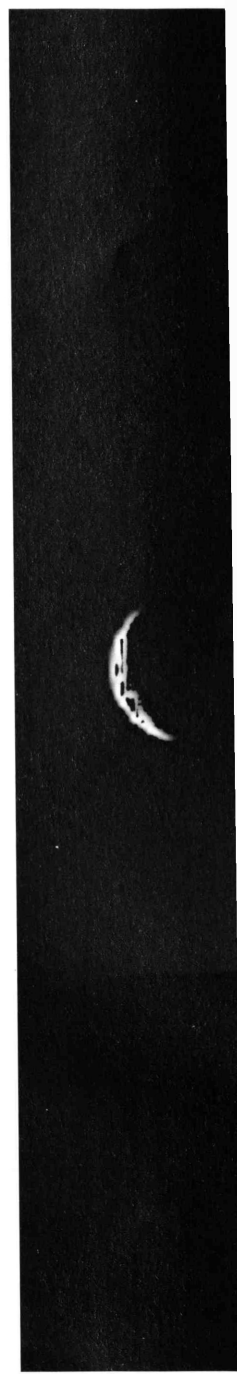
present English word *day*. As a general expression of time, the author's use of *yom* could have carried any of the following meanings:

(1) The daylight hours. "God named the light *day*" (Gen. 1:5). This was the predominant meaning of the word *yom* in Genesis and elsewhere. In the semi-desert context where the first listeners to Genesis 1 lived, it also meant the warm hours: Abraham "sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day" (18:1); by contrast, God walked in the Garden of Eden "in the cool of the day" (3:8). The *day* was the time in which work was done, projects accomplished, results achieved. If some activity, condition, or situation continued beyond the daylight hours, that fact was specified, for the "day" had been exceeded. This was the case in the Flood narrative, when it rained "forty days and forty nights" (7:12).

(2) An indefinite period of time, essentially equivalent to one of the common modern uses of "when." This is the usage in the next chapter, which might, with exactly the same meaning, read, "When God made *'eret* and *shamayim*" instead of "In the day God made *'eret* and *shamayim*" (2:4b), and, a few verses later, "when you eat from it you will die" rather than "in the day you eat from it you will die" (2:17).

(3) A general reference to time (usually plural): "you will eat dust all the days of your life" (3:14), and "all the days of Adam were 930 years" (5:5).

(4) A solar day, equivalent to our modern period of 24 hours. In Genesis 1, apart from



A Creation day was  
a period of time made  
significant by the  
transcendent activity  
of God.



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the meaning of the Creation day (which is the question at issue here), this might have been the meaning in relation to the chronometric function of the two celestial lights: "for seasons and for days and for years" (1:14). Even here, however, the word probably evoked mental images of work and workdays rather than 1/365 of a year. Elsewhere in Genesis 1 the reference is clearly to daylight hours: God named the light *day* (1:5); the celestial lights distinguished the day from the night (1:14); the larger and smaller lights were intended respectively to dominate the day and the night (1:16, 18).

So did the author of Genesis 1 use *yom* in a way that enables us to identify the precise meaning he intended? He did. He indicated that he was about to describe the archetypal, paradigmatic Creation day—the *yom* that was to define the subsequent Creation days—but he did so in a way that is not apparent in most English translations (KJV, TEV, NIV, NRSV, etc.). The numbers designating each of the six Creation days have usually been translated as "first," "second," "third," etc. The author, however, designated the first Creation day as "day one" or "one day" (*yom 'echad*, 1:5), using a cardinal numeral ("one," "two," "three," etc.) rather than an ordinal numeral ("first," "second," "third," etc.). In so doing he set up the archetypal Creation day, beginning with "evening," "darkness," "dusk" (*'ereb*) and proceeding to "dawning," "sunrise," "morning" (*boqer*).

In the narrative explanation of Creation, "one day" was thus an "evening then morning" or "darkness then dawning" day. Having defined the archetypal Creation day, the author thereafter referred back to that definition by means of ordinal numerals: "a second day"—that is, a second and similar day—"a third day," "a fourth day" (1:8, 13, 19). This is the way we still use our own language when we have carefully defined something and want to refer to additional instances of the same kind.

The narrative context for the designation of the archetypal Creation day is worth examining. Light had just been created and it was good (*tob*)—that is, it was functioning as God intended—implying that the pre-creation darkness did *not* fulfill God's purpose. The fully functional light was named "day" (*yom*) in contrast to the less-than-satisfactory darkness, which was named "night." Here "day" clearly referred to the light hours in which work was accomplished. In the next sentence, however, the author expands the word "day" (*yom*) to include not just the "dawning" of daylight (*boqer*) but also

the preceding darkness of evening (*'ereb*).

What meaning did the hearers get from this expanded meaning of the word "day"? That this "day" was different from the immediately preceding "day" is clear. It begins, not with the arrival of light but with a word meaning dusk, twilight, or evening—that which is associated with the futile darkness. Defined by its inclusion of *evening* (*'ereb*) as well as *dawning* (*boqer*), it involved two elements—one preliminary, incomplete, unfulfilled, and unsatisfactory; the other actualized, complete, and fulfilled.

So the "Creation day" could not have been the daylight hours, because it included *evening* as well as *dawning*. Nor could it have meant an indefinite period of time or functioned as a general reference to time, because it was specifically defined by the preliminary *evening* and the subsequent *dawning*.

What is clear, however, is that the Creation days were days in the realm of the divine; God is the grammatical and logical subject of most of the sentences of Genesis 1. They were days during which momentous events took place, bringing into existence everything that is. A Creation day was a period of time made significant by the transcendent activity of God.

### From "evening" to "dawning"

"There was evening, then dawning, one day" (Gen. 1:5) So what was the "day" made significant by God's creative activity that commenced with *evening* (*'ereb*) and concluded as *dawning* (*boqer*)?

The darkness with which the explanation of Creation opens is associated with pre-creation formlessness and futility. We know this because its replacement, light, is described as *good*—that is, functioning as God intended (Gen. 1:5). The Hebrew *'ereb* connotes dusk and twilight (a mixture of light and dark). Its introduction in the Creation narrative recapitulates the immediately preceding reference to the pre-creation darkness, which God limited on the first Creation day by bringing light into existence. The direct referent for the *evening-and-dawning* day was what had just happened; at this point in the Creation narrative it was the only thing that had happened. Darkness, dusk, evening (*'ereb*) had become brightness, light, dawning (*boqer*).

In our consideration of the range of meanings of the word *day* (*yom*) it is useful to consider possible reasons for the author's unusual way of referring to each of the Creation days. Why was he at pains to specify that each



of the first six days was an *evening-then-dawning* day? Why did he not describe the seventh day similarly? For us, it is dawning that begins a new day. It was so for the Hebrews as well, because the *day* was ordinarily a work-day, a time of daylight, when something meaningful could be accomplished.

