## NEWS

**New Details Released about Half-million Dollar Online Theft from GC:** The process by which hundreds of thousands of dollars were stolen electronically last year from General Conference accounts appears to have involved masterful ingenuity and flawless execution....

**Well-known Missionary Pilot and Others Killed in Plane Crash in Indonesia:** An Adventist missionary with decades of experience flying in Indonesia and PNG dies as he lived, confronting dangers, toils, and snares to bring hope and healing....

**Second Keough Lecture: American "Culture War" has Infiltrated Adventist Discussion:** The debate regarding women in ministry appears to be producing at least one serious agreement—recent US cultural history always seems to lie at the foundation of the impasse, according to Dr. Olive Hemmings....

**Corrected: Adventists Stir Political Change Among Minorities in NZ:** It now appears no pastors—only lay leaders—spoke out politically last week in controversial meetings....

## OPINION

**“Time Will Never be a Test Again”:** Historically, great heartbreak in the Adventist Church stems from repeated attempts to impose time-frames and dates of occurrence on prophetic and historical events. Jack Hoehn warns us not to repeat the error by enshrining a time-frame on Creation within our Fundamental Beliefs....

"**When the Peculiar People Sing**: A Few Hymns from Early Adventist Hymnals:** In the beginning Advent music was sad and dismissive of the world—no love for perishing souls, no desire to save the lost. But years brought change in attitude and style. Lawrence Downing shows how the Church has changed, with its music....

**Noah: The Movie and the Ark:** Andy Hanson comments on the new film "Noah" not as a hit, but as a myth. Are modern engineers correct in their calculations that such a monstrous wooden construct would self-destruct in water, under its own weight? Such questions are more intriguing than the film....
Local Adventist Church Holds Prayer Vigil for Fort Hood Shooting Victims: One thing about war, the killing continues long after the fighting ends, as Adventists hold a prayer vigil for Fort Hood, in Texas, where a veteran combatant turned his weapon on his friends....

Construction of New Athletic Field Begins This Week at Washington Adventist University: A program of upgrades continues at the denomination's campus nearest to the US capital....

R&H Board Votes Major Down-sizing, $1.5 Million in Payroll Cuts: Facing continuing financial losses, the Review & Herald Publishing Association will undergo additional cuts in staff and operations after a board vote Sunday (April 6)....

Holland is New Director of Canadian Television Ministry: Because of cultural differences and local-content regulations, the It Is Written television program for broadcast in Canada must be produced independently from the one in the US. Christopher Holland, former ASI executive secretary in North America, has been named director and host of the Canadian program....

News Briefs April 11, 2014: The African press is condemning the Church for supposedly going easy on homosexuals during its recent Council in Cape Town; creative outreach and medical ministry are being promoted in large cities of the world where Adventist presence is still comparatively minimal; the Church is helping legally fight a ruling contesting the legality of parsonage allowances; more....

Nature of Christ: Glen Striemer revisits the electronic pages of AT and does something nothing short of audacious—he holds forth and takes his own, definitive position on the nature of Christ... Was Jesus of Nazareth perfect and divine in nature, or was he a true son of the fallen Adam? A topic to study in depth....

The Donkey's Secret: The devotional this week conjures mystery as it looks at the probabilities of who owned the donkey Jesus' disciples borrowed for the Triumphal Entry to Jerusalem....
POETRY AND THE ARTS, FEATURES, REVIEWS

(Available to logged-in subscribers; to apply for a 30-day complimentary subscription, click here)

Noah, We Hardly Knew Ye (Film Review): Veteran writer and lens-man SM Chen says the film "Noah" strays galaxies from its biblical GPS and seems to have little insight to share....

I Lift Up My Eyes: Keeley is 17 years old and lives in Bozeman, Montana. She is self-taught and has been drawing and painting for about two years. She attended Mt. Ellis Academy her freshman and sophomore years, but this year she is a home-schooler, to give her more time for the art she hopes to make her career. Watch for more of her art at Adventist Today....

Someone in the Crowd: Writer Andy Hanson shares a heartfelt piece of poetry about the crucifixion, drawing our eyes to what really matters....

125 Years of the Adventist Church in Accra, Ghana (Feature): Few know that SDA ministry in Ghana began just a few years after it did in North America, and members are now savoring the 125th anniversary of the Church's experience in that nation....

Another Successful Film Festival, This One in Australia! (News and Notes): An Adventist arts festival has staged and screened two Australian premieres, to critical and popular acclaim during its annual celebration of faithful creativity....

This message was sent to ahc@andrews.edu from Adventist Today, Post Office Box 1135, Sandy, OR 97055-1135.
Edit profile / unsubscribe - Forward to a friend
New Details Released about Half-million Dollar Online Theft from GC

From Adventist News Network, April 8, 2014

New details in the ongoing investigation of an Internet theft that cost the General Conference (GC) of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination about $500,000 were released today. The money was lost over a four-week period late last year.

Finance officers at the GC say a compromised password appears to have allowed online scammers to hack into the Gmail account of a church employee authorized to initiate instructions for money transfers. Impersonating the employee without his knowledge the criminals sent emails to financial officers at the GC approving the transfer of funds on behalf of a denominational entity. An elaborate filtration system set up by the criminals marked all responses from the GC as "read" and "deleted," thus bypassing the employee’s inbox.

Meanwhile, the criminals laundered funds from 16 fraudulent transactions through the personal bank accounts of five apparently unwitting victims. “We have modified procedures to do our best to prevent anything like this from happening again,” said Robert E. Lemon, GC treasurer.

Lemon said incidences of fraud in which criminals troll the Internet for emails giving instructions to “pay, transfer or send” funds are growing in occurrence. In such cases, the criminals carefully study the account holder’s emails so they can send transaction requests that closely mirror the tone and content of legitimate emails. Some hackers may even include personal comments, often work or family details gleaned from actual emails, to make the transactions appear genuine.

“We urge church employees and members to exercise extreme caution when acting on instructions for handling funds that come through an email without a second independent verification through another means, such as a phone call, text message or fax,” Lemon said. At the GC office there were internal controls that should have alerted financial officers to a problem with the first transfer, but several key employees who would have questioned the transactions were traveling or were otherwise out of the office at the time, Lemon said. Additionally, the transfer amounts and explanations were “within the normal scope” for the denominational entity in question, he said.

Denominational finance officers discovered the fraud after growing suspicious of the high rate of transaction requests and an alert from one of the banks involved. The criminals quickly discontinued activity associated with both the email account and the bank accounts. The GC was able to recover some of the funds that were still in the bank accounts. It is unclear whether the remaining losses are recoverable. Cooperation with U.S. Federal authorities in the ongoing investigation is expected to continue, denominational finance officials said.

“There is no indication that any employees were involved in unethical behavior, and no church email servers or bank accounts were accessed or compromised in the scheme,” Lemon said. “But having something like this happen on our watch is very difficult for those of us in Treasury.”

Adventist News Network (ANN) is the official news service of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination.
Well-known Missionary Pilot and Others Killed in Plane Crash in Indonesia

From Adventist News Network, April 9, 2014

An Adventist Aviation-Indonesia (AAI) plane piloted by veteran missionary pilot Bob Roberts crashed upon takeoff this morning at the AAI headquarters in Papua, claiming his life as well as those of several passengers on board. Witnesses said that the plane, a Quest Kodiak, appeared to have trouble lifting off just before it slammed into a bridge at the end of the runway. An official cause has yet to be determined by investigators.

Roberts' work included delivering food, medicine and other urgently needed supplies as well as transporting sick and needy passengers to and from the many isolated mountain villages of Papua. He was well known throughout the islands and had flown more than a thousand relief flights over the years.

Roberts and his wife Jan, originally from the United States, have served AAI for more than 20 years in Papua. The couple previously served as missionaries in the African countries of Ethiopia, Tanzania and Congo from 1976 to 1992. They have three grown children. “He died doing what he loved best,” Jan said.

Roberts is remembered by Pastor Darron Boyd, Adventist Mission coordinator in Papua, as someone who brought hope to those in remote areas. Despite the often extreme terrain that made his work challenging, Roberts had a love for his mission. “If they’re really sick ... we fly them for free,” he said in an video report last year from the Office of Adventist Mission at the denomination’s General Conference (GC). “Those are the kind of things that make you glad you’re a mission pilot. Helping people who would not have hope otherwise. That’s why we’re here.”

Pastor Jonathan Kuntaraf, director of Sabbath School and Personal Ministries at the GC said he was saddened by the death of Roberts, who was serving in Kuntaraf's home country. “He and his wife are very dedicated people. Together we worked to raise money for the education of underprivileged children in Papua. Please pray for the family during this difficult time.”

The Indonesian state of Papua is home to two million people and 20 language groups. The denomination's East Indonesia Union Conference covers this area which has 763 churches and more than 101,000 church members.

*The video report of Roberts’ mission work in Papua can be seen at www.adventistmission.org/dvd by clicking on "Called to Fly." The Adventist News Network (ANN) is the official news service of the denomination.*
Second Keough Lecture: American "Culture War" has Infiltrated Adventist Discussion

By Keisha McKenzie and Monte Sahlin, April 7, 2014

Despite the fact that the idea of including women among the ordained clergy of the Adventist Church was introduced as early as 1881, there is no opposition on record until 100 years later, and that opposition was rooted not in Biblical theology but in concern about perceived threats of higher criticism and liberal religion, feminist sympathizers and critiques of patriarchy. This is the history revealed by Dr. Olive Hemmings during the 34th Annual Edward Keough Lectures on March 28-29 at Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Maryland.

In the 1980s and 1990s some Adventists began to suggest that these were a “mortal threat” to the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. Despite the fact that these considerations were absent from the proposals for women’s ordination before 1980, nevertheless women’s ordination came to symbolize an Adventist identity crisis for many believers.

Hemmings cited the Biblical Research Institute papers on “The Role of Women in the Church” (Mohaven report) and “Men and Women in Genesis 1-3.” After those papers were approved by the denomination’s General Conference a “fundamentalist resistance to modernity” emerged and an attitude that "someone must be sacrificed to save the community," Hemmings observed.

Bible evidence is shaped by this ideology, she pointed out. The evidence used for post-1980 “male headship” arguments include Genesis 3:16 (“he will rule over you”), 1 Corinthians 11:3 (natural order of creation), 1 Corinthians 14:34 (women should remain silent in church), and 1 Timothy 2:11-12 (do not allow a woman to teach). There are other texts that are ignored that present gender mutuality. These include Genesis 1:28, Galatians 3:28 and 1 Corinthians 11: 11-13 (“all things” come from God).

Hemmings argues that male headship was the “most consistent argument available” that matched the patterns of ancient cultures as well as Western society’s customs related to power. It is a status quo the church still holds to in opposition to modernity. This ideology of male power and female subordination placed the church’s position in alliance with fundamentalism in the 1980s and 1990s. It offered a “secure space for males” in a changing society. As society continued to change, various compromise attempts emerged, such as a combination of gender equality with male headship, but these compromises are incoherent, Hemmings observed.

Opponents to equality in the family and/or the church frame it as a “threat to civilization as we know it.” One effect of this is “divide and conquer.” If God is understood as a male, that symbol cannot easily guide the whole church. Resisting women’s ordination is currently presented as a sign of denominational loyalty, forcing defenders of women’s ordination to prove their team loyalty in order for their proposals to remain viable.

In these cultural tensions, the Bible has become “more an accessory” to ideology than a source of truth for the church or the grounds for its policy, Hemmings stated. Prior ideological commitment to male headship determines the church’s position on ordination and members around the world convinced by their cultures on this idea is easily persuaded against women’s ordination. The Bible is recruited as a weapon in the cultural tensions.

At the 1995 GC Session in Utrecht the two speakers asked to present the two sides of the issue unwittingly...
demonstrated that the issue was not the method of Bible interpretation used but women’s ordination and the cultural ideologies that drove opposition to it. Both the pro-ordination and anti-ordination presenters began their arguments from an assumption of male headship. This meant that the GC did not address the fundamental question of whether headship was the most Biblical premise for the denomination and no argument for gender mutuality was presented.