This is reflected in a series of stories confirming the fact that, for the Hebrews, the day began in the morning at least down to the time of the monarchy. Illustrating this usage the narrator speaks of “tomorrow” in the context of “evening” or “night,” indicating that the following morning—the “tomorrow”—marked the beginning of a new day. There are several such stories<sup>6</sup> in the Bible. The first is that of the incestuous relationship of Lot’s daughters with their father: “They made their father drink wine that night... The next day the firstborn said to the younger, ‘Look, I lay last night with my father’” (Gen. 19:33–34).

The next incident—also somewhat distressing—is that of a Levite and his concubine in the period of the Judges, “When the man with his concubine and his servant got up to leave, his father-in-law, the girl’s father, said to him, ‘Look, the day has worn on until it is almost evening. Spend the night. See, the day has drawn to a close. Spend the night here and enjoy yourself. Tomorrow you can get up early in the morning for your journey and go home’” (Jdg. 19:9 NRSV).

Several centuries later David’s wife Michal, the daughter of King Saul, warned her soon-to-be-king husband that Saul had sent messengers to his house to kill him the following morning. “If you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed” (1 Sam. 19:11 NRSV).

If the day was understood to begin in the morning for the Hebrews down to the time of David, why did the author of Genesis 1 depart from the usual understanding and describe the Creation days as beginning with evening and proceeding to dawning? We will explore a possible answer to this question shortly.

For the present, however, since the author expanded the usual understanding of *day* (consisting of the daylight, warm, working hours) and the usual sequence of day followed by night, it would seem helpful to draw attention to this unusual usage when the text is translated into English. It is for this reason that we have translated the conjunction between *evening* and *dawning*” (Gen. 1:5) not as *and* but as *then*. The Hebrew word here (*w*<sup>6</sup>) serves as a general, almost-all-purpose conjunction with English

equivalents ranging through “and,” “so,” “then,” “but,” “now,” and occasionally nothing at all. If, in fact, the author was describing the first Creation day as a reprise of the first creative act—the transformation from darkness to light—then one way to capture that sense in English (without being explicit, as the author wasn’t) is to translate the Hebrew as “There was evening, then dawning—one [Creation] day” (Gen. 1:5b).

For later Hebrews the word *ereb* carried negative connotations.<sup>7</sup> The night that followed evening was a time of peril. “At evening time, lo, terror!” (Is. 17:14 NIV), and often a time of death (1 Kgs. 22:35; 2 Chr. 18:34; Ez. 24:18; Ps. 90:6). It was a time when those who plotted evil would “come back, howling like dogs and prowling about the city” Ps. 59:6, 14 NRSV).

By contrast, throughout the Hebrew Bible the word *boqer* carried no such negative freight. It meant light, dawn, daybreak, sunrise, the end of fear and terror. Thus a *day* consisting of *evening* turned into *dawning* was good news indeed: a change of state, a transformation from darkness, threat, and menace to light, fulfillment, and satisfaction. “God saw that the light was good” (Gen. 1:4)—that is, it was fulfilling its divine purpose.

Having defined the archetypal creation day and underscored its essential nature as a change of state from darkness to light, the author proceeded with an explanation of what was accomplished during the following Creation days. In each case, after describing God’s creative activity he recapped the day as a transformation of some aspect of reality from a state of incompleteness (symbolized by *evening*) to a state of fulfillment (symbolized by *dawning*), moving step by step from formlessness and futility to form, functionality, and fulfillment of the divine purpose. In so doing God moved from “light mixed with darkness” to “darkness transformed into light.” Here in Genesis 1 this is what Creation is, and a “Creation day” is a part of the process.

*Evening* and *dawning* have sometimes been understood metaphorically, with a part standing in for the whole (synecdoche). Thus *evening* really meant night and *dawning* really meant day. On this basis some readers have supposed that each of the Creation days was understood by the original hearers of Genesis 1 not as days in the realm of the divine, but rather as six modern 24-hour, consecutive, solar days.

But as we have explained, this interpretation is highly unlikely. If this was the picture the author wanted to

convey, he could easily have combined the “day” and the “night” of the preceding sentence (“God named the light *day* and the darkness *night*) and designated the combined *day-and-night* sequence a “day.” But he did not do that. Alternatively, he could have done something similar to what was done later in relation to the annual Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*): “From evening to evening you shall keep your Sabbath” (Lev. 23:32 NRSV). But he did not do that either.<sup>8</sup>

Yet it is undeniable that both the author of Genesis 1 and his listeners were aware of the period of time we call a 24-hour solar day. It is clear from the entire thrust of this Creation account that the author intended these days to be viewed as exemplars of human weekdays. This connection is explicit in the Fourth Commandment (Ex. 20:8–11) and a subsequent reiteration of the Sabbath law (31:12–17);<sup>9</sup> and it was certainly understood by the first listeners.

The six Creation days in the divine realm served as prologue to the Creator’s Sabbath rest. Similarly the six weekdays in the human realm were to serve as a prologue to the weekly Sabbath, the paradigmatic Biblical instance of *imitatio Dei*. That is why the author of Genesis 1 said, “God blessed the seventh day and made it holy” (Gen. 2:3 KJV). The Sabbath rest was to be for humankind what the prototypical Sabbath rest was for God—a day of reflection on and celebration of God’s acts of Creation.

## The number six

The number six was used by the author for the sequence of Creation days and also for something else during the Creation week. In addition to the six days there were six affirmations that aspects of Creation were “good” (*tob*)—functioning as God intended they should (although the six affirmations do not correspond exactly to the six Creation days). The Hebrew *tob* can properly be translated as “fulfilling its purpose” in order to communicate the truth that each aspect of created reality was “functionally good” in the sense that other aspects of reality could then be based upon it. Six times, beginning with the creation of light, the author underscored the truth that God, in Creation, moved through a period of activity, in each case producing that which fulfilled God’s purpose.

- The first Creation day: God said, “Let there be light”; and God saw that it was fulfilling its purpose (1:4).
- The third day: God said, “Let the waters be gathered together, and let the dry land appear”; and God saw

that they were fulfilling their purpose (1:10).

- Also the third day: God said, “Let the earth bring forth seed-bearing plants and trees with seed-bearing fruit”; and God saw that they were fulfilling their purpose (1:12).
- The fourth day: God said, “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky”; and God saw that they were fulfilling their purpose (1:18).
- The fifth day: God said, “Let the water bring forth swarms of living creatures” and “let birds fly across the dome of the sky”; and God saw that they were fulfilling their purpose (1:21).
- The sixth day: God said, “Let the earth bring forth creatures of every kind”; and God saw that they were fulfilling their purpose (1:25).

Finally God said, “Let us make the humankind in our image”; God saw that everything he had made was fulfilling the collective divine purpose *very well* (1:31).

Perhaps our focus on the six Creation days has been one-sided; perhaps we should have been just as interested in *how* the creative events of each day fulfilled God’s intentions, culminating in the sixth day when what occurred fulfilled his purpose *very well*. But the original listeners heard the *explanation*, not its *interpretation*. We too must first *hear* the explanation for what it is before proceeding to the interpretation. That is a further, theological task.

## Recapitulation

To recap: each of the six days saw creative events that accomplished what they were intended to do.