Hemmings reminded the audience that “word study” as an interpretative method can distort the text if not linked to an understanding of the context in culture and history. For instance, Dr. Gerard Damsteegt’s presentation at Utrecht claimed that the early church was battling an early form of the women’s movement and that background explained the headship statements attributed to the apostle Paul. The counter argument began with Galatians 3:28, but claimed that the terms used in 1 Corinthians 11:3 meant there should be a difference between male authority at home and authority in the rest of life. This argument never addressed verses 11-13 in the same chapter, where the same words were also used without gender distinction.

Hemmings proposed a look at the narrative and rhetorical pattern in the Pauline epistles; that he often presents opponents’ arguments before offering a new way “in the Lord.” Mutuality, she stated, appears in 1 Corinthians as part of the believers “new life” in Christ over against the cultural status quo. But the presentations at Utretcht ignored this textual reality in favor of an ideological notion which equates the authority of scripture with the authority of the male.

Some church members often say that opposition to women’s ordination comes from the developing world. Hemmings stated that, in fact, the opposition comes from the culture war in the United States and the developing world functions as a proxy conflict, as “soldiers in a war that’s not theirs.” If U.S.-based fundamentalists are fighting in “easier terrain,” the implication is that the U.S. is comparatively difficult terrain. Discrimination is legally and socially outmoded in the U.S., a source of shame for the church, but still comparatively more acceptable elsewhere.

“The rest of the world has joined the fray not knowing what the war is really about,” said Hemmings. This concept that the developing world opposes women’s ordination has been developed because “the cultural war cannot be won on the American continent.” The second generation of almost all immigrant groups almost universally supports gender equality even in the church and its ministry.

All of this shows that this is an ideological conflict, not a disagreement over Bible interpretation. Hemmings pointed out that the Adventist denomination has the resources to lead the world church into mutuality, as it seemed ready to up to the early 1980s. Instead it has used divisions in developing regions to advance fundamentalist ideology. “I am asking the church not to squander its power to teach,” she stated.

During the question and answer time following her second presentation, one person asked, If the Adventist church is now aligned with fundamentalists, where else could we go? Hemmings and others suggested that we might go back to our progressive roots and move away from fundamentalism. The fundamentalist view did not come into the Adventist movement until after the death of Ellen White in 1915.

Another person asked Hemmings, Has she noticed a basis for interpreting literally (with “plain reading”) regarding women but in a more abstract, principled way with regard to slavery? "Yes," she said. Nineteenth Century fundamentalists promoted slavery using literal readings of Bible texts, but the founders of the Adventist Church were strongly opposed to that reading. Another participant in the discussion reported that this kind of using scripture to permit slavery has recurred very recently in a paper by an Adventist because of the author’s literalist presuppositions.

Is there a relationship between view of male-female roles and views of the Trinity? Yes, said Hemmings, one’s view of the Trinity does influence one’s view of how men and women should relate and how authority should operate in the church. The Jesus story has as much to say about the nature of humanity as it does about the nature of God, and this is a question that Adventists have not resolved yet. She pointed out that the Pauline literature includes a low Christology (view of Christ’s nature and relationship to the divine). 1 Corinthians 11, for example, represents God the
Father as the sole Head with Christ at God’s right hand. By contrast, a high Christology presents Christ as fully God in every way.

Why do Adventists align themselves with fundamentalist and non-progressive interests if the Adventist movement is truly committed to “present truth” as it says it is? Fundamentalism is defined in terms of its resistance to modernity, its reductionist approach and its dogmatism. Adventists who align with fundamentalism are not content with advancing the Adventist mission, but are also attracted to the fundamentalist strategy in the culture wars.

*Dr. Hemmings’ book,* Sacred Texts and Social Conflict: the Bible and the Debate Over Women’s Ordination in the Seventh-day Adventist Church *is available from Amazon and other online book sellers. Keisha McKenzie is a board member for Adventist Today who attended the Keough lectures and took notes. Monte Sahlin is executive director for the Adventist Today Foundation. The third presentation by Dr. Richard Rice will be reported in the next few days.*
The Adventists who spoke out for political change in New Zealand are not clergy, Adventist Today has confirmed with the denomination's local conference president. At least three of them are active lay members in the North New Zealand Conference known to Pastor Edward Tupai who uses the title Lead Pastor as conference administrator.

The *Fairfax News* and other secular news media described Teleiai E. Puni and five others who led out in a public meeting on Sunday, March 30, at the Manurewa flea market as clergy in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In fact, they are not denominational employees.

The purpose of the event was to advocate support for the National Party among the Pacific Island ethnic minority community in New Zealand. It generated considerable public debate because Pacific Islanders have long voted for the Labour Party in New Zealand. The group announced that they had met with National Party Member of Parliament Cam Calder. "If we are to defend our Christian values and build a brighter future for New Zealand families, we need to engage our Pacific people and vote National," Puni said at the March 30 event. The announcement brought a number of negative reactions. A meeting was announced for next Sunday (April 6) under the auspices of a Samoan Catholic Church with 23 churches of various denominations meeting to discuss political parties and Christian values, the newspaper reported. The Adventists "have been criticized for not consulting their parishes" on Facebook and Twitter sites where Pacific Island minorities communicate regularly. Several comments noted that the Adventists had worn blue T-shirts with the slogan, "I'm a KEY person." Blue is the color of the National Party and John Key is a Member of Parliament. Comments were critical of religious leaders being involved in politics. "Jesus didn't say just love a certain group of people." Another comment from a former Labour voter said he believed "both parties have let our people down many times." Voters in the southern region of the City of Auckland have long supported the Labour Party "thanks in large part to church-going Pacific Islanders." The newspaper quoted a Fundamentalist pastor Sooalo Setu Mu'a: "To change from wearing red to blue is not an easy thing for our Pacific communities who have been voting Labour over the years." "There may be specific issues, but the larger reality here is that this reflects the fact that there is growing middle class among the Pacific Islanders in New Zealand," a source told Adventist Today. "The working class perspective does not fit some people like it once did and this may be more true among educated professionals than anyone else."
Local Adventist Church Holds Prayer Vigil for Fort Hood Shooting Victims

By AT News Team, April 5, 2014

The New Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church held a prayer vigil last night (April 4) to honor those who died, the wounded and their families following Wednesday's shootings at Fort Hood. The church is located near the United States Army base in Killeen, Texas.

People gathered in the small church on Clear Creek Road and sang, "He's got the soldiers and their families in his hands. He's got the soldiers and their families in his hands." according to a reporter from The Killeen Daily Herald who attended.

The people involved in the shooting and their families need to feel the love of this community and need to feel the embrace of God, local elder Jansen Trotnan told the reporter. "We put these people that are bereaved in your hands," Trotnan prayed. "Put your big blanket of love over them. Blanket the entire fort at this time. Give them your love and protection."

Almost everyone in the congregation is a soldiers or a veteran, or a family member of someone who is or has served in the military, so its members are hurting after four people were killed and 16 injured in a tragic mass shooting on Wednesday, the largest on a military base in American history. "For me, the tears have not stopped," said Marie Jackson.

The vigil was New Hope's way of supporting everyone in the community and extending the good news of God's love at a time of need, another member told the reporter. "Hopefully the victims know we are not just here to be a church but to serve the community," she said. "We are a small church with a big heart."

New Hope Church has 97 members and is affiliated with the denomination's Southwest Region Conference. There are two other local churches from the denomination in Killeen.
Construction of New Athletic Field Begins This Week at Washington Adventist University

By AT News Team, April 6, 2014

Construction of a new athletic field is scheduled to begin this week at Washington Adventist University (WAU) in the Takoma Park, Maryland, suburb of the United States capital city. Montgomery County approved the building permit last week, according to the Montgomery Gazette. The project will be completed by summer.

Artificial turf will be installed to provide a space that can be used in all seasons of the year for soccer games, intramural sports and a variety of other activities. "We plan on using this space as part of our community outreach," Angie Crews, from the university’s communication office, told the local newspaper.

WAU is a member of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and fields teams in Division 2 in baseball, softball, men's and women's basketball, men's and women's soccer and men's and women's volleyball. Adventist Today has been told that it has the strongest athletic program among Adventist colleges and universities in the U.S.

A number of new facilities and upgrades have been implemented at WAU over the past five years, including a new $6.3 million music building, a $1.1 activities center, a $1.2 million renovation of the dining room, new sidewalks on campus, new steps at the entrance to H.M.S. Richards Hall, new furniture for the dormitories, new flooring and furniture in a number of classrooms and new lockers in the gym. All of this is part of the university’s Vision 2020 master plan.

The university will celebrate its 110th anniversary this year. It began in 1904 as Washington Missionary Institute with a small number of male students living temporarily in tents as they worked on construction of the original buildings.

WAU operates a radio station that has the largest verified listening audience of any media ministry in the Adventist denomination. It shares a campus with Washington Adventist Hospital and has strong programs in nursing and other health-related professions as well as the largest pre-law program of any Adventist higher education institution in the U.S.
R&H Board Votes Major Down-sizing, $1.5 Million in Payroll Cuts

By AT News Team, April 10, 2014

The Review and Herald Publishing Association (R&H) board voted significant cuts in staff and operations at a special meeting on Sunday (April 6) after year-end reports revealed a loss of nearly $943,000 for operations in 2013 and continued weakness in the first quarter of this year. This came just months after an abortive attempt to merge the two publishing houses operated by the Seventh-day Adventist denomination in the United States.

The board voted a reduction-in-force of 26 current employees, a savings of $1 million in 2014 and more than $1.5 million a year thereafter. The most recent Annual Statistical Report from the General Conference (GC) indicated that R&H had 137 employees, but there is no accounting for full-time equivalency so this may be a 20 to 25 percent reduction in staff.

About half of the RIF will be achieved through "collaborative retirement agreements" with eligible employees. "Redundancies" will be eliminated in several departments and the editorial and the production staff of some periodicals will be reduced.

Operations will be reduced sufficiently to free up about 60,000 square feet of the R&H building visible from Interstate 70 in Hagerstown, Maryland. The board voted to lease out this space not only reducing operational costs but also generating additional income.

The board also voted to reduce the number of new books slated for release in 2015, while at the same time vowing to increase sales starting with the second half of 2014. It has a regular meeting previously scheduled for April 24 which will focus on broader strategic directions for the future, including a possible role for the denomination's North American Division (NAD) in shaping literature ministry in its territory, a move that has been resisted by the publishing houses for decades.

In addition, the R&H board made a number of requests to the GC and the NAD for policy changes which the institution’s leadership think will benefit its operations and finances. One of these is a proposal that the contribution R&H makes to the denomination's retirement program be reduced to the level required of Adventist educational institutions.

The entire set of actions voted at the April 6 meeting was labeled a "solvency plan" by the official news release from the Adventist News Network. This reference and the fact that it was felt necessary to have a special board meeting just three weeks prior to one already scheduled indicates how difficult the situation is for the 165-year old publishing house. This despite a move by the GC in the second half of last year to pour cash into the institution by purchasing undeveloped land from R&H with reserve funds which policy permits to be held in securities or real estate, sources have told Adventist Today.

Dr. Delbert Baker, the chairman of the board at R&H and a GC vice president, said that there was a need for quick action to turn around the oldest institution in the Adventist movement. "No faith-based employer ever wants to lose even one employee," said R&H president Mark Thomas. "But we have a greater mission [and] keeping that mission in focus required us to take these hard steps to secure this organization and reposition it for renewed growth."
Last year a study group was appointed to consider the possibility of merging R&H with Pacific Press and placing the new publishing house entirely under the control of the NAD. A number of church administrators told Adventist Today privately that this could result in considerable cost savings and perhaps generate creative, new approaches to publishing ministry. Other expressed concern that a merger might result in "too few voices" and a monopoly for some approaches. Around the first of August the study group was abruptly closed down.
Holland is New Director of Canadian Television Ministry

By AT News Team, April 7, 2014

Pastor Christopher Holland has accepted a call to head the It Is Written television ministry in Canada. He has served since last fall as executive secretary of Adventist-Laymen's Services and Industries (ASI), the association of private businesses and independent ministries recognized by the Seventh-day Adventist denomination as "supporting" organizations.

The ASI offices are located in the General Conference office complex in Silver Spring, Maryland. They are housed with the denomination's North American Division staff. Adventist Today learned of Holland's new responsibilities from sources in Silver Spring.

Prior to his job with ASI, Holland served as a pastor in Illinois and Maryland, most recently as senior pastor of the Hagerstown, Maryland, Adventist Church where a number of the staff from the Review & Herald publishing house are members among many others. He also spent a year in 2009-2010 managing a major evangelism campaign in Chicago with 34 preachers, including the well-known evangelist Mark Finley.