- Light and its separation from darkness.
- Dry land and its separation from sea.
- Vegetation and its ordering into various “kinds.”
- Lights in the heavens and their assignment as time-keepers.
- Fish and fowl and their ordering into “kinds.”
- Wild and domestic animals and their ordering into “kinds,” plus male and female humans and their appointment as stewards of the land.

All six evening-then-dawning Creation days were characterized by ordering and arranging by the Creator, moving created reality toward its intended functionality. The Creation days thus become archetypes—paradigms—of human weekdays. During the week we, like God, are to

bring—relatively, of course—light from darkness and order from chaos. As creatures in the presence and service of our Creator, we are called to use our time, energy, and creativity to bring light and order as our talents allow.

## The Sabbath, Culmination of the Six Days

The seventh day, at the end of Creation week, was the capstone of divine creative activity. On each of the six preceding days in the realm of the divine, God had transformed a portion of finite reality from a state of darkness, symbolized by evening (*'ereb*) into a state of light, symbolized by dawning (*boqer*). Because it was explicitly not a transformation of that which was dark, disordered, and functionless into light, order, and function, the seventh day is the first Creation *yom* not to be described by *evening* and *dawning*. It was not just more of the same: on the seventh day God rested.

As our human weekdays are given us so that we can, in our own spheres of influence, work as the Creator worked “in the beginning,” so too we are given a seventh day for rest. This is not, as often supposed, for us to “rest up” in order to work all the more diligently and effectively during the next six days; it is for us to experience in gratitude the satisfaction of accomplishment. The seventh day is not for the sake of the six days; rather, the six days are for the sake of the seventh. The Sabbath is “not an interlude but the climax of living.”<sup>10</sup>

By failing to remember that the six creation days were a divine prologue to that first Sabbath we run the risk of missing the purpose for which we are granted the privilege of “working while it is day” (John 9:4). We are called to work six days a week to bring order out of chaos and, on the seventh to join the Creator in celebrating worthwhile tasks accomplished.

And what, one may well ask, is a “worthwhile task”? That too is part of the message of Genesis 1. A worthwhile task takes something disordered, chaotic, dark, formless, and unproductive, and renders it ordered, organized, light, formed, and functional. In the author's words, a worthwhile task takes a state of *'ereb* and transforms it into a state of *boqer*. And the purpose of the seventh day is to allow us, in the presence of our Creator, to share in the joy of a worthwhile job well done.

Our work—our whole existence—is worthwhile to the extent that it transforms “there was evening” in our little section of the world into “then dawning.” ■

## Footnotes

1. John H. Stek, “What Says the Scripture?” in *Portraits of Creation: Biblical and Scientific Perspectives on the World's Formation*, ed. Howard J. Van Till (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 205.

2. The author of the extant text has been traditionally (although not Scripturally) identified as Moses, but is now often identified by scholars as the Elohist (or simply E), one of four sources of the Pentateuch according to the Documentary Hypothesis. The text, of course, may well have been edited one or more times in the course of its preservation and transmission. Our references to “the author” function as a kind of personification of the text.

3. There is scholarly dispute about the exact division between the two narrative explanations of Creation in Genesis 1 and 2. The issue is whether 2:4a concludes the first explanation or begins the second. In the quotation we use as an epigraph, John Stek indicates that the first explanation ends at 2:3. We, however, include 2:4a, chiefly because it parallels the language of 1:1 and because it does not accurately describe the following material (2:5–25).

4. The original author was almost certainly male, given the gender roles of that time, place, and culture.

5. M. Saebø, “*yom*, II,” in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck et al., 15 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977–2006), 6:13.

6. Jacob Milgrom cites these and other stories as indicating that for the Hebrews the day began in the morning.

7. H. Niehr, “‘*'ereb*,” in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, 13:340.

8. This evening-to-evening designation is never applied to the weekly Sabbath in the Hebrew Bible, and the New Testament evidence is ambiguous. Later Jews, including observant Jews at the present time, have applied the *Yom Kippur* command in this way, as have Seventh-day Adventists.

9. This is the last explicit Scriptural connection of the Sabbath to Creation. Seventh-day Adventist readers and writers have often seen an implicit connection in the First Angel's Message in Rev. 14. See, for example, John T. Baldwin, “Revelation 14:7: An Angel's Worldview,” in *Creation, Catastrophe, and Calvary: Why a Global Flood Is Vital to the Doctrine of Atonement*, ed. by John Templeton Baldwin (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 2000), 19–39.

10. See Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York: Farrar, Straus, 1959), 14.

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This article is adapted from the authors' forthcoming book, *Understanding Genesis 1: Why It Is So Hard for Us to Hear Now What the Ancient Hebrews Heard Then*.

out the inadequacy of that formulation by citing the very obvious errors which Scripture teaches if taken only "in the part," that is, apart from the context of the entire Scripture: the lies of Satan, for example.

The point here is that Fuller Seminary got itself into difficulty by adopting an explicit statement of faith. It is instructive to notice the circumstances under which the original statement of faith was formed. Fuller had a professor, Bela Vasady, who was somewhat more liberal than his colleagues and whose participation in the World Council of Churches also provoked suspicion. Indeed, Vasady's affiliation with the World Council so disgusted many of the financial supporters of Charles Fuller's radio program, "The Old Fashioned Revival Hour," that Fuller finally appealed to the seminary to get rid of Vasady.

How was Vasady gotten rid of? By drafting a statement of faith which he could not and would not sign. The ploy worked, but it left a number of far more conservative professors with a dilemma because they had reservations about the new creed which, to meet the crisis, had been gotten up in such haste.

When the statement of faith finally was revised to accord better with the majority position, Fuller Seminary was left vulnerable to attacks like those of Lindsell, who took the opportunity to accuse it of a drift toward liberalism.

The episode points up the hazard that creeds are almost impossible to change without embarrassment and acrimony. Any changes are likely to unleash charges against those revising the creed that they are either abandoned the faith of the fathers or going absurdly beyond it into a spooky forest of rabid nonsense.

Are proposed changes to the church's fundamental beliefs really expressions of the nonnegotiable fundamentals of our faith? Or are they, on the other hand, merely the church's "current" understanding of its beliefs, subject to continued examination, discussion and reformulation?

When one asks why further revisions are needed, one gets the former answer: We have to defend the non-negotiables. When one questions the creedal nature of the statements, one gets the latter answer: These are not creeds because they are not to be cast in concrete and declared the church's position for all time.

But if they are nonnegotiable fundamentals, why not cast them in concrete? And once the church has done

that—in what sense and by what criteria are these statements not creeds? And if they are creeds, how can they escape Ellen White's condemnation? Of course, one may say, yes, perhaps there is some danger in enacting creedal statements, but it's just the price we have to pay for the far greater value of being able to exclude those with whose views we do not agree.

Is this really the only way to preserve the landmarks? Has it come to the place where with all the administrative talent, theological expertise, scientific wisdom, and Divine guidance with which the church is blessed, it can think of no better way to defend the faith?

Another question. Suppose an administrator decides someone on his staff does not measure up to the test imposed by the church's creed? Then what? Does this person lose his chance for tenure or promotion? Is he or she to be fired? Does he or she go on trial? Before whom?

Creeds are tools. They may be sharp or blunt. The church seems to be keen on fashioning some particularly sharp creedal instruments. If we are to trust such sharp tools to human beings, we deserve to know who will be handling them and under what guidelines and protections. Will they be handled with the care, patience, training and concern of a surgeon or with the crude dispatch of a hooded executioner?

The historic Adventist witness against creeds was based on a tendency for the more specific doctrinal statement to seize interpretive control of the less specific. Thus when a creedal statement attempts to define a doctrine more precisely than inspiration does, the creed becomes the authorized interpreter of Scripture rather than Scripture standing alone as its own interpreter. In trying to defend Scripture against the "opinions of learned men" and the "deductions of science," we need to do better than to substitute "the creeds and decisions of ecclesiastical councils." Not one of these, Ellen White says, should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith.<sup>27</sup>

As the General Conference of 1883 pointed out, once a creed is promulgated, people begin to look to it to obtain guidance in religious matters. Bible study and the leadings of the Spirit are neglected, and the church becomes formal and spiritually life less. "The selfsame principle which was maintained by Rome," Ellen White writes, "prevents multitudes in Protestant churches from searching the Bible for themselves. They are taught to accept its teachings as interpreted by the church; and there are thousands who



dare receive nothing, however plainly revealed in Scripture, that is contrary to their creed or the established teaching of their church."<sup>28</sup>

As Blakely pointed out in *The Review* in 1890, creeds increase controversy, polarization and schism within a church rather than lessening it. There is potential for divisiveness not only in the content of the creed but also in the whole question of whether the creed should be adopted and how it should be used.

Truth cannot be determined by majority vote. Often a greater or lesser number of the majority are not even aware of what the issues are, but since creed-making involves official church actions invariably involving political and personal power relationships, creed-formation can easily be corrupted by personal or political ambitions.

Once a creed is enacted, any attempt to change it will unleash charges of laxness and heresy or foolishness and obscurantism on the very ones who are only attempting to safeguard the inspired writings.

These will be a greater hazard in direct proportion to the specificity of the creedal statement involved. The enactment of a precise and detailed creed places a sharp tool in the hands of those in power. No matter how carefully some may handle such a tool, there are always those who will use it to coerce the conscience and impugn the motives and beliefs of their fellow church members. For all these reasons, churches should seek other ways of defending and preserving the landmarks of their faith. ■

## Notes and References

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21. Blakely, W.A., "Why Not Have a Creed?" *Review and Herald* 67 (Jan. 14, 1890): 19.
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**Ronald Graybill** writes from Riverside, California, where he recently retired from his position as Community Benefit Director for Loma Linda University Medical Center. This article is a revised version of an article that he wrote in 1977. It appeared under a pseudonym in *Spectrum*, three years before the Fundamental Beliefs were originally voted into existence.

柳陰高士  
高松浪那  
自豪浪那  
何姓氏於  
李晉為詢  
丁亥春月  
游見



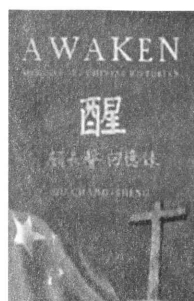
# Memoirs of a Chinese Historian | BY REBEKAH LIU

I knew it would be challenging for me, an Adventist minister from Mainland China, who was converted from atheism and communism to the faith of Jesus and the Adventist Church (although I have never renounced my love for the Chinese Communist Party) to write a review on **Awaken: Memoirs of a Chinese Historian**. In his autobiography, Professor Gu Chang-Sheng openly renounces both Adventism and the Chinese Community Party. In many aspects, Gu is a “strange other” to me with whom I can dialogue, learn lessons, and get different perspectives without agreeing with him on many issues.

Gu’s memoir is roughly divided into four periods of his life: his life before he was an Adventist, life in the Adventist Church, life under the Chinese Communist Party, and life in the United States, a life-story spanning over eight decades.

Gu’s pre-Adventist life was “a life in a slum” (1). His family belonged to the poorest class of the Chinese people whose major concern in life was to survive no matter what. Although Gu devotes only six pages to this period of his life, these pages provide important social background which sheds light on Gu’s perspective on life and helps readers to understand the behaviors of Gu’s parents as well as Gu himself.

The author summarizes his family’s “conversion” to Adventism by using a typical Chinese expression, “eating the foreign religion” (6). This kind of conversion story happened and is still happening in many poor countries. The Adventist missionaries felt “the best way to attract people to join the church was to offer them jobs or charity” (6). So they took a “loving” advantage of poor people’s desire to



survive and offered Gu’s father a job in the Shanghai Adventist Sanitarium under the condition that Gu’s father “would have to be baptized before he could take a job” (5). After that, Gu’s life story within the Adventist Church revolved around their family’s effort to keep his father’s job in the church so that the family could survive.

Gu especially notes that he did not understand the meaning of his baptism, and what worried him was “the dirty water” that he swallowed from the baptismal pool. Gu’s baptism appears to be a sign of his unhappy experience with the Adventist Church. Although his life in the Church was not all bad, and at least some encouraging experiences with Dr. Harry Miller probably brightened a little bit of his outlook on the Church, his overall evaluation of his life in the Adventist Church was that he “let” his life “be dictated by the Seventh-Day [sic] Adventist Church” (49). He had to attend the Adventist school in order to preserve his father’s job, he even had to marry a girl he did not love and had to work in the *Signs of the Times* Publishing House in order to please the Adventist pastor.

It is no wonder that at last, in 1951, after the Chinese Communist Party took over the government, Gu was active in exposing the missionary activities in his church, and he cooperated with the work team during the Anti-American Imperialism Accusation Campaigns. He was “selected [by the Communist Party] as a member of the [accusation] committee” (61) and later “chosen to be one of the accusers at the third and last accusation meeting against the Adventist Church” (64). During the accusation meetings, Gu confessed, “My work for the American Christian mission in China was solely to make a living to support my family” (83).

In 1956 Gu finally ceased his work relationship with the Adventist Church and became a worker in the Shanghai

Foreign Language College. He later transferred to the Shanghai Institute of Historical Studies. Gu remained a theist. Although throughout Gu's early years under the Chinese Communist Party, Comrade Luo, the Director of the Shanghai Bureau of Religious Affairs, had been friendly to him, Gu's overall experience with the Chinese Communist Party was not a happy one either. During the great Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), like many people in that time, Gu was falsely accused and was sent to a labor camp for three years, mainly due to his involvement with the National Party during the anti-Japanese war and also his work in the American-operated Adventist publishing house. After Deng Xiaoping stepped in to power, Gu was assigned a teaching position in the History Department of the East China Normal University and began to write his book on the history of Christian mission in China.