The It Is Written television program produced in the United States cannot be widely used in Canada both because of cultural differences that must be taken in consideration in a far more secular society and because of laws limiting the amount of foreign content to be broadcast and encouraging content produced in Canada. Holland will lead the team that produces a weekly television program, serve as the host and primary speaker on the program, and develop plans for related evangelism campaigns, publishing activities, etc.

The offices of the Canadian media ministry are located in the Oshawa suburb of Toronto. It is in the same building with the national headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada.
Adventist Today

News Briefs April 11, 2014

Adventist Today regularly provides a summary of stories that we have decided do not require in-depth reporting, but our readers may want to be aware of.

At least three universities affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventist denomination are planning major Resurrection Pageants for Sabbath, April 19, and Sunday, April 20 the weekend when most Christian denominations celebrate Easter this year. Andrews University, Southern Adventist University and Southwestern Adventist University have announced as many as eight re-enactments over the weekend and the need for both church members and others in the community to get tickets if they want to see the events. If you know of other Adventist churches or institutions with similar plans, please send a quick note about it to atoday@atoday.org. Adventist Today will do an overview story during the week following.

An opinion piece in The Herald, a major newspaper in Zimbabwe, by Stephen Mpofu has condemned the recent leadership council convened by the Adventist denomination in Cape Town, South Africa, for not taking a strong position against homosexuality. The article states that African nations "who reject homosexuality get the stick: they are denied international capital as sanctions. What is even more scripturally tragic is that the church of Jesus Christ in the West happens to be in the forefront, pushing for a worldwide embrace of gays and lesbians. Just recently the Seventh Day Adventist Church's world vice president Ella Simons called ... on SDA congregates to be compassionate towards homosexuals and her remarks immediately hit a brick wall in the SDA in Zimbabwe where the SDA's communications director, Nkosilathi Khumalo read out the chapter and verse in the Bible about God's no-nonsense stance against homosexuality."

The Council on Evangelism and Witness of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination met this week and the agenda focused on creative outreach projects developed by Adventists around the globe. Among the projects presented were a pizza restaurant which doubles as a church on Sabbaths for a growing congregation of Sabbath-keepers, a church in Geneva (Switzerland) planted by a team of young adults attended by 60 new believers and former Adventists, a growing number of vegetarian restaurants started by churches in Korea, a ministry among refugees in San Diego (California) where many immigrants arrive from areas of the world considered difficult to evangelize and are open to new ideas in the new country, and a recent movie entitled Hell and Mr. Fudge which features a theologian from another denomination who has championed the Adventist view on life and death. The council is part of the spring meeting of the GC executive committee that includes leaders from all parts of the world.

Urban mission was a key agenda item at the council and Dr. David Trim, director of statistics, archives and research for the GC reported that there are 396 people per Adventist worldwide. That ratio, he said, jumps to 547 people per Adventist in urban areas. Some cities of a million or more fare much worse, while Lusaka (Zambia) is a bright spot, with the best population-to-member ratio of any large city in the world: one Adventist per 19 people. Pastor Erton Kohler, president of the denomination’s South American Division, reported that the division's goal is to plant a church in every one of the nearly 7,000 neighborhoods in major cities. Currently there are 2,000 neighborhoods with Adventist churches.

The Adventist denomination has joined an amicus brief for a case in U.S. Federal court which challenges a lower court’s ruling that the “parsonage allowance” for clergy housing is unconstitutional. The brief was led by the Church Alliance, a coalition of more than 30 denominations that work together on legislative and legal issues.
The group is challenging a November ruling by a U.S. district judge that the clergy exemption for paying taxes on income designated for housing is unconstitutional. Adventist Today has previously reported that if this ruling is allowed to stand it will cost clergy and/or denominations in America many millions of dollars.
“Time Will Never be a Test Again”

By Jack Hoehn, April 7, 2014

According to Gerard Damsteegt, our 19th century Adventist forerunners repeated the error of setting times for the second coming of Christ at least four times before they largely gave up on time-setting.

They studied their Bibles, and they felt they understood it. They were quite certain that Bible prophecies of Daniel 12:12 (1335 Days), Daniel 8:14 (2300 Days), Daniel 9 (70 Weeks), Daniel 7 (the Seven Times), and Leviticus 25 (the Great Jubilee), all pointed to a date around February 1843.

This was then focused down and recalculated, and the fixed date agreed on was March 21, 1844. Many accepted that this time was supported by the Bible, and they were Bible believers. But this time was what they later called “the first disappointment.”

For there was a second imposition of time on the Bible. They found a flaw in their first calculations! They did not yet question the wisdom of applying their human reasoning to the Bible; they just figured they had made a calculation error, so now recalibrating their time setting, they felt it must be accepted that Jesus would return to earth on October 22, 1844. As Damsteegt wrote, “At the sound of the clock at midnight an indescribable feeling of disappointment came over the Advent believers.”

Yet even after this second disappointment, “many of these continued further time setting.” William Miller suggested it could be in April, 1845 at the same time as the Jewish Passover of that year. Sadly again one of them wrote, “Our third disappointment was a trying one.”

But they did not stop trying! The Adventist paper, Day Star, took an editorial position that Christ should return on the 10th or 17th of the 7th month—late in October 1845. So a fourth disappointment.

The temptation to set time for the prophecies and the future events of God was not easily abandoned, as various Adventist articles came suggesting the fall of 1846; others even suggested it would come in 1850!

Setting Time Weakens Faith

About this time a very young prophetic voice offered Adventists advice on setting times to prophecies. Ellen Harmon was the young prophet, and in 1845, while James White (not yet her husband) was preaching yet another of these dates, she had a vision showing “they would be disappointed.” She wrote later, “Different times were repeatedly set for the Lord to come and were urged upon the brethren; but the Lord showed me that they would all pass by…and that every time that was set and passed by would only weaken the faith of God’s people.”

Times set and urged upon the believers that proved false would only “weaken the faith of God’s people.”

What about Setting Time for Creation?
Are we perhaps just children of our Adventist ancestors doomed to repeat their same mistakes? Have we not learned from their errors? Is the enthusiasm to decree an interpretation of time on Bible prophecies and to date Christ’s return any different from our enthusiasm to set our interpretation of time on Bible history and to date Christ’s creation?

The Bible does not come with dates. The Bible did not date those prophecies. The Bible does not date the creation. We imposed by our “sanctified reasoning” what we thought the prophetic dates meant and put our own chronology on the Second Advent. We were wrong. Shouldn’t we be careful not to impose our own chronology on the Creation?

The prophecies spoke of Days, we interpreted them as Years. The prophecies spoke of events. We dated them based on “the best authorities” we could find.

It went like this formula:

If this is so, and that is when, then add the numbers, correct for the 0 year between BC and AD dates, decide which of the two Jewish calendars we should follow, do the math, correct our errors, do the math again and voila= “Jesus will come on October 22, 1844.” Or maybe on Passover April, 1845? Or maybe in late October 1845? Or maybe in 1850?

The Bible history of creation, that geology suggests took many years, speaks of Creation Days, yet we don’t interpret these Days as Years? Oh, you rush to explain, those were Prophecy Days, Genesis is History Days. And I agree with you, but since we now all question the wisdom of imposing on Bible Prophecy our interpretation of time and setting dates, so I still question the “wisdom” of imposing on Bible History our interpretation of times and setting dates for creation.

The idea that creation was 6,000 years or so ago is an imposition of our own reasoning upon Bible texts. We make assumptions, add up the dates we guess for Bible events, suppose the genealogies are complete and error free, and come up with a number. So the Irish Bishop Ussher made his assumptions and did his math, and concluded that creation happened on October 23, 4004 B.C.

Today no Adventist accepts his math. Even Ellen White who in earlier writings wrote of “6,000 years ago” later wrote “about 6,000 years ago” and then even sometimes wrote “Over 6,000 years ago.”

Rewriting Fundamental Beliefs 6 and 8

So the Young Earth Creation date-setters in the General Conference are requiring the world church to vote on the age of the earth. (Doesn’t that strike anyone else as a little arrogant—that we can vote history?)

Next we are asked to accept only one possible interpretation (Young Earth) of the date of Creation (there are many) as binding on all Adventists. They have suggested instead of our present Fundamental Belief #6 (that simply quotes the Bible and does not “clarify” those ancient words) that we now set an approximate date for the creation, effectively ruling out any other interpretation. Here is how they are doing that:

Firstly, they require that Genesis 1 is not just a creation summary, organization, hymn, poem, or “exalted prose” as Jack Collins suggests, but also “historical.” I don’t know that any Creationist has any question about that. But even if historical, the Genesis account is surely very incomplete, a brief summary, an organization of Creation rather than a news report on the event.

What the fundamental belief revisionists mean by “historical” they clarify next by time-setting the creation! Instead of the very open and very wide “In the beginning” of the Bible, they require all to agree that it was “recent.” True, they don’t say “October 23, 4004 BC on a Sunday morning,” but they are setting their interpretation of time on God’s actions in the past.

Secondly, unlike prophetic “days” where Adventists are encouraged to count Prophetic Days as years of time, they do
not wish to leave you the freedom to count Creation Days as years, stages, or eras. Oh no, here they are sure that God’s Creation Days had to be “six literal days…[constitute] a week as we experience it today.”

Thirdly, in their editing of Fundamental Belief #8 they want to impose one view of geology on all Adventists. They are sure, no matter how you read the geologic evidence of a flood or floods, that Noah’s flood was “global in nature.” A local flood for Noah’s world, a flood larger than a dove could fly in one day, is very geologically plausible. But a global, worldwide flood seems to be geologically impossible, so again we are being asked again as a church to cancel physics and geology by a church vote!

**Demanding only one possible interpretation of the Bible is trying to be closed and definite where the dear Bible itself is indefinite and open.**

**There Is Nothing Wrong in Being Wrong**

There is nothing wrong in being wrong, unless you demand that all agree with your interpretation and forbid any other possible interpretations. As I have written before, I don’t find Young Earth Creationism harmful to young faith. Setting a date for Creation may have some spiritual benefits, just like setting a date for the Second Coming of Jesus appeared to have some spiritual benefits for our early Adventists. They were wrong, but at least doing it once didn’t cause fatal spiritual harm for all of them. However, when proven wrong by the facts, they began to repeat the error of time-setting over and over again. As Ellen Harmon wrote, imposing dates on the Bible subsequently proven wrong “would only weaken the faith of God’s people.”

**Belief in the Second Coming and in God as Creator is a fundamental that all Adventists can agree upon. Setting-time for the Second Coming is an error we no longer make. Why should we make the similar error of time-setting for the Creation?**

If the beloved Young Earth interpretation in dating Creation is proven wrong (and much independent evidence from chemistry, nuclear physics, astronomy, genetics, paleontology, and biology suggest a very different chronology), then being dogmatic and imposing only one generally discredited chronology on creation in the Bible “would only weaken the faith of God’s people.”

In 1851, regarding time-setting, Ellen, now Mrs. Ellen White, warned Seventh-day Adventists against the “false excitement arising from preaching time.” She said the Lord had shown, “Time will never be a test again.” I hope the General Conference realizes this should also be true about being dogmatic about the Biblical time of history as it is about the Biblical time of prophecy. If “Time will never be a test again,” why are we trying to make the time of creation and the age of the earth a test for Adventists?

[If you found this article thought provoking or useful, please SHARE it on your Facebook page using the SHARE link at the top.]

---


ii www.CartoonStock.com (license to use has been purchased for this blog).

iii Ibid.


vii New readers are referred for discussion of some of this evidence in Jack Hoehn's Adventist Today blogs from 2012 and 2013.

viii Review and Herald, July 17, 1851, Ellen G. White. “The Lord has shown me that the message of the third angel must go, and be proclaimed to the scattered children of the Lord, and that it should not be hung on time; for time never will be a test again.”
Hymns have long served to unite and inspire the Advent believers. What we as a church sing, whether by intent or default, express in subtle and direct ways our theology and practices.

It is my hypothesis that the hymns published in the first Adventist hymnals reflect or, perhaps in stronger terms, shaped how the first Adventists understood their community, their mission and their world. An examination of the hymns sung by Adventist congregations Sabbath after Sabbath provide a window into what beliefs and hope the singers held close. The earliest hymns are quite sectarian and express pessimism toward the world and an isolation from that world. One looks in vain for hints that community needs or humanitarian response is part of the equation. The world is a field awaiting harvesters to go forth and reap. The world was viewed as a lonely place and escape is near, even at the door. The hymns suggest that the community and its people are more to be exploited than to be nurtured, ministered to or understood.

A reading of these early Adventist hymns may help us understand the suspicion Adventists have toward involvement in community, except for evangelistic purposes, and the reluctance Adventists have had to engage their community and the reluctance to be involved in the political arena. The following hymns are taken from early Adventist hymnals. The name of the hymnal and its date of publication are in bold type along with other publication information, if available on the title page.

_Hymns For God’s Peculiar People That Keep The Commandments of God And The Faith of Jesus. 1849_

"Second Advent History"

Lo! Another angel follows

Lo an angel _loud_ proclaiming

With the gospel of good news.

Yet, a third and solemn message,

Now proclaims a _final doom_
All who "worship Beast or Image;"
Soon shall drink the wrath of God:
Without mixture
Mercy now no longer pleads.

Here they are, who now are waiting,
And have patience to endure;
While the Dragon's hosts are raging
Those confide in God secure:
Faith of Jesus;
And COMMANDMENTS, keep them pure.

"The Seal"

Behold a light appears,
The holy sabbath (sic) day,
And magnified so clear,
That none may need to stray;
Though small at first, as sun beam's ray,
Its strength ascends to perfect day.

It is the message clear
Ascending from the east,
God's servants now appear
Who will not worship "BEAST;"

Four angels hold the winds reveal'd
Until God's servants all are seal'd
The Sabbath is a sign,
A mark which all may see,

And sure will draw a line
When servants all are seal’d
And while destruction’s in the land
This mark will guard the waiting band.

“Restitution”

Oh, spare thy people, Lord,
and bring them full salvation;
Fulfill they faithful word,

Rescue the sleeping nation;
Thou voice of God should from on high;
The signal give for reaping;

Come thou and reap the harvest dry;
Oh, gather all the sleeping:
Spare now the “remnant” Lord

The foe doth yet pursue them.
Oh, for thy blessed word,
Do thou with strength renew them.

“Armageddon”

Ripe is the vintage of the earth;
Its clustering grapes are round and full;
And vengeance, vengeance bursts to birth,
Sudden and irresistible!
Messiah comes to tread amain, (sic)
The wine-press of the battle-plain

The cry is up, the strife begun,
The struggle of the mighty ones;
And Armageddon's day comes on,
The carnival of Slaughter's sons;
War lifts his helmet to his brow:
O God, protect thy people now!

“This World Is Not My Home”

Farewell! farewell! to all below,
My Jesus calls and I must go:
I'll launch my boat upon the sea,
This land is not the land for me.
This world is not my home: (4 X repeated) (Sic)

Farewell! my friends! I'll not stay here—
The home I seek will soon appear;
Where Christ is not I cannot be;
This land is not the land for me
This world is not my home, &c.

“I'm A Traveler”

I'm a lonely trav'ller here,
Weary, opprest;
But my journey's end is near,
Soon I shall rest.
Dark and dreary is the way,
Toiling I've come—
Ask me not with you to stay—
Yonder's my home.

“The Jubilee Prayer”

We are in the time of waiting;
Soon we shall behold our Lord,
Wafted far away from sorrow,
To receive our rich reward.
Keep us, Lord, till thine appearing,
Pure, unspotted from the world;
Let thy Holy Spirit cheer us,
Till thy banner is unfurl'd

“Here Is No Rest”

Here, o'er the earth as a stranger I roam,
Here is no rest—is no rest;
Here as a pilgrim I wander alone,
Yet I am blest—I am blest

CHORUS [One of 4—all different]
Let them revile me, and scoff at my name,
Laugh at my weeping—endeavor to shame;
I will go forward, for this is my theme;
There, there is rest—there is rest

Here are afflictions and trials severe;
Here is no rest—is no rest;…

This world of cares is a wilderness state,
Here is no rest—is no rest;
Here I must bear from the world all its hate—
Yet I am blest—I am blest.

"The Little Flock"

How happy are the little flock,
Who, safe beneath their guardian Rock,
In all commotions rest;
When war's and tumult's waves run high,
Unmov'd above the storm they lie,
And lodge in Jesus' breast

Such happiness O Lord, have we,
By mercy gather'd into thee,
Before the floods descend;
And while the bursting cloud comes down,
We mark the vengeful day begun,
And calmly wait the end.

The plague, and dearth, and din of war,
Our saviour's (sic) swift approach declare,
And bid our hearts arise;
Earth's basis shook, confirms our hope;
Its cities' fall but lifts us up,
To meet thee in the skies.

“A Pilgrim And A Stranger”

1. I'm a pilgrim and I'm a stranger;
I can tarry, I can tarry, but a night;
Do not detain me, for I am going
To where the fountains are ever flowing,
I'm a pilgrim and I'm a stranger, &c.

2. There the glory is ever shining!
O, my longing heart, my longing heart is there;
Here in this country so dark and dreary,
I long have wander'd forlorn and weary.

4. Farewell, dreary earth, by sin so blighted,
In immortal beauty soon you'll be arrayed!
He who has form'd thee, will soon restore thee!
And then thy dread curse shall never more be:
I'm a pilgrim, and I'm a stranger,
Till thy rest shall end the weary pilgrim night.

Hymns for Second Advent Believers Who Observe the Sabbath of the Lord, 1852.

Rochester, N. Y. Published by James White
“Come To Reign”

List again;--the low earth sigheth,
And the blood of martyrs crieth
From its bosom, where there lieth
Millions upon millions slain:
“Lord, how long, ere thy word given,
All the wicked shall be driven
From the earth by bolts of heaven?
Jesus come—oh! come to reign.”

Kingdoms now are reeling, falling,
Nations lie in woe appalling,
On their sages vainly calling
All these wonders to explain;
While the slain around are lying,
God’s own little flock are sighing,
And in secret places crying,
“Jesus come—Oh! come to reign.”

Here the wicked live securely,
Of to-morrow boasting surely,
While from those wh’re walking purely
They extort dishonest gain;
Yea, the meek are burden’d, driven;
Want and care to them are given,
But they lift the cry to heaven,
“Jesus come—Oh! come to reign.”

“Despised Pilgrims”

1. WHAT poor despised company
Of travelers are these,
Who walk in yonder narrow way,
Along the rugged maze?

2. Ah, these are of a royal line,
All children of a King….

3. Why do they then appear so mean,
and why so much despised?
Because of their rich robes unseen,
The world is not appriz’d

4. Why do they shun the pleasing path,
That worldlings love so well?
Because that is the road to death,
The open road to hell

5. What, is there then no other road
To Salem’s happy ground?
Christ is the only way to God,
No other can be found.

“The Exile”
There is a land, a better land than this—
There’s my home, there’s my home!
A land of pure, unbounded, perfect bliss—
There’s my home, there’s my home;
A captive on this desert shore,
I long to count my exile o’er,
And be where sorrows come no more:
There’s my home, there’s my home.

Far, far I am from my own happy shore—
I would go, I would go.
But yet my days of exile are not o’er:—
I would go, I would go.
I would not stay though earth were mine;
Though all its treasures for me shine,
A captive here I still should pine—
I would go, I would go.

“I Walk Alone”

1. I WALK a lonely pilgrim here
O’er life’s uneven way;
But my aching heart keeps hoping on
For the bright, the better day.

2. I walk alone and oft am sad,
And falls the briny tear;
My heart is grieved with trials sore,
And pressed with many a care.
"A True Witness"

1. SHALL I, for fear of feeble man,
The Spirit's course in me restrain?
Or, undismay'd in deed and word,
Be a true witness for my Lord?

2. Aw'd by a mortal's frown, shall I
Conceal the word of God Most High?
How then before thee shall a dare
To stand, or how than anger bear?

3. Shall I, to sooth the unholy throng,
Soften thy truth, or smooth my tongue,
To gain earth's gilded toys, or flee
The cross endur'd, my Lord, by thee?

4. What then is he whose scorn I dread?
Whose wrath or hate makes me afraid?
A man! An heir of death! A slave
To sin! A bubble on the wave!

Supplement
(No titles are listed for these hymns.)

Hymn 8

OUR bondage it will end by and by, when he comes
Our bondage it will end when he comes,
And from Egypt's yoke set free,
Hail the glorious jubilee,
And to glory we'll return by and by when he comes,
And to glory we'll return when he comes.

Though our enemies are strong, we'll go on,
Though our hearts do sometimes fear,
Lo Israel's God is near,
And the fiery pillar moves, we'll go on, &c.

**Hymn 12**

OH, no, we cannot sing our songs,
Our glad and cheerful lays;
Our sorrowing harps refuse their strings,
To Zion's joyful strains.
They bid us be in mirthful mood,
And dry these tears so sad;
But Judah's hearths are desolate
And how can we be glad?

**Hymn 30**

I LOVE this pure religion,
Soldiers of the jubilee;
I love this pure religion,
Soldiers of the cross.
Remember me while toiling here,
Soldiers of the jubilee
Remember me while toiling here,
Soldiers of the cross.

We'll preach a coming Saviour,
Soldiers of the jubilee;
We'll preach a coming Saviour,
Soldiers of the cross.

_Hymns and Tunes for those who keep the Commandments of God and the Faith of Jesus, 1869._

Steam Press of the Seventh-Day Adventist Publishing Association Battle Creek, Michigan
Pages: 416 Hymns not numbered No Music No credits

“REPENDANCE”

No. 93 S. M. [Slow Meter]

DID Christ o'er sinners weep,
And shall our cheeks be dry?
Let floods of penitential grief
Burst forth from every eye.

The Son of God in tears
The wond'ring angels see;
Be thou astonished, O my soul,
He shed those tears for thee.
“Social Worship”
No. 452 7 s & 6 s.

1. HOW long, O Lord our Saviour, (sic)
Wilt thou remain away!
Our hearts are growing weary
Of they so long delay.
Oh! when shall come the moment
When, brighter far than morn,
The sunshine of thy glory
Shall on thy people dawn.

2. How long, O gracious Master,
Wilt thou thy household leave?
So long hast thou now tarried,
Few thy return believe.
Immersed in sloth and folly,
Thy servants, Lord, we see;
And few of us stand ready
With joy to welcome thee.

*The Seventh-Day (sic) Adventist Hymn and Tune Book For Use in Divine Worship, 1886.*

Published by the General Conference
Battle Creek, Michigan.
Review & Herald Publishing House
Oakland, CA.:
Pacific Press

Credits Given
No. 381

1. GOD’S holy law, transgressed,
Speaks nothing but despair;
Burdened with guilt, with grief oppressed,
We find no comfort there.

2. Not all our groans and tears,
Nor works which we have done,
Nor vows, nor promises, nor prayers,
can e’er for sin atone.

3. Relief alone is found
In Jesus’ precious blood;
’Tis this that heals the mortal wound,
And reconciles to God.

4. High lifted on the cross,
The spotless Victim dies
This is salvation’s only source
Whence all our hopes arise.

No. 1023

1. Let party names no more
The Christian world o’erspread;
Gentile and Jew, and bond and free,
Are one in Christ, their Head.

2. Among the saints on earth
Let mutual love be found
Heirs of the same inheritance
With mutual blessings crowned.

3. Thus will the church below
Resemble that above
Where streams of pleasure ever flow,
And every heart is love.

4. And till we reach that place,
Our daily prayer shall be
That we may dwell before thee Lord
In love and unity.

No. 1032

“Go, preach my gospel,” saith the Lord,
Bid the whole world my grace receive;
He shall be saved who trusts my word,
And they condemned who disbelieve.

No. 1035

Ye Christian heralds! go, proclaim
Salvation through Immanuel's name,
To distant climes the tidings bear,
And plant the Rose of Sharon there.

No. 1038

Go, messenger of peace and love,
To people plunged in shades of night;
Like angels sent from fields above
Be thine to shed celestial light.

Go to the hungry, food impart;
To paths of peace the wanderer guide;
And lead the thirsty, panting heart,
Where streams of living water glide.

O, faint not in the day of toil,
When harvest waits the reaper’s hand,
Go gather in the glorious spoil
And joyous in his presence stand.