**I**n 1984 Gu traveled to the United States and became a visiting scholar at Yale University. This signified the starting point of his scholarly life in America. While traveling in the U.S. in 1989, Gu responded to the Chinese government's crush of the June Fourth Student Movement by writing an article criticizing the Chinese Communist Party. Thus, he finally broke off his relationship with the Party and since then has remained in the U.S. Currently, Gu enjoys his life as an American citizen in Massachusetts.

Gu's life is a miniature of the lives of the common mass in China. His struggle to survive and finally to scholarship throughout the tumultuous years in China is encouraging.

The author does not explicitly explain the title of his book, leaving the reader to ponder the question: "Awaken," but from what and by what? Probably to awaken from the "brainwashing" of the Adventist Church (70), and also to awaken from Community ideology? Awakened by the democratic spirit of the free land of America?

As an Adventist minister serving in the Adventist Church for more than twenty years, I have to confess that I read Gu's book in pain. My church and many other denominations owe an apology to people like Gu and his parents, and to many other poor families who have been taken advantage of in China and throughout the world. The Church is totally responsible for creating "Rice Christians." Unless the Church recognizes its use of the poor people, the reconciliation between people like Gu and the

Adventist Church will not be possible. It is so easy to point a finger at Gu and his family for "eating the foreign religion," but we may be too critical in doing this. As I have noted earlier, Gu's family belonged to the poorest class in China.

Gu's parents and even Gu, when he was in the Adventist Church, were deprived of the traditional ethical teachings of Confucius. The ideal person in Confucianism is what Mencius describes when he says, "A virtuous man is a man whom no money and rank can corrupt, no poverty and hardship can shake, and no power and force can suffocate." This high ethical standard belongs to the educated elite in China, and no one should judge Gu and his family with this ethical standard. To the poor masses what counts is whatever helps them to survive. But we, as a Church, do need to be self-critical because we, somehow, in the name of Jesus, took advantage of the simple human mentality to survive and thus betrayed and put a stumbling block before the little ones whom Jesus loves. We are to be thankful for God's grace, because after his bad experience with the Adventist Church, Gu remained a believer of God. Here we see the difference in the Church for particular classes of people and the God universal for the poor as well as the rich, for the great as well as the little ones.

Besides his life story in the Adventist Church, writing as a historian, Gu also provides some statistics about the former Adventist China Division, as well as his insight into the Adventist system. He states, "From 1902 to 1940, the China Division received a total of \$635,802.95 from the United States to be spent primarily on the construction of church, school and hospital buildings. Instead, over 40 percent of the money was spent on the missionaries' residences alone, while the church buildings only occupied 2.3 percent of the total funds (63). In fact, Gu is not the first person to refer to this statistic. As early as 1951, both China Division Treasurer S. J. Lee and the former China Division Executive Secretary David Lin, lamented that "Today [1951], all the fine, large buildings in which the church invested 40 percent of its funds, and the missionaries' houses which consumed another 43.5 percent, are in the hands of God's enemies. They stand as a monument to the former wealth of the Seventh-Day [sic] Adventist Church in China."<sup>1</sup>

Lin also adds, "With very few exceptions, the China Training Institute (the "Andrews University" in the former China Division) faculty and student body of 1950–51 are



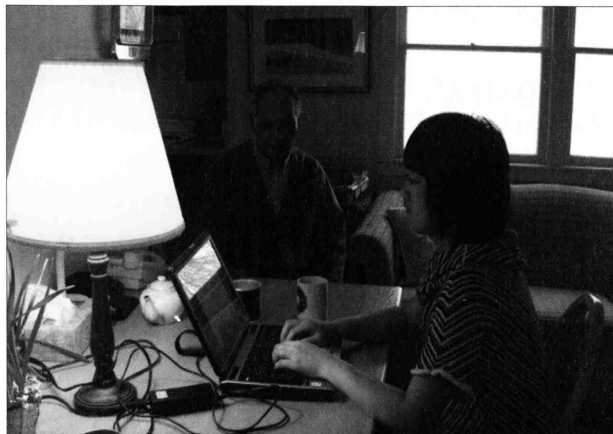
no longer practicing Seventh-day Adventists. The same is true of our other schools....Men hurrying to be baptized in order to qualify for a job."

From a missiological perspective, as an eye-witness to the growth of the Chinese Adventist Church, I have to say that the dissolving of the former China Division proved to be a blessing in disguise, including the rise of the Chinese Communist Party and the enforcement of the Three-Self Principles (Self-governing, Self-financing, and Self-propagating) in the Church. All of these events brought good results. First, it cleansed the Church; second, it helped the Adventist Church in China, "the fat lady," in George Knight's words, to get her weight reduced in order to enter the narrow gate.<sup>2</sup> It helped her to forsake its top-heavy institutional structure by political forces (Does the Adventist Church worldwide also need some political forces to help her out today?). Thirdly, it enabled the Adventist churches in China to rely more on the leading of the Holy Spirit. When the former China Division was still standing, with all of its institutions, the church membership in 1946 was just a little more than 20,000. Today, without any institution, not even a seminary, the Adventist Church in China has reached a membership of 400,000.

Zheng Zhao-Rong, former president of the Chongqing Sanitarium and Hospital, also the principal of the former Chongqing Adventist Academy and now a 93-year-old pastor in China, reflects on the Adventist mission in China: "During the time when the Chinese Adventist Church was under the leadership of a Mission, the leadership structure in Shanghai was huge with lots of personnel spending lots of money, but the baptisms were not many. Later when foreign missionaries were gone, and outside financial support was cut off, our loving heavenly Father moved the brothers and sisters in Shanghai to work for the Lord with zeal. Although at that time, in the Shanghai church, there was only one person who got full-time pay and only a few received allowances, the lay members of the church worked with zeal, and every year there are more than 200 people who [have been] baptized. For so many years, the Mission failed to translate the five great works, the Great Conflict of the Ages Series of the Spirit of Prophecy, and yet, within a short period of two or three years, these were all translated and printed out under extremely difficult situation[s]. When the Mission was still in China for so many decades, was there ever an incidence of more than 1,000

or 2,000 people being baptized at one time? Never! And yet, when there is no foreign leadership, [these kinds] of baptisms of 1,000 and 2,000 actually happened.

What do these facts indicate? [They] indicate that the progress of God's ministry does not depend upon talents, knowledge, and money, but the willingness to suffer hardship and to endure toil, and [for] God's faithful sons and daughters [to] obey God's guidance, looking up to the results which are given the Lord through the Holy Spirit. The past experiences, and the understanding of



**Photos taken during a visit the author and her brother made to Prof. Gu's home in Hynnes. Top: Rebekah Liu typing Professor Gu's words as he spoke. Bottom: at the bus station when Professor Gu and a friend, a Protestant church member, saw off Rebekah and her brother.**

the past give us important lessons. We should always bear in mind these lessons which the Lord has given us in practical living.”<sup>3</sup>

I also read Gu's life story under the Chinese Communist Party with pain. His story recalls the painful road China has gone through collectively towards modernization. Despite all the pain caused by human systems, as a minister working in China, I would like to offer my opinion to Gu as well as his to American readers regarding the Chinese Communist Party. In his epilogue, Gu expresses his firm belief that “China will have democracy in the near future.” He says he is “hopeful for China because my country has over four thousand years of civilization to back her up” (204). I agree with Gu that China will have democracy in the future, but I firmly believe every country has its own culture and ways to achieve its prosperity. It seems that Gu feels democracy is the way to solve all of China's problems; apparently, he said this before the economic crisis started in the United States and then spread into the rest of the world like an epidemic. We do have over four thousand years of civilization, but we also have over two thousand years of an autocratic political system. The last emperor of China was only overthrown in 1911, and within one hundred years, it is amazing that China could make such progress under the leadership of the Communist Party.