No. 1042

Convert and send forth more,
To spread thy truth abroad;
And let them speak thy word of power,
As workers with their God.

No. 1048
The vineyard of the Lord
Before his laborers lies,
And lo! we see the last reward
Which waits us in the sky.

No. 1053

Ho! Reaper's of life's harvest,
Why stand with rusty blade,
Until the night draws round thee,
And day begins to fade?

Thrust in your sharpened sickle,
And gather in the grain;
The night is fast approaching,
And soon will come again.

The Master calls for reapers,
And shall he call in vain?
Shall sheaves lie there ungathered,
And waste upon the plain?

No. 1058

In the vineyard of our father
Daily work we find to do;
Scattered gleanings we may gather,
Through we are but young and few;
Little clusters, little clusters
Help to fill the garners too.

**No. 1068**

Brother, you may work for Jesus;
God has given you a place
In some portion of his vineyard,
And will give sustaining grace.

He has bidden you to labor
And has promised a reward—
Even joy and life eternal
In the kingdom of your Lord.

*Christ in Song, 1908*

Pages: 574
Copyright, 1908, F. E. Belden. (Revised and Enlarged)

**No. 817 Our Exiled Fathers** (Rev. Leonard Bacon)

O god beneath thy guiding hand, Our exiled fathers crossed the sea; and when they trod the wintry strand, With pray’r and psalm they worshiped thee.

Truth, freedom, justice, faith in God, Come with those exiles o’er the waves; And where their pilgrim feet have trod, The God they trusted guards their graves.

And here thy name, O God of love, May we, their children, still adore, Till these eternal hills remove, And spring adorns the earth no more.

**N. 818 Brotherhood of Men** (J. S. Dwight)
God bless our native land! May Heaven's protecting hand Still [guard (sic) our shore. May peace her pow'r extend, Foe be transformed to friend, And all our rights depend On war no more.

May just and righteous laws Uphold the public cause, And bless our name; Home of the brave and free, Stronghold of Liberty, We pray that still on thee May rest no stain.

And not this land alone, But by they mercies known From shore to shore; O that all men would see That they should brothers be, And form one family, Thy wide world o'er!

No. 809 **What Is the Chaff?** (I. Watts)

What is the chaff, the word of man, When set against the wheat? Can it a dying soul sustain, Like that immortal meat?

Thy word, O God, with heav'nly bread Thy children doth supply; And those who by thee are fed, *Their souls shall never die.* [Bold & Underline mine]

No. 819 **Let us Work Too** (F. E. Beldon)

The Lord worketh, let us work too; In his vineyard there's much to do, And Souls perish for need of you: The Lord worketh, let us work too.

They world moveth, let us move too, The sun's glory that we may view. From night turning to day-dawn new: the world moveth, let us move too.

The wrong speaketh, let us seak too; The worst error is bright with dew: Shall truth slumber the whole day thro? The wrong speaketh, let us speak too.

The Christ liveth, let us live too, From death wakening, his work to do, With hearts loving and pure and true: The Christ liveth, let us live too.

No. 813 **Above These Shades** (Anne Steele)
O could our thoughts and wishes fly, above these gloomy shades; To those bright worlds beyond the sky, Where sorrow ne’er invades!

There, joys unseen by mortal eyes, or reason’s feeble ray,

In ever blooming prospect rise, Exposed to no decay

No. 842 **A Stranger Here** (Thos. R. Taylor)

I’m but a stranger here, Heav’n is my home;

Earth is a desert drear, Heav’n is my home; Danger and sorrow stand Round me on ev’ry hand, Heav’n is my Fatherland, Heaven is my home.

No. 561 **Bring Them In** (A. Thomas)

Hark! ‘tis the shepherd’s voice I hear, Out in the desert dark and drear, Calling the sheep who’ve gone astray, Far from the Shepherd’s fold away. Bring them in, Bring them in, Bring them in from the fields of sin; bring them in, Bring them in, bring the wanderers to Jesus.

Out in the desert hear their cry, Out on the mountain wild and high, hark! ‘tis the Master speaks to thee, “Go, find my sheep where’e they be.

No. 596 **Buy Up the Opportunity** (J. R. Clements)

Buy up the opportunity, O Christian, buy today! For Heaven’s ageless mansions buy, buy treasures while you may.

Buy up the opportunity, It may not long remain! The evil hosts are bidding, too, These precious souls to gain.

Buy up the opportunity, Pay any price to win!

With Heaven's legions watching you, To falter will be sin.
Buy up the opportunity, At home; in lands afar; Go quickly! Find the jewels rare,— each soul a glowing star.

Chorus: Buy up the opportunity, The souls from whom Christ died, Buy up the opportunity, Buy for the Crucified.

No. 570 **Hold On** (J. P. Ellis)

If your hand's on the plow, hold on, hold on; Tho' the soil may be sterile and hard, The plowshare will make the fallow ground break, And the plowman will have his reward; Earth’s bosom will sparkle with emerald green, And its grain will be golden king; The reapers will come, with loud "Harvest Home," and the gleaners will joyfully sing.

No. 718 **The World Is Very Evil** (J. Neale)

The world is very evil, The times are waxing late; Be sober and keep vigil; The Judge is at the gate,—The judge who comes in mercy, The Judge who comes in Might,—Who comes to end the evil, Who comes to crown the right.

Even a cursory examination of the early Adventist hymnals and the hymns each contains provides evidence that ideas and emphasis change. The earliest hymns expressed an antipathy toward the world and a sense of isolation and impermanence. The world was not their home and they could not wait to leave it. One looks in vain for admonitions to go out into that world and save the lost nor is there an acknowledgment of God’s love for the world nor of God’s grace extended to the people of this world. Later hymnals have a quite different emphasis. A harvest awaits. Reapers are needed. Go out and work! Expressions of God’s mercy and grace are common. The world is still evil, as holds the title of the hymn above, but other hymns serve as a counter.

Note that now-and-again the hymns express a point of theology that today would not fly. See **Hymns and Tunes # 809** written by Isaac Watts, “…Their souls shall never die.”

I hope you enjoyed looking through these hymns that our pioneers sang on a Sabbath morning. We can imagine ourselves joining in with James White or F. E. Beldon as they led the early Advent believers in lifting their voices to the Lord.
I saw the newly released movie *Noah* at a Friday matinée. I concur with Paul Young’s evaluation: “Overall it is disjointed, incoherent, and awful. For all the expense, even the computer-generated imagery was hit and miss [even before] the jarring introduction of transformer-ish fallen-angel rock creatures…There is barely enough truth in this film to warrant attention.”[1]


Paul Young’s review is kind! However, my reason for mentioning this movie isn’t to pan the acting, CGI, or script. It demonstrates visually what reasoned arguments with a biblical literalist might not: this story is a myth.

Even using modern equipment, building the set was a monumental task ([http://screenrant.com/noah-movie-2014-preview/](http://screenrant.com/noah-movie-2014-preview/)).

Of course there are other problems with the Genesis story, involving the numbers of land animals, birds, insects, and their devastating microbial companions that marched into the Ark. And it can be argued that the Bible story itself claims that the Flood did not accomplish its stated objective.[2] But in this blog I want the reader to imagine the Ark as described in the Bible: the required building materials, its engineering, and its ability to weather the conditions described in the Genesis 5-9 story.

### Building Materials

“Noah's Ark was a great rectangular box of gopherwood, or perhaps some combination of other woods colloquially referred to as gopherwood. Its dimensions are given as 137 meters long, 23 meters wide, and 14 meters high. This is very, very big; it would have been the longest wooden ship ever built. These dimensions rank it as one of history's greatest engineering achievements; but they also mark the start of our sea trials, our test of whether or not it's possible for this ship to have ever sailed, or indeed, been built at all.”[3]

“Tens of thousands of massive timber-quality trees would have to have been imported into the middle of what's now Iraq.”

### Engineering

“Scale up a simple wooden beam large enough, the weight will exceed its strength, and it will break from its own weight alone. Scaled up to the immense size of Noah's Ark, a stout wooden box would be unspeakably fragile… If there were even the gentlest of currents, sufficient pressure would be put on the hull to open its seams… Noah's Ark would bend with eddies like a snake. Even if the water itself was perfectly still, wind would expose the flat-sided Ark's tremendous windage, exerting a shearing force that might well crumble it.”[3]

“Most of the largest wooden ships were, like Noah's Ark, unpowered barges. Yet even those built in modern times, such as the 103 meter *Pretoria* in 1901, required substantial amounts of steel reinforcement; and even then needed steam-
powered pumps to fight the constant flex-induced leaking.”

“There’s no precedent for a wooden ship the size of Noah’s Ark being seaworthy, and plenty of naval engineering experience telling us that it wouldn’t be expected to work. Even if pumps had been installed and all hands worked round the clock pumping, the Ark certainly would have leaked catastrophically, filled with water, and capsized.”

**Meteorology**

“A real-world problem for those believing this story is meteorology. Genesis 7:19-20 states that all earth was covered by 15 cubits (approximately 25 feet) of water. In order to cover Mt. Everest by 25 feet—over 29,000 feet above sea level—during a span of 40 days, it would have to rain an average of 6 inches per minute for the entire time. The record for rainfall for any one-minute at any one location is 1.5 inches. Also, if all that vapor was in the air before the rain started, the air pressure at sea level would be an astounding 13,000 psi instead of the normal 14.5 psi.”[4]

[1] Paul Young, author of *The Shack.*

[2] I’ve included two biblical references that indicate that God knew that the flood was a waste of time, and that other humans actually survived the Flood.

“Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: “Never again will I curse the ground because of humans, even though every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood” (Genesis 8:20, 21).

“The most devastating problem facing believers in the "Great Flood" surfaces in Numbers 13:33. Here the Israelites encounter the sons of Anak. The Anakites came from the Nephilim (giants) who, according to Genesis 6:2-4, originated in pre-flood times as a result of the sexual union of male angels (sons of God) and the daughters of men. Therefore the presence in post-flood Canaan of Anakites, the descendants of the Nephilim, would mean that not all who lived on earth, other than Noah and his family, were killed in the flood. This stands as a direct contradiction of Genesis 6:17 where God vows to...bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die” (The Myth of The Great Flood).[4]


Join in the discussion:
Steve Ferguson
Reply
10 days ago

‘The most devastating problem facing believers in the "Great Flood" surfaces in Numbers 13:33. Here the Israelites encounter the sons of Anak. The Anakites came from the Nephilim (giants) who, according to Genesis 6:2-4, originated in pre-flood times as a result of the sexual union of male angels (sons of God) and the daughters of men. Therefore the presence in post-flood Canaan of Anakites, the descendants of the Nephilim, would mean that not all who lived on earth, other than Noah and his family, were killed in the flood. This stands as a direct contradiction of Genesis 6:17 where God vows to...bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die” (The Myth of The Great Flood).’

Very interesting - never heard this. Perhaps this illustrates an important point. For those who wish to argue in favour of theistic evolution (or whatever variant) or a non-worldwide flood, perhaps the best way to engage the issue is from the...
Bible itself - not from science.

Usually, it becomes a science vs scripture argument. But right here, whether rightly or wrongly, we can see this as a scripture vs scripture argument.

Steve Ferguson
Reply
10 days ago

'And it can be argued that the Bible story itself claims that the Flood did not accomplish its stated objective.'

Interesting, I guess the question is what does the Bible literally say itself? For me, the question is what does 'earth' mean exactly in Gen 6:17, Gen 7:4,6,10,12,17,18,19,20,21,23,24, Gen 8:1,27,9,11,13,14,15,18,19,22 and Gen 9:1,2,7,10,11,13,14,16,17,19 etc?

I am no expert in ancient languages, but a percursor search of the OT suggests the term 'whole earth' (Heb. kol erets or translated 'whole land') sometimes is a phrase to mean the whole land (i.e. in like all of North America or all of the USA) as opposed to literally all of planet earth (notably because the ancients didn't know we lived on a planet floating in space). We have passages such as:

- Gen 2:11 - 'whole land' of Havilah
- Gen 2:13 - 'whole land' of Cush
- Gen 13:9 - 'whole earth' before Lot - but the context shows Abraham is talking to Lot about only a localised part of Canaan
- Gen 41:57 - 'all the world' came to Joseph in Egypt because of the famine - what, including the Australian Aboriginals on the other side of the world, or is this really mean the 'known world' of the Middle East?
- Ex 34:10 - God performing miracles in 'all the earth or in any nation' - but why would Moses need to refer to 'any nation' if 'all the earth' meant the entire planet?
- 1 Kings 10:24 - 'all the earth' sought Solomon's wisdom - what the Native Americans popped over for a visit, perhaps with Joseph Smith?
- 1 Chronicles 14:17 - David's fame went out 'into all lands' - what David was famous amongst the isolated Amazonian tribesmen hidden away in the Amazon jungle?

It would see a problem for us today, is that all these biblical passages suggest 'the whole earth' really meant something which we ourselves can see is entirely logical - the whole known world of the ancient Middle East.

I readily admit I have no idea about this and more than happy to be corrected. Just putting these 'problems' out there, as Andy has with the Anakites, descendants of a people who supposedly were destroyed in the Flood! If anyone can explain these problems away I would be very appreciative.

I think it far more fruitful to focus on what the Bible actually says, on sola scriptura, rathing than supposedly scientific theories. But that is just me.

William Noel
Reply
10 days ago

Since the author of the story of Noah probably was recording a story passed-down through many generations it seems very likely that it has been embellished and polished to some (perhaps very considerable) degree. Though a few things stand out to me.
First, the dimensions of the Ark. I have read commentaries by maritime engineers who say that those dimensions are perfect for a ship and provide both the maximum capacity while giving it the greatest potential stability in various sea states.

Second, the story presents that the flood significantly changed the surface of the planet. Were there high mountains like Mt. Everest before the flood? (Geologic evidence projects that Everest is the result of tectonic plates overlapping with one getting pushed upward to produce the Himalayan range, which appears to still be rising by a few centimeters per years.) If the general terrain was much lower then the volume of water required to cover the planet reduces greatly.

Third is that part about the "fountains of the deep" being broken-up. How much water was below the surface that came rushing upward? Geology provides us with numerous examples of surface levels dropping as water is extracted from below. One of the more dramatic examples of this is Venice, Italy where there is an effort to stop the city from sinking into the sea by pumping water back into the subterranean water table. Another is the Leaning Tower of Pisa, which has been tilting at an increasing rate for centuries and was in danger of falling-over until engineers started pumping grout into the ground below it. Now they are actually slowly pushing it back toward vertical.

While I've not seen the current "Noah" movie and have no plans to do so, I think it may provide us with a great example of what product can come from a fertile imagination when it begins with a story told by those well removed from being eyewitnesses.

Elaine Nelson
Reply
10 days ago

The movie director clearly explained that it was not to be explicitly based on the biblical story; and they accomplished that quite well. They add much to the mythic tale in order to sell more tickets. We shouldn't have expected a documentary.

Nathan Schilt
Reply
10 days ago

I completely agree with your assessment, Andy. What was great about the movie is that it caused me to go back, read the story, and cross-reference it. Mind you, my overview was pretty superficial. But I found that my Flood myths are not at all supported by the Bible. For example, how do we know that Noah preached repentance, much less that he did so for 120 years? It's just not there. Peter calls him a preacher of righteousness. But even if we accept that as factual, it tells us very little. How do we know it was 120 years? The text tells us that God decided that the years of man would be limited to 120. Does that mean 120 years from the time he decided to destroy life on earth, or does it mean a life span of 120 years? The genealogy that follows the flood would suggest that humans were still living several hundred years after the flood. But does that mean Noah preached 120 years?

Ellen white tells us that Noah warned of a coming flood and was mocked and ridiculed. Really? Where is that in the Bible? Jesus seems to suggest that the victims of the Flood had no warning whatsoever. As to the idea that Noah's generation had never seen rain - what is the source of that myth? Well, we find in the Genesis 2 creation story that, before any vegetation or humanity appeared on the earth, the Lord had not sent rain. Streams or a mist watered the earth. What happened between then and the time of Noah? How do we know there was no rain? On what evidence do those who reject uniformitarianism when it comes to naturalistic evolution, embrace it to perpetuate the mythic narrative of the Flood?

Now maybe there are really simple explanations. I spent about half an hour cross-referencing the Bible and Ellen White, with no scholarly commentary. Incidentally, Ellen White creates a beautiful, highly embellished, pastoral picture of the
natural world in Noah’s time that, like most of her narrative commentaries, is quite credible and entertaining, but totally detached from Biblical confirmability. I find her fertile imagination more consonant with my picture of the character of God as revealed in the Bible, but no less removed than the movie from what can be confirmed by Genesis 6-9.

Stephen Foster
Reply
9 days ago

Since we are speculating, why do we think that Peter referred to Noah as a preacher of righteousness at all?

Where in the Genesis narrative is that indicated?

Since Peter said indicates that Noah preached, what did Noah have to preach about? In what context did he preach righteousness? I there some connection to Matthew 24:38, and why can’t the 120 years in Genesis 6:3 be considered a 'countdown' prophecy?

Nathan Schilt
Reply
9 days ago

I'm actually fine with going beyond the Genesis narrative to inform conjecture and imagination. I was just surprised to see how much of what I had assumed to be Biblical is really just not there.

It would be difficult to imagine that the flood could really have been a complete surprise, given the conspicuousness of the ark and the time it must have taken to build it. Undoubtedly, when Jesus spoke of the flood coming as a complete shock, He meant it in the same way that The Second Coming will be a complete shock to many AToday commenters, because they have closed their minds to it as a realistic scenario.

I agree, Stephen, that the 120 years can be considered a countdown prophecy. It's just not clearly stated in the text, and I found that interesting, given how firmly some of the details of childhood stories were implanted in my mind.

Had the movie portrayed Noah as a Godly, relatively righteous man who confronted the pagan culture with its insidious moral evil (which I believe was the case), rather than as a persecuted nomad, on the run, who was primarily concerned with helping God eradicate humanity due to original sin and environmental evil, it would still have been a bad movie. In the movie, humanity is saved not by a Redeemer or the intention of a merciful God. Rather, humanity is saved from God's intended "final solution" by human sentiment and impulse operating to frustrate the purposes of a vengeful, judgmental deity, who communicates His will through hallucinogen-induced visions. In that sense, it's morality is very contemporary, and quite consistent with the non-Biblical world views of its creators.

Elaine Nelson
Reply
9 days ago

Keep reading. Too many Adventists have been taught a mixture of the Bible and EGW where she adds to the Bible stories and then discover much later, that their beliefs have not been from the Bible at all! If the church had limited its message from the Bible only, it would have avoided the confusion that began from the start, and still is quite pervasive throughout the membership. Nearly daily on this, and other blogs, one can read of Bible stories and essentials that were never from the Bible at all. Noah is a perfect example. How many were taught that Noah preached for 120 years and yet was able to convince no one to enter the ark? It is not from the Bible. How many were taught that incest was sinful, and yet multiplication of the species was only possible by incestuous mating.

Stephen Foster
I find the suggestion that what EGW extrapolated from the Bible isn’t actually Biblical to be somewhat curious; yet somewhat understandable.

Since Peter declared Noah to be a preacher of righteousness, the idea that he preached righteousness comes directly from the Bible. The idea that Noah preached righteousness to ungodly people who weren’t saved but destroyed—because they didn’t heed Noah’s preaching of righteousness—is directly from 2 Peter 2:5.

The New Living Translation (not Ellen White) says: And God did not spare the ancient world—except for Noah and the seven others in his family. Noah warned the world of God's righteous judgment. So God protected Noah when he destroyed the world of ungodly people with a vast flood.

The concept of warning no doubt comes from the Greek since ‘preacher’ is literally translated as ‘herald’ which in our language is “an official crier or messenger” or “one that precedes of foreshadows” or “one that conveys news or proclaims” (announcer) or “one who actively promotes or advocates (exponent).

So Ellen White didn’t make this up.

The 120 years was, per Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, “meaning not the term of man’s life, reduced to this from the length of time he lived before the flood; but this designs the space that God would give for repentance, before he proceeded to execute his vengeance on him…” And per the Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary “yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years”—It is probable that the corruption of the world, which had now reached its height, had been long and gradually increasing, and this idea receives support from the long respite granted.”

The point of course being that EGW didn’t write either of these commentaries. Nor did she write 1 Peter 3:20.

What ‘we’ learned about Noah was/is Biblical.

Are you also willing to explain Peter’s statements:

Christ, in the spirit went to preach to the spirits in prison. Now it was long ages ago when Noah was still building the ark," or

"When angels sinned, God did not spare them: he sent them down to the underworld and consigned them to the dark underground cafes to be held there till the day of Judgment."

If the angels are held captive in underground caves, how can they be tempting people to sin?

This is hilarious Elaine—but nice try. The fact is we were discussing Ellen White’s extrapolation of the Biblical facts of the flood story, as you well know.

Let’s face it, unless these commentaries and this NLT version of 2 Peter 2:5 owe the wording of their exegeses to Ellen...
White’s influence, then Ellen White’s take on events is not at all unusual. Not that it would make any difference if it was, I hasten to add; since it is based on the Bible.
Nature of Christ

By: Glen Striemer, April 10, 2014

If there is one sermon which is taboo to preach within the confines of the SDA Church, that subject has to be on the subject of The Nature of Christ. It is deemed too divisive and often evokes a tumult between good standing members at the topic’s mere mention. Often the Ellen White card is pulled out with reference to an obscure letter she wrote to a minister named Baker, where she told the man to “be exceedingly careful” how he presented the matter of Christ assuming human nature. We have generally concluded that as a church we should not discuss this delicate matter. We seem content to wait it out until the Second Coming, waiting in dead silence until the day we can ask our Saviour, “Which of the two natures did you assume in Your humanity?” Seriously, when is the last time you heard a sermon from an SDA minister on the subject of the nature of Christ? Our early Bible Readings For the Home Circle sold by colporteurs stated Christ assumed our fallen nature. Newer versions ignore the subject totally. However, if you Google critics of the SDA Church and listen to their rants against Ellen White, they almost always include references to her stating Christ took upon Himself our fallen, polluted nature. This is strange since many leaders in our church conclude Ellen White’s writings to be inconclusive even though her references to the fallen nature of Christ overwhelmingly outweigh her odd statement indicating that Jesus took the unfallen nature of Adam. So, in fairness of this study, Ellen White quotes will not be used as proof of position, but the Bible and the Bible alone will verify which nature Christ assumed. According to Scripture it is seriously flawed to adapt a mute position on the nature of Christ.

“Without controversy great is the mystery of Godliness: God was manifest in the flesh” (1 Tim. 3:16). It appears if we can determine which flesh God’s son was manifested in, then the subject is not controversial. There is only one flesh mentioned in the entire Strong’s Concordance when it comes to humanity. The word is sarx, and in the King James concordance here is the translation: carnal flesh. When the Bible says, “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us,” (John 1:14), it says the Word was made sarx. In order to find “the Word was made unfallen flesh,” you must head to the concordances printed for the newer translations which of course concur with the scholars who wrote this flesh of Jesus was without any suggestion of depravity.

The apostle John wrote dynamically about the flesh of Jesus. “Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh [sarx] is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh [sarx] is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world” (1 John 3:2-3). Does the Antichrist have a position on the nature of Christ? Absolutely, and a cornerstone: Mary, the mother of God, the Queen of Heaven, was born with immaculate flesh in order that her son Jesus would be born immaculate, untainted by carnal human flesh. When the Protestant world believes this theory it adapts its understanding of doctrine and accepts one of the signature marks of the spirit of the antichrist.
The sad thing about Adam’s fall is that it took place while he possessed unfallen flesh. The beautiful thing about the Second Adam was He came in the fallen flesh of humanity. Adam was created by the hand of God out of dust. Had Jesus appeared like unfallen Adam, He too would have been made out of dust and probably walked into Jerusalem in the lofty and noble manhood of Adam’s creation, where every soul would have bowed in reverence to their perfect Messiah. Instead, the prophecies were fulfilled regarding the heavenly seed, “When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son made of a woman” (Gal. 4:4). Mary, from the royal line of King David’s seed, was the best of all women chosen, but by no means was she immaculate. God chose to introduce the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world as merged with something He could not create—fallen, depraved, polluted, carnal flesh. “That Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall come upon thee and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee” (Luke 1: 35).