Comparing today's China with the China of sixty years ago, I would have to say the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) fulfilled its promise to the Chinese people when it first propagated its ideology. It is true that the CCP is an autocratic political party, and yet, it has been born within the larger Chinese culture. The CCP is part of the Chinese people. Their way of doing things and their worldview and mentalities are the same as the common Chinese people. They are the Chinese people.

If we want to help China, simply writing articles overseas to criticize it harshly will never help, but rather would harden the hearts of the leadership in China. To me, those who criticize the Party harshly overseas may be suspected of building their political status before the Westerners. It has been my observation that one of the fastest ways to become popular in the West is to speak against the CCP openly. Why don't we give more time to China and leave China alone to her own people and problems? If we really want China to change for the better, let's not take the easy path to stay overseas and write, but to be with her and

contribute our part in improving the country wisely. This is what Dietrich Bonhoeffer did when he decided to take the last ship from the States back to Germany to join his suffering people to face the challenge together with his own people as a collective body.

Democratic ideas began in western civilization, starting with the Greek city states more than two thousand years ago. Western civilization went through a number of democratic movements throughout the ages, including the Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation, and the Industrial Revolution. The United States started with a democratic system, and its first citizens were the Puritans. Yet, we still hear Martin Luther King's sermon, “I have a Dream,” even in the 1960s. Today, every Martin Luther King Day sermons are being preached, pushing for more democratic treatment of African Americans, even inside the Adventist Church. The lack of democracy is not only a CCP problem, it is the prevailing culture of the Orientals where collectivism is preferred over individualism. Inside China, the lack of democracy is also a problem in the Adventist Church, even in Adventist homes. Gu's sad story with Mary, his first love, was not just because of the Adventist Church pastor's intervention. In fact, because Gu was the eldest son in a poor Chinese family whose mother could not see the value of having a well-educated son, he had to sacrifice his personal ambition for the sake of his mother and younger brother. There was no CCP at that time, and yet he did not enjoy his own human rights as understood by westerners. I do agree with Gu that China will be “gradually and peacefully changed” (204) for the better. Gu's life experiences tell it loud that whenever the country is in turmoil, the common people suffer most.

There are some minor things I would like to point out. Gu asked, “Where did all of the grain go? In Anhui province alone 700,000 people starved to death in the years between 1959–1961” (132, 133). (All of the figures Gu got were from a local government leader). The first reason he gave was “The grain went into the stomachs of most of the members of the CCP, from Mao and the highest officials to the grassroots party members.” I checked with my mother, currently an ordained pastor of the Adventist Church in China, who was a government officer at that time, and she said Gu must have misunderstood. In fact, from the grass root CCP members' homes up to Chairman Mao Tse Tong's home, everyone's rice was regulated during those years. At that time, the CCP was not

yet corrupted that deeply. Despite the starvation, most of the Chinese people still loved Chairman Mao passionately, and that was why revolt was never heard of during that time. The Chinese people at large had not yet awakened from Mao worship. The reason which caused the starvation was first of all the inflation of the grain harvest figures by local governments. The local government wanted to create a picture that communism was already on the way up, so they exaggerated the figure of the grain harvest when reporting to the central government. The result was most of the grains were stored for the exhibition of the prosperity under the leadership of the Party while people were starving.

The second reason for mass starvation was that even though there was grain in the field, all the human power was invested in the steel-making program, and no one dared to harvest the grain. The third reason was the commune café; food was not purchased but rather everyone ate in the commune café. The number of deaths from starvation is overwhelming, and my mother was surprised by that number because of the existence of commune cafés; everyone should have had something to eat.

One more minor point is that apparently Gu is not very much acquainted with Adventist teachings, otherwise he would not have stated that "Their [the Adventists'] prophet was Ellen White, and their interpretation of the Bible is based on her writings" (11). It is a common misunderstanding about the Adventist Church by non-Adventists.

My third minor point focuses on Gu's comment that "The ideology that 'history should serve the politics, especially the present politics,' is still strong today in the People's Republic of China under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party" (140). My question is, in which country does history not serve politics? The CCP stated this political principle clearly while the rest of the western world would not dare to speak it out. History is never neutral, so when Gu states that as a historian, he told American audiences the true

stories of what happened in the People's Republic of China, I believe Gu is honest in his claim, and yet, I would have to add that the same history written by different people would come out differently, and every version could be the true version, although not the only true one.

Overall, I found this book thought-provoking. I'm grateful for Gu's honest opinion and description of the human side of the Adventist Church. It is a valuable, first-hand historical book. Recognizing that any human organization would have such faults as mentioned in his book, I feel the need of being reminded of the human side of the Church, so that we would never lose sight of the God who is in, outside of, and above the Church. I recommend that one copy of Gu's book be placed in our Mission Institute on the Andrews University campus, and one in the world-wide headquarters in Washington, D.C., as part of the remembrance of the former China Division, lest we forget what we have done to the little ones so to avoid having the church hurt more poor people like Gu and his family. ■

## Notes and References

1. See S. J. Lee, "Adventism in China: The Communist Takeover," *Spectrum* 7 (1976): 16–22; David Lin, "Years of Heartbreak: Lessons for Mission by a China Insider," *Spectrum* 7 (1976): 22–33.

2. Reference is made to George Knight, who is a Seventh-day Adventist historian and educator. He is Emeritus Professor of Church History at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI. See George Knight, *The Fat Lady and the Kingdom: Confronting the Challenge of Change and Secularization* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1995).

3. A letter written by Zheng Zhao-Rong on November 23, 2008, to a leading brother in Beijing. The letter was sent by the brother to the General Conference President together with the brother's own letter regarding Chinese Adventist Church issues. Neither of the letters received a response.

**Rebekah Liu** is an ordained minister from Mainland China, currently completing a Ph.D. in New Testament Studies at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University.

**The Church  
is totally  
responsible  
for creating  
"Rice Chris-  
tians"...My  
church and  
many other  
denomina-  
tions owe an  
apology  
to people  
like Gu...**

## Review of Martin Doblmeier's Film, *The Adventists* | BY TODD KLINE

In denominationally diverse films such as *Bonhoeffer*, *Washington National Cathedral: A New Century, A New Calling*, and *The Power of Forgiveness*, it is evident that filmmaker, Martin Doblmeier, possesses a keen interest in exploring the role that religious belief, generally Christian, plays during critical moments throughout a human being's life. *Bonhoeffer* focuses on the individual in detailing the German Protestant theologian's decision to actively support violent resistance to Hitler's Nazi regime, while *The Power of Forgiveness* explores the intangible sensibility, oft-motivated by Judeo-Christian theology, that leads some, and compels others, to "let go" of

actual or perceived wrongs. One may argue that the underlying theme of the majority of his films is restoration, whether it is physical or emotional, of the individual or group. In *The Adventists* Doblmeier continues this theme with an exploration of the intersection of faith and modern medicine evidenced within the Seventh-day Adventist-sponsored health care system.