Satan thought he had Jesus ripe for a fall when he knew Jesus had assumed the continuously defeated nature of mankind. But God’s perfect plan of salvation would demonstrate once for all what happens when a born again carnal flesh meets temptation head on. Jesus never yielded to temptation by thought or deed. There have been occasions when we ourselves, full of the Holy Ghost have met vicious temptations head on and walked away victorious. Examining the miracles of Jesus, there doesn’t appear to be one that hasn’t somewhere been duplicated by a Bible character with fallen flesh—reading minds, axe heads floating on water, the dead raised, seas parted, people being miraculously fed, and the list goes on. The Reformation is also full of men going to the stake and rack full of the Holy Ghost and bravely choosing death before dishonouring Christ. It is the mystery of godliness at work in mankind.

Here is the mystery of iniquity as found in the Book of Daniel: “It is a rare thing that the king requireth and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods whose dwelling is not with flesh” (Dan. 2:11). The absolute proof text of the antichrist will always be “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Ps. 51:5). Behold the severe lamentation of a king who had committed one of the most grievous crimes a man could construe: to steal away another man’s wife, and then have the husband killed in order to keep her. David was the chosen anointed King of Israel, once the man after God’s own heart, author of the Psalms and the type of Christ to come. How could he conclude anything other regarding his existence after such a pitfall from grace? If King David with so much privilege and favour could fall so far, then it must be the lot of all men to do likewise due to birth itself. Because of this verse, most baptisms in the world have been for babies deemed too sinful to launch their lives without it. Yea, the antichrist concludes like David did that it is a sin to be born, even a sin to have been conceived. That is depressing. A common sense rendering of this verse would be that all human conception and birth is saddled with the restrictions of fallen, corrupted, sinful flesh.

In any discussion of how much Jesus was “like” us, it is only fair to mention all the ways in which He is so unlike us. It would fill many books. Only Jesus was the Son of God, equal with His Father from eternity; only Jesus took humanity into Him from before the foundation of the world; He created the worlds and by Him these same worlds exist; only He could be the Lamb slain in the Garden of Eden; only He gave purpose to the Holy Spirit of the Godhead through which the Bible was written; only through Him do prayers of the saints ascend; only He became incarnate; only He could die on a cross and use His shed blood to forgive all manner of sin; only He is the Saviour of the world; only He is coming back again; and only He sacrificed His omnipresence in becoming us. Thus, in any discussion regarding the nature of Christ it is an error to dwell solely upon how much He is just like us. We need to see how much Jesus is unlike us in order to appreciate the fallen nature He assumed.

What is the purpose of Christ assuming fallen flesh? Primarily it is so believers can know of a certainty when Christ dwells within our hearts with His faith, there is not a single sin or temptation that can overpower us in our fallen flesh.
A born again flesh overcomes sin every time. In the case of Jesus it lasted His entire life. What father would counsel his enquiring daughter before her first date: “My child, when you go out tonight, I must inform you that in spite of your best efforts to be good, you will end up doing the things you don’t want to do and you will be unable to do the things you have been taught from your childhood.” Even a child would know this thinking is messed up. What missionary would knock on a door and tell the people: “I have something wonderful to share. If you follow the God of this Bible, you will continually fall short of the mark, and your flesh will rule in spite of your best intentions to change your life.” They would look at you and say, “Don’t need it; I’ve got this experience already.”

Seven times in Revelation chapters 2 and 3, Jesus lays down the victory challenge available to believers:

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith.... To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life.... He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.... To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna and will give him a white stone and in the stone a new name written.... He that overcometh and keepeth My works until the end, to him will I give power over the nations.... He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment and I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life.... Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God and I will write upon him the name of My God.... To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne....

Now here comes the key to the entire passage: “Even as I also overcame.”

What Jesus promises His followers is the power to be victorious over sin even whilst labouring within a carnal tent of flesh. Otherwise, Jesus is asking us to do something which He Himself dared not to attempt—live a victorious life in sinful flesh. When the question is finally asked Jesus in heaven, “Which nature did You assume?” there are only two possible answers: “It is true, I am not ashamed to be called your brethren because I took your sinful flesh.” But what if Jesus answers, “There is no way I could have been victorious on earth unless I took Adam’s unfallen flesh.” If so, the next logical question would be, “Then why did you ask me to do something You wouldn’t attempt?”

What is man that thou are mindful of him?.... Thou madest him a little lower than the angels.... But we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels...for it became Him...to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings...for both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.... Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also, Himself likewise, took part of the same...and deliver them who...were all their lifetime subject to bondage.... For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren...for in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted. (Heb. 2:6-18)

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, ye without sin.... For such an high priest became us. (Heb. 4:15; 7:26)

There is a world of difference in attitude between thinking “I am doomed to fail in fighting sin” and “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4:13).

From the beginning it has always been about the Seed of Promise. To assume Christ took the unfallen nature then we
have a situation whereby Mary is a surrogate mother with an implantation in her uterus of a pre-fertilized egg via the Holy Spirit. Or you could go with the spirit of the antichrist whereby Mary’s nature was immaculate, joined by the immaculate Holy Ghost? Anything else picks up the fallen human nature.

There is an undeniable prophetic emphasis placed on the human aspect of the seed’s participation as it journeys towards Mary. The chosen seed twists and winds down through time from fallen Adam, onto the ark, and we’ll join the storyline where God is prophesying to Moses: “The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto Me; and unto Him ye shall hearken.... I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in His mouth” (Deut. 18:15, 18). “Hath not the Scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem?” (John 7:42). In the two New Testament genealogies leading to Christ, one strain concludes with Mary, the other for good measure ends with stepfather Joseph.

In every discussion concerning the nature of Christ comes the inevitable question: “If Christ had a fallen nature then who was His Saviour?” Of course this query falsely assumes it is a sin to be born. After Adam sinned in the Garden, he became the benefactor of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Adam lost the world; however, Christ won the world to the point where a child is not a sinner by being born. Therefore Christ could enter into this world saddled down with a born-again human flesh and not be called a sinner. Nonetheless, to answer this objection we point you to the Saviour, whom Christ depended upon for everything. “Thou art My Son.... Thou art a priest forever.... Who in the days of His flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death and was heard in that He feared” (Heb. 5:5-7). Just how much did Jesus rely on His Father while on earth? Although all the disciples heard it, the beloved John was the one disciple who made it a point to report strongly upon it: “I can of My own self do nothin g...because I seek the will of the Father which hath sent Me” (John 5:30). “The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works” (John 14:10). “The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do” (John 5:19). “Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son as Thou hast given Him power over all flesh” (John 17:1-2).

There is a global church which has built a foundation upon the false premise that Jesus was in some way inferior to His Father, in that He was created. They stand not alone upon the idea that Jesus was created. This was the mainstay belief of the SDA Church back in the beginning, with the notable exception of Ellen G. White, who came from a Trinity-believing Methodist background and W.W. Prescott who wrote the famous phrase which ended up in the Desire of Ages: “In Christ is life...unborrowed, underived.” The Jehovah’s Witness look to Philippians 2:5-8 to prove their subservient position of Christ. We look to Philippians to prove the Divine became man. Here are three translations declaring the Divine nature of Christ: “The divine nature was His from the beginning” (20th Century NT); “He has always been God by nature” (Philips); “His nature is from the first divine” (Knox). “Yet, did not cling to His prerogatives as God's equal” (Philips), “but stripped Himself of His glory” (Conybeare) “and took upon Him the nature of a bondservant” (Weymouth NT) “and to be born like other men” (Norie NT). “And being recognized as truly human” (Weymouth NT), “He lived obediently” (Berkeley NT) “going so far as to actually die a criminal's death on a cross” (Taylor).

If you wish to accurately describe the life Christ assumed on earth, then Peter lays it out in terms we can all understand: “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pet. 1:4).
We need to praise and exalt our Lord for coming to us with a divine nature which assumed the nature of the bondservant, yet still found a way to never yield to the pull of the flesh. Yet, the Jehovah's Witnesses demean Him by saying He was not equal with God. Our Saviour stooped so low and gave up equality as not something to grasp to retain, and we dare question His equality with the Father? God understood the sacrifice and declared He had “highly exalted Him, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow” (Phil. 2:9-10). Instead of marvelling at what Jesus did and the victory He won in defective flesh, some men say He is not equal with God, while others say He did it with superior flesh. And to this end we are ashamed to write their reports.

Much has been said about the missing comma found in the story of the thief on the cross, where churches place the man into heaven before Christ got there. There is another missing comma with equally important ramifications in our study on the nature of Christ. It is found in Romans 8:3. The KJV reads: “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” According to this comma placement, the text strongly indicates there is no way the law could be kept in the weakness of flesh, so God sent His Son in a look-alike nature to finally defeat this persistent flesh. Now, watch what happens to our understanding when we reissue the comma where it is wont to be: “For what the law could not do in that it was weak, through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” It is the law which is declared weak in that it cannot save anybody. It is the plan of God to send His Son in the only flesh spoken of in the Concordance, the sarx, where He defeated the flesh once for all by a perfect performance! That is the Gospel truth.

Most Christians do not think there was any chance that Christ could have failed His mission. Most Adventists believe Christ could have failed when operating in the sinless flesh wherein untainted Adam fell. However, if God were to have given Adam and Eve a second chance and said for them to start over, chances are they never would have failed, for the Bible says the “affliction shall not rise up the second time.” So, if we are expected to live forever in glorified natures and choose to never sin again, then Jesus coming in the nature of pre-fall Adam, His fight against Satan and sin would have been a cakewalk. There is no way He sins. Satan would have given up his fight early on. However, if Jesus came to us in the post-fall nature of Adam, it is “game on” for Satan’s crew.

Here is a misunderstood verse that shows from the beginning it was always a divine risk to send Jesus in our fallen flesh. God says to King David (most assume the prophecy is about his son Solomon but it is speaking of an eternal throne, thus Jesus is the focus): “I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish His kingdom. He shall build an house for My name, and I will stablish the throne of His kingdom forever. I will be His Father, and He shall be My Son. If He commit iniquity, I will chasten Him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But My mercy shall not depart away from Him.... And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established fore ever before thee” (2 Sam. 7:12-16). The possibility to fail His mission was very real. This was no actor’s script Jesus was to follow. This was the battle of eternity to see if One assuming fallen humanity could redeem mankind.

In speculation, what if Jesus had stumbled and sinned? Then the common death of mankind was his lot. There is no sacrifice for sin. There is no resurrection, no hope for humanity. Satan wins; God loses. But that is not the end. “By Him all things consist” (Col. 1:17). All of His creations begin to fall apart. The Holy Spirit who lives to tell us about Jesus has no longer any purpose. And who is there to show and tell us of the Father’s love in living, breathing form? Satan is deemed to be more powerful than God. It is far more than Jesus simply retreating to heaven with 10,000 angels as the vanquished One. You might conclude, “God so loved the world, that He risked His own existence to save it.”
Understanding the nature Christ took upon Himself is a life changing experience. Before this fight is over and Christ returns, something wonderful is going to take place on this earth among people filled with the divine nature of Jesus. It has been prophesied from old: “A seed shall serve Him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare His righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that He hath done this” (Ps. 22:30-31). How long this generation lasts is not important. There will be a final group who will demonstrate to Satan and the unfallen worlds that commandment-keeping people of sinful flesh who are full of the divine nature would rather die than sin, even if for a short season. They will not know how great their performance is because they will feel too unworthy to notice.

While this is going on, the priestly robes are laid aside in heaven and the announcement is made that it is time. While on earth this special group of believers “sing a new song” yea, one that has never been sung before, a song of victory over the flesh. “These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins.” The doctrines of the antichrist are not what they live by. It’s pure gospel time. “These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb” (Rev. 14:1-5). Reformers dying at the stake were not the firstfruits; the pioneers of the Advent movement were not the firstfruits. Even the apostles of Christ never sang this song. The final piece to the puzzle is Jesus waiting for one united group at the end of time to demonstrate the born again divine nature operating victoriously within the tabernacle of the fallen flesh. It starts with belief. It ends with belief. It’s Christ in our sinful flesh, the hope of glory.

Do not try to improve your performance, simply get to the mindset where you would rather die than willingly and premeditatedly sin. To adapt the common position that we are going to sin until Jesus comes and fall repeatedly into the pattern of Sin-Confess-Repent is right where the antichrist lives. And he wants to live a long time. Do not say you have no sin, lest you be called a liar. Your whole life has been nothing but sin. But there is a glorious prophecy awaiting fulfilment in you, a season that will shut the mouth of the antichrist forevermore, and it will take place in the sinful fallen flesh our Saviour assumed. The faith of Christ is a wonderful thing operating within us. It causes the Father to declare: “That man was perfect.... Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly” (Job 1:1, 22).
The Donkey's Secret

by Debbonnaire Kovacs
submitted April 9, 2014

Did you ever wonder about the owners of the donkey? We all know that in Old Testament times, it was seen as a kingly thing to ride upon a donkey. As a lover of the long-ear people, I myself would agree with that assessment. (Here's my girl, but no foal at the moment. Her name is SaraBeth and Jesus is welcome to ride her.)

Then we have Zechariah 9:9, a Messianic prophecy which says, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

We are all familiar with the New Testament story: Jesus and his disciples come to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, and he says, “Hey, guys, go into that village over there and you’ll find a donkey tied up and her foal with her. Untie them and bring them to me. Oh, by the way, if anybody asks you about it, just say ‘The Lord needs them.’”

Matthew simply reports that they “did just what Jesus said.” But I’m way more curious than that. Did anybody ask? Did they get to say their talisman, “The Lord needs them”? Did the owners then say, “Oh, wow, then we’re coming, too!” and join the procession. (I would have!)

How did he know them? He must have known them, right?

Did you ever wonder about the donkey owners?

More to the point, if some guys came and took, say, your car, and when you asked them why, they said, “The Lord needs it,”...what would you do?
From time to time, Hollywood seems to become enamored with biblical stories and religious motifs as topics for its once celluloid output. Some decades ago it was Cecil B. DeMille's "The Ten Commandments." Then William Wyler's "Ben Hur." More recently, Martin Scorcese's "The Last Temptation of Christ" and Mel Gibson’s "The Passion of the Christ." And, particularly recently, Christopher Spencer’s "Son of God." And now, Darren Aronofsky’s "Noah."

It was probably inevitable. Numerous societies recorded a tale of the Great Deluge. And the narrative of the destruction of earth by a God sated by the iniquity of man, save for eight humans and various numbers of animal species, holds a fascination for most, perhaps excluding those who deny its veracity.

Darren Aronofsky (director of "Black Swan"and "The Wrestler") is a self-proclaimed atheist, so it is no surprise that his "Noah," with Russell Crowe as the redoubtable protagonist, plays fast and loose with the spare historical account of the global catastrophe recorded in the book of Genesis.

Viewers familiar with the biblical account will find much at which to wince. A certain artistic license is a given, but there are so many deviations from the story of Noah, his building of the ark according to divine instructions, and the subsequent Flood that the suspension of disbelief at some point is insufficient to sustain the bridge that any film director hopes to build between his oeuvre and the audience, if that audience be Bible believers.

Aronofsky apparently deemed the account in Genesis insufficient, in either interest or detail, to justify a feature-length film, so he and co-writer Ari Handel composed a script incorporating Watchers (giant, grotesque anthropomorphic fallen angels who helped build the ark and fought off hordes of humans who sought to take the ark once the rains began to fall). Like reverse lightning, their souls return to heaven when they die in righteous combat.

The demise of Lamech, Noah’s father, when Noah was but a boy, at the hands of Tubal-Cain (Ray Winstone), the nemesis of Noah who successfully manages to board the ark and almost corrupts Ham, Noah’s second son, is a contrivance that might work on a story board but is at variance with the biblical account of Lamech’s longevity (age 777).

So is the presentation of the three sons of Noah: Shem, Ham and Japheth. According to Genesis, all had wives when they boarded the ark. Not so with Aronofsky’s version. Shem’s inamorata Ila (a flawless Emma Watson) becomes pregnant with twin daughters, whom Noah vows to kill upon birth, so convinced is he that only animals are supposed to survive; humans are to be exterminated, so God can start afresh with the one species that chose evil over Him.

Ham is a troubled lad with a grudge against his father having to do with Noah’s failing to save Ham’s love interest before the rains came. Tempted to betray his father, he partially does so, but, in the end, saves Noah in his fight with Tubal-Cain. Japheth is a mere boy.

Anthony Hopkins, although having little more than a cameo role, is fine, as usual, as the aged Methuselah. His most
memorable achievement is healing the barrenness of Ila, who was rescued as a young girl by Noah after her family was slain by wandering marauders.

Jennifer Connelly’s portrayal of Naameh, Noah’s wife, is convincing and touching.

In sum, Hollywood has proven, once again, that fire and fireworks trump hewing to the accurate telling of a compelling story recounted in the world’s best-selling book, which has survived for centuries.

One redeeming message of the movie is the ending: Noah’s injunction to be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. This includes humans, as represented by the twin daughters of Shem.

An earlier scene in which Noah is on the verge of knifing to death his two granddaughters (against the protests of his wife, son and daughter-in-law) is reminiscent of Abraham’s near-sacrifice of his only son Isaac. But the two situations differ in that, at the last moment, as Abraham’s knife is raised, God tells Abraham not to sacrifice Isaac; he has passed the test of loyalty. In the case of Noah, Noah tells God, as he puts down the knife, “I can’t do it.”

But, according to the Genesis account, he was never asked to.

Missing was the depiction of a post-Deluge full rainbow, symbolizing God’s promise to never again destroy the earth by water. Only a small arc of a rainbow appears at the film’s terminus. The significance of this truncation may be greater than that intended by the auteur.

S M Chen
Edwin A. Schwisow
Reply
9 days ago

Perhaps there is an attempt being made today in the movie industry to market religious themes out into the non-fundamentalist mainstream of America. Every child and his nanny today has heard of Noah, but often not in a Sabbath- or Sunday-school, but in a child's reader and comic-strip Bible context. It would appear that director Aronofsky, presumably an Ashkenazim Jew, saw tremendous potential in the narrative (which I understand he adapted as a screenplay, himself). For the past 40 years I have been in dialogue with various Israeli and Jewish couples who have explained to me that while they love their Bibles, they no longer believe that God guided the writing or activities recorded in the Holy Book, and they consider themselves secular Jews, as do a vast majority of Israeli Jews back in the homeland. The Bible and its major narratives have become elements of Judeo-Christian lore and culture, and are no longer seen either ther, in Europe, or in the Middle East as literal guides for the soul, as the Bible has been regarded in the past. It should not surprise us that today large deviations from the text was in the past....

Anonymous

Posting as Andrews University Library - 1, James White Periodical Libr Subscribe to comments
I Lift Up My Eyes

http://www.atoday.org/article/2416/poetry-the-arts/visual-arts/i-lift-up-my-eyes

by Keeley Jones, age 17
submitted April 3, 2014

Acrylic paint on canvas

Keeley is 17 years old and lives in Bozeman, Montana. She is self-taught and has been drawing and painting for about two years. She attended Mt. Ellis Academy her freshman and sophomore years, but this year she decided it would be better to be homeschooled so she could have more time for her art. She hopes to make it her career, and if you keep watch for more of her art here at AToday, you will certainly agree that she has what it takes!
Someone in the Crowd

www.atoday.org/article/2430/poetry-the-arts/poetry-prose/someone-in-the-crowd

by Andy Hanson
Submitted April 9, 2014

When You asked as you were dying,

    Father forgive them, they know not what they do,

while You were taunted by passers-by and chief priests and scribes and elders and even a bandit crucified with you, someone in the crowd was listening and was forgiven.

When You cried out as you were dying,

    My God, my God, why have you forsaken me,

while they ridiculed You and called You a madman, “For did he not say ‘I am God’s son?’” Someone in the crowd knew the difference between a declaration of abandonment and a desperate cry for comfort.

When You declared as You were dying,

    Father, into your hands I commend my spirit,

while the cynical commented, “He has put his trust in God; now let God rescue him if he wants him.” Someone in the crowd understood that your trust was not misplaced.

When You spoke as you were dying, hanging there under that cruel sign, JESUS—KING OF THE JEWS,

    I am thirsty,

someone in the crowd put a sponge soaked in sour wine on a hyssop stick and held it up to your lips.

When You knew that you had finished the course, that You had kept the faith, it wasn’t only the centurion who struggled to understand what it meant when you whispered,

    It is fulfilled
    It is finished.

Someone in every second of every minute of every hour of every year of every century since that day has made the transition from fearing God to loving Him because you loved us. Someone has
always understood the ironic, terrible, glorious, eternal truth spoken by those who mocked you.

He saved others; himself he could not save.
In 1888, on the Atlantic “Gold Coast” of Africa, a ship made a stopover at Apam. The captain was apparently carrying tracts concerning something called the Advent message; at any rate, he gave one to a man named Francis I. U. Dolphijn. According to the Dictionary of African Christian Biography, Dolphijn “accepted his newfound faith warmly and wholeheartedly. He determined to help build up the church on a sound and lasting footing in his home country.” For the next four years he carried on a correspondence with church leaders at Battle Creek, asking for more reading material, and eventually for missionaries and pastors.

His efforts culminated in the first official visit of an SDA minister to his home, Apam, in 1892 to undertake a feasibility study of Adventist prospects in that country. Upon the recommendation of this visiting official, --Lawrence Chadwick,-- the General Conference of SDA headquarters in Battle Creek, Michigan, USA dispatched the church's first foreign resident missionaries to Ghana in early 1894. These pioneer missionaries, Karl Rudolph and Leroy Sanford, Americans, first landed at Apam on Thursday, February 22, 1894. That marked the opening of the first SDA mission station in Real Africa (referred to some people as "Black Africa"). Francis Dolphijn and his small band of Adventist believers warmly welcomed Rudolph and Sanford to Ghana for Seventh-Day Adventism.

Thus began Adventist work in what is now Ghana. In early December, 2013, the church in Accra celebrated its 125th anniversary. In other words, this church on the other side of the world from Adventist roots has been around only 25 fewer years than the denomination itself. Pastor Dr. Samuel Adama Larmie, President of the Ghana Union Conference of the SDA, was there to help them celebrate.

“From a single pamphlet and a single soul, Francis Dolphijn, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Ghana now has over 700,000 worshippers,” he said. Dr. Larmie went on to note that throughout the years, God had raised for Himself faithful people fired by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the everlasting gospel within and without the borders of the nation. “From very humble beginnings, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church has grown through the years to become a strong
army for the proclamation of the saving truths of the Living God contained in the Holy scripture,” he said.

Pastor Delbert Baker encouraged listeners to serve God as Joseph did, and God would work in their lives as he did in Joseph’s. He said that worshipers could be deeply grateful to God for multiplying little beginnings, as he has done for this church for 125 years, and that he would do the same in individual lives.

Dr. Larmie, in speaking of the activity of the Adventist church in the area, reported that “the church now runs 675 basic schools, fourteen senior high schools, one college of education, three levels of nursing training education, and one university with two major campuses.” He added that the church has 25 hospitals and clinics, and that over the past 30 years, through the agency of ADRA, the church has been involved in several social interventions across the country. “ADRA has provided school buildings, health education, and have been present at places where natural disasters struck to provide relief for the affected people.”

Mr Julius Debrah, Greater Accra Regional Minister, was also present to commend the Adventist Church for its immense contributions in the establishment of health facilities, educational institutions and human rights advocacy that sought to help put the country on a high pedestal. He cited ADRA Ghana as a benchmark of the Church which continues to play major roles and empower people with relief needs of the country.

Today, the town of Accra, once a 19th century suburb of Victoriaborg, is the capital and largest city of Ghana, with an estimated urban population of 2.269 million as of 2012. [Wikipedia] Adventism has grown with the area, now comprising the Ghana Union Conference, with six local conferences and one mission field.

For more info:
http://www.dacb.org/stories/ghana/dolphijn_frankis.html
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seventh_Day_Adventist_Church_(Ghana)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Accra
Another Great Film Festival


submitted by Debbonnaire Kovacs
April 9, 2014

Another great story about the power of film! Click on over to:

A Seventh-day Adventist arts festival has staged and screened two Australian premieres to critical and popular acclaim during its annual celebration of faithful creativity.

*Chariot: the Eric Liddell story* and *Hell and Mr Fudge* both featured at the Manifest Creative Arts Festival, which Avondale College of Higher Education hosted on its Lake Macquarie campus, March 20-23.

*Avondale staff members and students star with Michael Taylor (centre) in Searchlight Theatre Company’s co-production of Chariot: the Eric Liddell story.*
Credit: Colin Chuang.