While the title suggests an overview of the Seventh-day Adventist movement as a whole, the focus of the film centers on the Adventist medical care system, itself an outgrowth of the Adventist's historical emphasis on healthy living. Doblmeier competently lays out the origins of mod-



A re-enactment scene portrays the mid-19th century event called the Great Disappointment, featured in *The Adventists*.



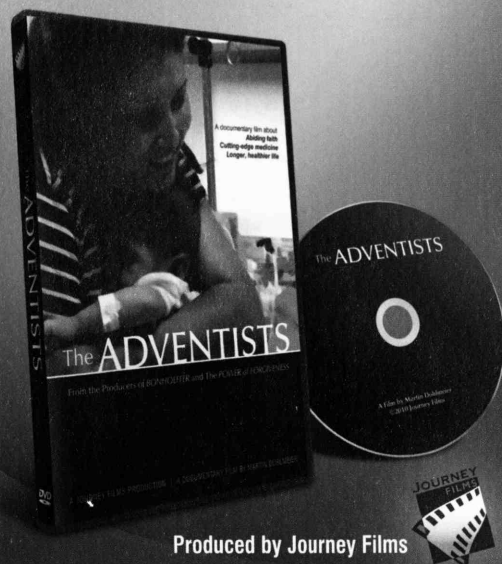
ern Seventh-day Adventism through a series of historical re-creations that focus on one of its primary founders, Ellen White. These scenes are well-staged but too short in duration to adequately explain to the unfamiliar viewer what motivated White, other than briefly detailed spiritual visions, to heavily emphasize matters of health, much less spirituality. Far more effective is Doblmeier's decision to highlight Dr. John Harvey Kellogg.

Poorly showcased in the heavily fictionalized 1994 film, *The Road to Wellville*, Dr. Kellogg's true life story is fascinating. Albeit popularly known as the inventor of the now-ubiquitous cornflake, per the film, Dr. Kellogg played an essential role in transitioning Ellen White's nineteenth century teachings on healthy living and diet into its remarkably successful twentieth century form. Doblmeier's narrative of this period in Seventh-day Adventist history is particularly effective at whetting the viewer's appetite for greater detail about this unique physician, but it is over all too quickly as the film shifts to the modern-day Adventist-operated health care system, the true star of the film.

It may be an understatement to say that religious faith and science, particularly medicine, do not have a history of harmonious co-existence. Doblmeier's interest in this subject is immediately obvious as he begins to document how the traditional tension between faith and science is a stereotype that does not seem to find purchase within the Seventh-day Adventist health care system. Through carefully crafted shots that exude light, warmth, and healing, he provides what amounts to virtual tours of the denomination's most prominent medical facilities, including Loma Linda University Medical Center in Loma Linda, California; Kettering Medical Center in Kettering, Ohio; and Celebration Health in Orlando, Florida. The sincerity and competency of the staff interviewed at each institution is genuinely felt. These are people who appear to have a true passion for their work in the medical field, which is inspired by their deep Christian faith. This commitment is successfully demonstrated through a surprising interview with the prominent attorney, Alan Ginsberg, a patient at Adventist Health Care System's Florida Hospital. Despite being Jewish, Ginsberg affirmatively chose the Florida Hospital for medical treatment due to its reputation for a high level of care.

Expertly shot and extremely moving, the latter half of the film interweaves the groundbreaking work of Loma Linda surgeon, Dr. Leonard Bailey, with a modern-day

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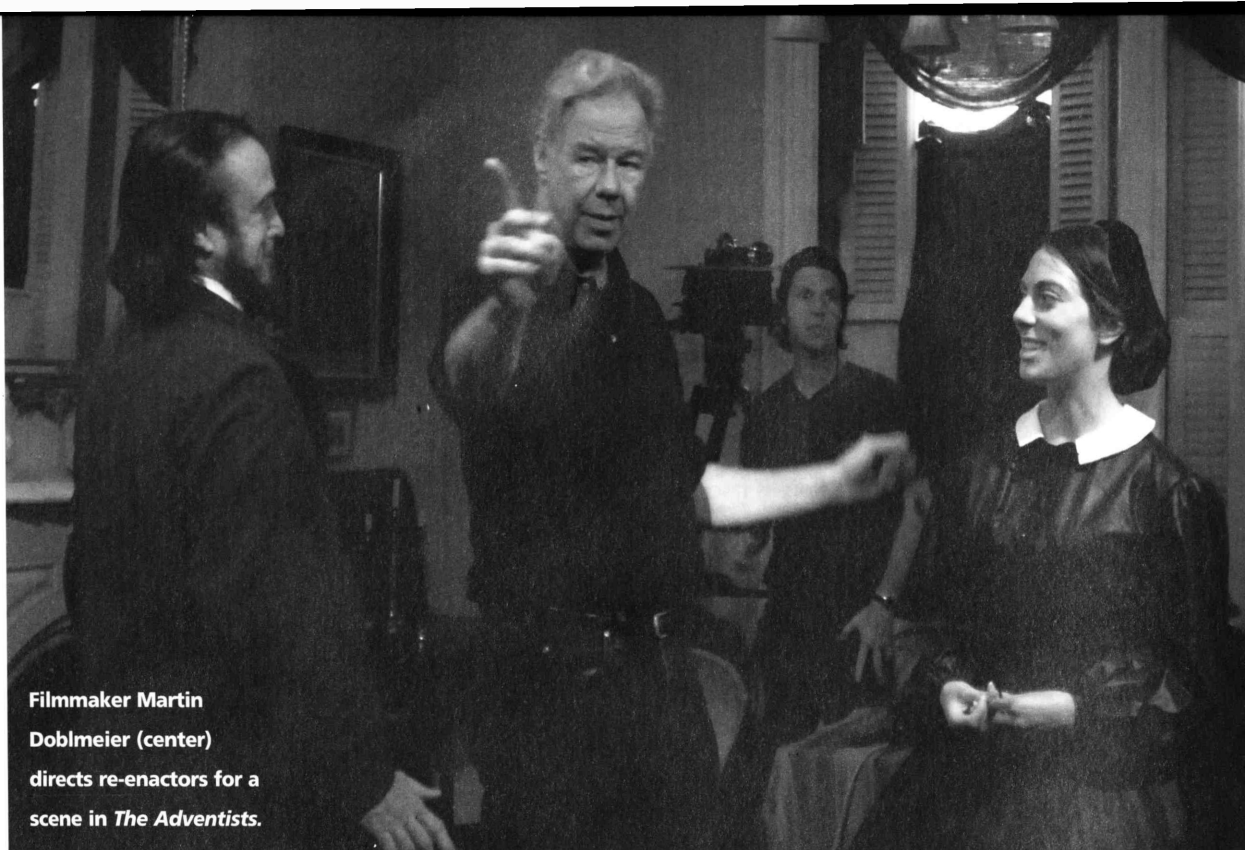
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**Filmmaker Martin Doblmeier (center) directs re-enactors for a scene in *The Adventists*.**

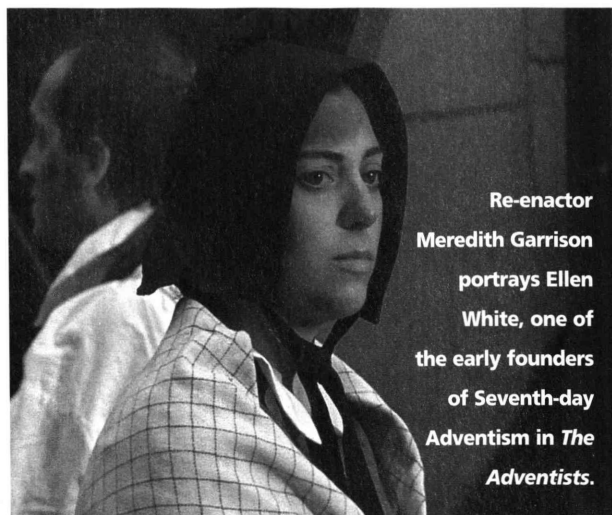
medical crisis. Shown in the film as a still spry and nimble man approaching seventy years of age, Dr. Bailey pioneered the infant heart transplant procedure in the mid-1980s by successfully replacing a faulty human heart with that of a baboon. "Baby Fae," as she is known publicly, lived for just over twenty-one days following the procedure. The procedure was considered a success and led to "Baby Moses," who at 24 years is the oldest living infant heart transplant recipient.

Dr. Bailey's professional story is chronicled alongside that of an infant facing a life-threatening cardiac condition. Many filmmakers lack the talent and craft to chronicle such a story without appearing manipulative, exploitive, or simply crass. However, Doblmeier's sensitivity as an experienced documentarian shines during these scenes. Through them he effectively connects the historical relevance of the unique Adventist health tradition with modern-day, life-saving procedures. Seeing such an overt and unapologetic embrace of modern medical science by a conservative Christian tradition is both jarring and, strangely, natural. Simply put, it feels right.

Mike Hale, a film critic for *The New York Times*, writes in his review of *Have You Heard from Johannesburg?*, that some documentarians have a tendency to run a bit long when dealing with serious subject matter, as if the extended duration of the film itself somehow adds legitimacy. Doblmeier encounters the opposite problem with *The Adventists*.

Although he is nearly successful, 56 minutes proves to be too brief to comprehensively detail such a truly fascinating and complex subject, one that deserves greater coverage. As an exploration of the medical journey Seventh-day Adventists have taken from their inception to the present, the film is quite successful, but viewed as an overview of the denomination's history as a whole, it is less successful. Perhaps viewed in that light, Doblmeier's documentary succeeds. It made me want to know more. ■

**Todd Kline** is a Lieutenant Commander in the U.S. Navy's Judge Advocate General's Corps currently serving as the supervising International Law attorney for Africa and southwestern Europe.



**Re-enactor Meredith Garrison portrays Ellen White, one of the early founders of Seventh-day Adventism in *The Adventists*.**

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# POETRY

## Intangibles

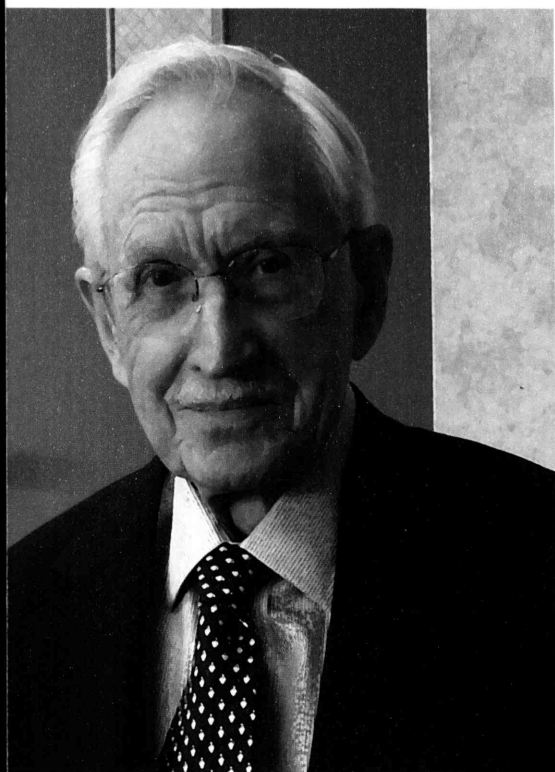
BY T. S. GERATY

(Genesis 1,2; Psalm 33: 6, 9; Job 38)

By faith alone we trust our God.  
The Bible is our norm—  
In seven days He made the earth  
and with His word did form  
The seas and land and all therein  
and found all "very good."  
For life and breath and robust health  
He provided food;  
Intelligence and power of choice  
were given humankind  
To exercise in blissful scenes  
Their heart and soul and mind.  
The weekly cycle started then  
and ended with the rest  
In mem'ry of creation's God,  
The Sabbath day so blessed.

The Christian's view is Bible-based  
For "thus saith the Word;"  
For how the world came to be—  
God spoke, and things occurred.  
Paleoanthropologists  
Confuse their time and place:  
"For who relate to whom," they ask  
"In chronology and space?"  
The Hominoids and Homo true  
Lack missing links to prove  
In rational and logic ways  
What many disapprove.  
Why blood islands clot and form  
Is very hard to see  
Before the vessels that come next  
In embryology.  
Class, and Order, Genus all  
And Species in its place

Are recognized the world around  
In taxonomic base.  
The protests, fungi, plants and kin,  
And animals to see  
Are recognized for what they are  
In spite of chemistry.  
From whence came quasar, sun and star  
And gravitation pull?  
And why black holes in galaxy?  
What makes the moon so full?  
In systems closed momentum stays  
And energy is saved,  
But how can quantum bosons move  
When protons misbehaved?  
In distances beyond our ken,  
In light-years with the spheres  
Who controls exactitude  
Of days and months and years?



**Thomas S. Geraty**, of Loma Linda, California, will be 96 on Dec. 2. He leads a monthly poetry reading session for residents at Linda Valley Villa where he resides. During his career as an educator for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, he served as a missionary to China in the 1940s. When the Communists arrived, he and his family moved to Beirut, Lebanon, where he was president of Middle East University until 1960. After serving as Associate Director of the Department of Education in the General Conference through 1970, he held the position of Dean of Andrews University's School of Education from 1970–1977 where he founded their doctoral programs. His volunteer service since his retirement has taken him to Hawaii, the Far Eastern Division, Atlantic Union College, Middle East University and La Sierra University. He has three children, six grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren.