Adventist Woman Disfellowshiped for Medical Marijuana Use: An exceedingly grateful Adventist member who has found relief from severe pain by ingesting marijuana oil, is told by her fellow church members that she must forfeit her Adventist membership.

Two Adventist Pastors Killed in Two Days: For centuries political disputes have been fought through selective assassination and terror, and the practice was again apparently invoked this week in the tragic slayings of two Adventist ministers.

Conference President Roberts Receives Regional News Coverage: The only Adventist woman in the world currently serving as a conference president is seen as caught in a no-woman's land between ostracization by the world body of the Church and open-armed acceptance at home.

Andrews University Museum to Host Rare Archaeological Exhibit: Unlike many smaller archaeological
centers, the Andrews University Siegfried Horn Museum continues to garner opportunities to display highly prized collections....

**Loma Linda University Hosts Creation Discussion:** In the wake of a hot summer’s give-and-take between the GC president and select academics and invitees, Loma Linda University has hosted a review of the issues, presentations, and discussions in question....

**Adventists Play Important Roles in Ukrainian/Russian Dialogue:** Adventist members the world over are often regarded as uniquely disinterested and honest in matters of religious and political brokerage and continue to be looked to for conciliating leadership....

**Australian Prime Minister Says Hospital Shows Jesus' Love:** Prime Minister Tony Abbott has praised Sydney Adventist Hospital for accomplishing so much in the name of Jesus, in a massive remodeling that cost only $200 million—a bargain....

**OPINION**

**So, What Shall We Do With the Prophet?:** The past four decades (1975-2014) have been scarred and scary ones for the reputation and legacy of Ellen G. White, whom AT writer Dan Appel says has been injured grievously by those who purported to support her most perfectly....

**It Can Be Documented?:** President Ted Wilson has cited controversial data in his defense of a short, recent creation. Andy Hanson wonders if this documentation is worthy of the high-stakes debate....

**Review vs. Review:** Jack Hoehn wonders why the *Adventist Review* is becoming increasingly a magazine about corporate leadership, rather than a review of the accomplishments of Adventist laity and their leaders, working together....
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atodayarchive.org/article/2760/news/october/adventist-woman-disfellowshiped-for-medical-marijuana-use
Faith Bodle, who is a life-long Adventist, was disfellowshipped from the Beaumont Seventh-day Adventist Church for using medicinal marijuana, reports KBMT 12News, the local ABC affiliate in Beaumont, TX. In the state of Texas, purchasing and consuming marijuana is not legal for either recreational or medical purposes. Bodle began using marijuana in early 2014 to relieve the pain caused by trigeminal neuralgia (TN), a condition that affects the nerves of the face and head. Bodle told Adventist Today she never knew when the excruciating and debilitating pain would strike.

Despite being removed from the church’s books, Bodle expresses ongoing commitment to both God and the Adventist Church. “I'm still an Adventist and I will be until the day I die. What they do on paper makes no difference to me because I know that my name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Taking my name off the books is just something that they did with a human-made book; it's done by human judgment, which we know can be erroneous,” Bodle declared. “I pray for them. I pray every day for them. I love them. I know that Christ loves them and died for them. We are commanded to love our enemies and do good to those who hate us. So I don't hate them, I don't have any ill will toward them.”

Adventist Today spoke with a representative of the Texas Conference and was told that neither conference nor congregational leadership could speak to the situation because of privacy concerns. The conference did share a general statement affirming the stance of the Adventist Church regarding personal health. The Church “has long taught and believes that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit and as such, we are to care for them intelligently. Since the use of illicit drugs is harmful to our bodies, we are to abstain from their use. This includes the sale, manufacture or advocacy for their use,” the statement read.

The conference statement concluded with what appears to be intended as a welcoming statement to Bodle: “The Beaumont Seventh-day Adventist Church also wishes to affirm that both members and non-members are always welcome to attend and participate in church services and activities.”

Bodle began suffering from trigeminal neuralgia in November 2013 but was not diagnosed until February 2014. When the pain would come, Bodle says she was only able to scream like Edvard Munch's famous painting. “I couldn't touch my face, talk or do anything. The pain was so excruciating. They also call it the suicide disease because it is so relentlessly excruciating that people have committed suicide to end the pain,” Bodle relates.

Working with a neurologist and a pain management specialist, Bodle took a prescribed cocktail of pharmaceuticals, but this proved ineffective at reducing the pain. When a close companion recommended trying marijuana to alleviate the pain, Bodle was doubtful but desperate. To her surprise, the marijuana helped dramatically, so she began to research the plant, settling on cannabis oil as her preferred method of consumption.
When church members became aware of her use and advocacy, Pastor Ben Guerrero and an elder visited Bodle, informing her of the need to stop using the illegal drug. Bodle consulted her physician and decided to continue using cannabis oil. Consequently, Bodle was told the church board would meet to review her situation. In her 10-minute defense at this meeting, Bodle read a letter from her physician indicating the efficacy of the cannabis oil. Her defense was not sufficient to influence the board, which voted to disfellowship Bodle.

Bodle has been on pain medications for a number of years because of a car accident, scoliosis and degenerative arthritis in her spine. While taking cannabis oil, she was pleased to discover that she was able to reduce her medications for these preexisting conditions.

Consistent with the statement by the Texas Conference, Bodle affirms the health stance of the Adventist Church. “There is a long-list of side effects for every one of my medications. Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, and we're not supposed to be putting things in our bodies that are damaging to them. So when I think about what I'm doing to my body every time I take those pain medications, it bothers me that I'm damaging my kidneys, my liver and more,” she says. In contrast, Bodle believes that using marijuana is beneficial rather than harmful, with few negative side effects. She adds, “I know we can't just rely on cannabis oil to cure all of our diseases and continue with the lifestyle that caused the diseases in the first place. This is part of the health message that I feel God has given to us.”

Bodle returned to this theme repeatedly while speaking with Adventist Today. “If we don't eat a good healthy plant-based diet, and don't stay active, drink a lot of water, get fresh air and sunshine, and get plenty of rest, then even though we have a miracle cure, it's not going to help us because we're going to go back to the lifestyles that made us sick in the first place."

Miraculously, Bodle believes marijuana cured her of trigeminal neuralgia. “I believe using for 3 months, I've been cured of TN. I've had no other attacks since the end of April. I've been told that once the myelin sheath is gone, it doesn't grow back, but I believe God has the power to grow it back. He made it in the first place, why can't he grow it back?” Bodle would like to continue using cannabis oil in order to limit the use of drugs for her prior conditions relating to spinal pain.

While she does not support using marijuana as a recreational drug merely to get high, Bodle does fear that merely approving marijuana for medicinal reasons will still leave many people without proper access. “With the legalization for medical use only, they're going to say that only people dying with cancer or terminal diseases are entitled to getting a prescription for it. She continues, "I'm not an advocate of recreational marijuana, and I have let people know that, because I don't believe we should be using it just to get high. I think we should use it for the good that it can do. I don't get high. I use it for pain relief."

Bodle hopes that her situation will be of use to others. “I'm glad I got TN if I'm able to help someone else who suffers from that horific pain.” She emphasizes this point, “If it can cure my TN, it can cure someone else's TN. And if it can take care of my back pain, it can help someone else with their back pain. For me to keep silent and not share that with someone who is suffering is an atrocity.”
Between 1985 and 1996, the Seventh-day Adventist Church released five statements regarding drugs and temperance.* None of these refer directly to the use of marijuana for medical purposes, indicating the need for the Church to consider this topic as Adventists across the North American Division wrestle with the complexities of healthful living when formerly illegal drugs can now be prescribed by physicians in certain locations. (For additional viewpoints, see this previous Adventist Today report, link.)

*Drugs (June 1985) – [http://www.adventist.org/information/official-statements/statements/article/go/0/drugs/54/](http://www.adventist.org/information/official-statements/statements/article/go/0/drugs/54/)


Two Adventist Pastors Killed in Two Days

From Adventist Review News Release, October 29, 2014

Two Seventh-day Adventist pastors were killed in armed ambushes in Guatemala and the Philippines last week, highlighting the danger that some church workers face in restive regions of the world.

Masked assailants attacked pastor Noe Gonzalez, 54, and his wife as they rode home on a motorcycle following evangelistic meetings that he had led in the town of Hierbabuena in east Guatemala on Oct. 23, the Adventist Church’s Inter-American Division said Monday.

Gonzalez was shot four times and his wife, Oralia, was struck on the head and left for dead. Oralia was treated at a hospital and released hours later.

A day earlier, masked gunmen opened fire on six people preparing to board a vehicle in a village in the Philippine province of Zamboanga del Norte, killing pastor Ramil Ansong, 29, and his 50-year-old father, Jose. The other four people in the group, including the pastor’s mother, escaped uninjured, according to local media reports.

Police have opened investigations into both attacks but not identified a motive in either.

Deadly attacks on Adventist pastors are rare but not unheard of. "We are saddened by these violent attacks on Adventist pastors," said Derek Morris, associate secretary of the Adventist world church's Ministerial Association, which trains and supports pastors. "In such difficult times, we can find encouragement in the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:10: 'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'"

Morris added: "We will continue earnestly in prayer for pastors and church leaders and especially remember the families of those who have suffered."

While few details were immediately available about the attack in the Philippines, Gonzalez died amid an increase in violence in Guatemala that has worried local church leaders.

"We want you to live each day in the presence of Jesus so that you can be prepared for whatever incidence you may face each day," Guenther Garcia, president of the Adventist Church in Guatemala, said in a statement to his country’s 117 pastors. "Do not be discouraged by the wickedness, injustice and depravity that you are called to face as you proclaim the good news of salvation."

Gonzalez was the fourth Adventist pastor to be killed in Guatemala in the past 33 years.

Gonzalez had faced the threat of death before. Years earlier, Gonzalez boldly defended the president of a local mission, pastor Jaime Torres, when a group of angry indigenous people beat Torres and took him captive, said a friend, pastor Gustavo Menendez.

"Pastor Gonzalez offered his life to save the life of the Adventist president and the situation diffused," Menendez said in a statement released by the Inter-American Division. "His heroism and commitment to the work of God will always be remembered."
Hundreds of church members attended the funeral of Gonzalez on Sabbath, Oct. 25.

Gonzalez was born on July 22, 1960, in Jalapa, Guatemala, and is survived by his wife and four adult children.
Conference President Roberts Receives Regional News Coverage (Updated)

By AT News Team, October 28, 2014

As the first woman to be elected to the position of conference president within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Dr. Sandra Roberts was recently labeled “living history” by The Press-Enterprise, a newspaper based in Riverside, CA, serving Inland Southern California. The press coverage commemorates Roberts' first year as president of the Southeastern California Conference, an area that includes approximately 70,500 members in Riverside, San Bernardino, Orange, San Diego and Imperial counties.

Roberts' lack of recognition by the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (GC), which is the Church's global governing body, was arguably the focus of the article. “The world body still does not recognize Roberts’ election. Nor does it view her ordination as valid. Her name is conspicuously absent from the Adventist Online Yearbook’s listings of top administrators in the Riverside-based Southeastern California Conference.... A line is all that appears after 'President','” reports David Olson for the paper.

After addressing Roberts' ability to lead effectively despite this controversy, the story considers the upcoming vote on women's ordination that will be held at the General Conference assembly in 2015. Olson explains, “The 2015 measure is somewhat of a compromise. It would allow each of the 13 geographic divisions of the church to decide whether to permit the ordination of women. The executive committee only voted to place the item on the 2015 session agenda. It did not recommend a vote for or against.”

Finally, the article finishes by returning to the theme of Roberts' marginalization by GC leadership. "Roberts attended this month's annual council meeting in Maryland, where women's ordination was discussed and the executive committee acted. But the only female Adventist conference president in the world was forbidden from speaking on the matter during official sessions. Conference presidents in divisions that host annual councils typically are allowed to speak. But the world church does not recognize Roberts as a conference president, so she had to wear a 'visitor' tag like anyone else who was simply observing the proceedings."

UPDATE: The Press-Enterprise posted a follow-up article on October 27, 2014. This interview between David Olson and Sandra Roberts focuses primarily on ordination. It included a comparison between the recognition shown to her at the recent GC meetings and those that take place within the North American Division (NAD): "Unlike the worldwide Adventist Church, the North American Division recognizes Roberts as a pastor and as president of the Riverside-based Southeastern California Conference. As at last year’s division meeting, she will be treated the same as any other conference president, division spokesman Julio Muñoz said. 'Sandra Roberts was elected by her constituency, and that is why the North American Division recognizes her as president of that conference,' Muñoz said. 'She is entitled to represent her constituency.'"
The complete article can be read here—“ADVENTISTS: Female Conference President Is Living History” (David Olson, PE.com, 26 Oct 2014). The follow-up interview is available here—“More of my conversation with Inland Adventist leader Sandra Roberts” (27 Oct 2014).
Andrews University Museum to Host Rare Archaeological Exhibit

By AT News Team, October 30, 2014

At a time when many archaeological museums at religious-affiliated schools in the United States are struggling to add to their displays, the Siegfried Horn Museum at Andrews University (AU) will soon host an exhibit of 48 ancient artifacts, reports the New York Times.

"In recent decades, countries that house remains of the ancient world have become determined to keep archaeological finds within their borders," explains the New York Times article. Furthermore, small museums often lack "the financial resources to buy works or borrow actively from other collections." Because of these constraints, Dr. Constance Gane, curator of the Horn Museum and assistant professor of archaeology and Old Testament at AU, told Adventist Today that the museum is thrilled to exhibit the ceramic figurine fragments.

Gane describes the upcoming display: "Most of the figurines are of male or female busts or torsos. A particularly endearing motif is that of a mother breast-feeding her baby. There are also a number of partial 'horse and rider' figurines. Remnants of paint can still be seen on some of the figurines." Gane explains that the "ceramic figurines are a part of Late Iron Age II/Persian Period (8th – 6th century BC) material assemblage. Though the specific function and meaning of the figurines are still under study, it can tentatively be stated that at least some of the figurines were used in a cultic context."

The Horn Museum states that its goal is to "be a resource for understanding the Middle East as the cradle of civilization directly impacting the West. Both the Judeo-Christian and Islamic traditions find their cultural roots in the Middle East, and it is the intent of the Horn Museum to help bring this awareness to both students and the public."

The museum's collection process began in 1938 when the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago donated 27 pieces of Megiddo pottery.

Along with La Sierra University (LSU), a Seventh-day Adventist institution in Riverside, CA, Andrews University has been active for a number of decades in Jordan, excavating three sites which are together called the Madaba Plains Project. The project's website reports that the excavations began in Hisban in 1968. This work has expanded to include digs at Umayri and Jalul. LSU's efforts are led by Dr. Douglas Clark, professor of Biblical Studies and Archaeology. Clark believes the project is the most well-known Seventh-day Adventist archaeological initiative. "The Madaba Plains Project is the major Adventist flagship set of excavations. People know of Adventist involvement in other places—in Jordan, Israel and Turkey—but Madaba is the flagship. That's the one people mostly know about," Clark says.*
The years of work by AU students and faculty in Jordan made the upcoming Horn exhibit possible. Gane shares that “many of the ceramic figurines were excavated by Andrews University students. One of the most memorable finds was made in 2009 by Jasmine Saunders when she uncovered the now famed ‘Lady of Jalul’ in the Late Iron Age II/Persian Period ruins of Field D, directed by Jennifer Groves.”

![Photo 2. Jasmine Saunders holding “Lady of Jalul.” Credit: Constance Gane.]

The Horn exhibit will by a “study loan,” meaning it is for the purpose of further study in preparation for a forthcoming AU publication on the excavations at Tall Jalul, Jordan, explains Gane. “The loan is specifically for study, but we will be able to put the objects on a study display for the public in the near future.” Gane adds, “Over a period of several years, I have broached the topic of having excavated objects on loan for exhibition purposes at our Horn Archaeological Museum at Andrews University, but initially was not able to secure permission. The request process is a lengthy one and in the past I have not been able to complete the negotiation process while in the country of Jordan. This is the first time the process was expedited with the negotiations proceeding efficiently. I am extremely impressed with the organization and efficiency of the Antiquities Authority in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.”

Gane believes one of the primary reasons the Horn Museum was able to secure this loan is because of “the longterm level of trust that has been developed between the leadership of Tall Jalul (particularly that of AU director, Randall Younker) and the Jordanian Antiquities Authority. Secondly, the objects are on loan specifically for study purposes and not solely for the purpose of exhibition. By having the figurine collection assembled in one location with time and the facilities necessary to photograph and process the objects, we are given an opportunity to carry out in-depth analysis.”

Although the exact dates are not yet finalized, the exhibit of the Jalul figurines will be open to the public some time between December 2014 and January 2015 and will be located in the Madaba Plains Project Exhibit Hall in the Horn Archaeological Museum. The objects are on loan for one year, with a possible opportunity for renewal for one additional year. Gane says the “exhibit will be small, but highly significant.” She adds, “It is thrilling to be able to have an assemblage of actual Jordanian artifacts that we excavated ourselves on exhibit here in the Museum where our work in Jordan has been showcased. It is a vote of confidence by the Jordanian Antiquities Authority in the value of our work at Jalul that we are able to proudly showcase their significant heritage.”

Gane also shared with Adventist Today that the museum has other items of note. “Many would be surprised to discover that the 7th largest cuneiform tablet collection in the U.S. is housed at the Horn Museum. We have over 3000 tablets. Most of our tablets are included in the online Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative catalogue (CDLI). Just this week, a visiting scholar, Klaus Wagensonner, from the University of Oxford in England was working on our tablet collection, specifically studying tablets from the ancient site of Kish in Iraq,” she says. AU archaeological faculty are also active in Sicily and Israel.


Loma Linda University Hosts Creation Discussion

By AT News Team, October 29, 2014

On October 25 the humanities program in the Loma Linda University (LLU) School of Religion sponsored a discussion entitled, “Good Science and Literal Bible: What Gives?” The purpose of the gathering was to review the recent International Conference on the Bible and Science, which was hosted by the General Conference (GC) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in August. Adventist Today previously reported that approximately 300 faculty from Adventist colleges and universities, along with church administrators and pastors gathered for the conference in St. George, Utah, to discuss how to relate biblical and scientific data.[1]

An estimated 200 people attended this week’s panel discussion in order to hear commentary from six Adventist professors—Leonard Brand (biology and paleontology, LLU), Maury Jackson (pastoral ministry, La Sierra), Paul Giem (emergency medicine, LLU), Ken Wright (anatomy, LLU), Suzanne Phillips (earth and biological sciences chair, LLU), and Richard Rice (religion and theology, LLU). Two panelists—Brand and Phillips—had assisted in planning the Bible and Science conference, and Rice was the only discussion participant who had not attended that event.

The panel was moderated by Jim Walters, professor of religion and ethical studies in the LLU School of Religion. Walters began the event by stating, “The challenge for us this afternoon is whether we can have a genuine meeting of hearts and minds, in that logical order I suggest—or whether we bypass one another because of different orbits. If LLU can pull this off, maybe our church can.”

Walters shared with Adventist Today that he convened the panel “to hopefully demonstrate that Big Tent Adventism can really work. I began with the conviction that both sides of the debate are good churchmen and churchwomen at heart—even if they are far apart in mind. And I hoped to get us to find common ground at the deeper, affective level of being.” This "big tent" refers to the spectrum of views held by Seventh-day Adventists regarding the timing and method of God's creation of matter and life on Earth.

Each panelist was given six minutes to share his or her analysis of the St. George conference as well as to express their views and concerns relating to science and faith. This was followed by a discussion between the panelists and then a time for audience members to direct questions to the panelists.

One attendee asked Brand and Giem to provide their understanding of a “recent” creation. This question was asked in light of the vote of the Church’s Annual Council to request the upcoming GC session in San Antonio, TX, (July
2015) to add “recent” to the statement of the Adventist fundamental belief on creation. Giem stated that 6,000 years would be his understanding of recent. Brand’s response was less specific. He stated that his concern was when “the fall” occurred and sin entered the world, but he provided no specific time.

A representative of Adventist Today later interviewed Brand and requested that he clarify his answer. He stated that, in his opinion, the issue is a choice between the creation of a literal Adam and Eve on the one hand and on the other a long period of evolution using death as the means of change, which would mean God is responsible for death. When asked for his view on when the creation week occurred, he answered “a few thousand years” ago. Brand indicated that he would not argue with someone who believed the creation week occurred hundreds of thousands of years ago.

In the end Walters was pleased with the conversation. “I liked the tone of the panelists’ discussion—a lack of condescension and a considerable degree of charitable candidness. My fear that traditionalists and the progressives would talk past one another did not materialize. In fact, I think there was some actual engagement—particularly on the necessity of being true to conscience,” Walters shared. “Also, some surprising unanimity surfaced. When faced with a concrete case of whether to baptize a scientist who believed in all regards except in the orthodox idea of a short-chronology creation, all panelists—left and right—agreed, some with heavily nuanced positions.”

UPDATE: A recording of the event may be viewed on YouTube (link).

Adventists Play Important Roles in Ukrainian/Russian Dialogue

From a news release by the Trans-European Division, October 26, 2014

From September 9-11, 2014, religious leaders from Russia and Ukraine gathered in Oslo, Norway, for dialogue to agree on a common communiqué regarding the situation in eastern Ukraine. Given the different perspectives of the two delegations, that was not the most likely outcome. Adventist leaders played important roles in the interreligious dialogue.

The religious leaders present at the conference included Orthodox, Pentecostals, Adventists, Baptists, Methodists, Jews and Muslims. They all condemn “violence committed toward clergy and lay people, religious buildings and houses of prayer of any denomination.”

In the one-page long communiqué, the religious leaders support the efforts of the two countries and the “international community directed toward termination of the bloodshed and establishment of peace in Ukraine.” Further, the communiqué appeals “to all participants of the conflict not to allow, under any circumstances, actions that would lead to humiliation of human dignity, use of torture, kidnapping (including those for the sake of ransom) and looting.”

Religious freedom is another concern of the religious leaders for Ukraine and Russia. In the communiqué they state: “As religious leaders we want to pay special attention to this need to ensure the freedom of religion in the war zone.”

Participants in the roundtable conference told of gross violations of human rights. Believers in Eastern Ukraine have been picked at random by rebel forces only to be killed and dismembered. During the conflict many houses of worship have been totally destroyed.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was represented both in the Ukrainian and the Russian delegations. Pastor Victor Alekseyenko, president of the Ukrainian Union, was part of the Ukrainian delegation, while Pastor Vasilii Nichik, director of the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty department of the West Russian Union, represented the Adventist Church in the Russian delegation.

The 25 members of the Ukrainian delegation chose Pastor Alekseyenko as one of three persons to form a working group collaborating with four members of the Russian delegation to propose a final communiqué.

The Norwegian Bible Society hosted the conference, which was financed by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Bible Society had asked Pastor Tor Tjeransen to function as the moderator of the conference. Pastor Tjeransen is currently the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty director at the Norwegian Union and is a former board chairman of the Norwegian Bible Society.
Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott has praised the Sydney Adventist Hospital as a place that shows Jesus' love in a practical way and said state health providers should look to it as an example of how to spend money wisely.

Abbott spoke at a ceremony that opened a record U.S.$168 million expansion of the 111-year-old hospital, affectionately known by many Australians as “the San” in a nod to its former name, Sydney Sanitarium.

“This hospital is about providing the love of Christ in a practical way to people who need help,” Abbott told more than 500 guests on Oct. 17. “I salute your work, and I know you will do it even better in the months and years ahead as a result of these new facilities we open today.”

His remarks were echoed by Jillian Skinner, the top health official for the state of New South Wales, who applauded the hospital for providing “outstanding care to people across Sydney’s north shore, north west, Northern Beaches and Central Coast.”

As part of the opening ceremony, the prime minister, Skinner, and other dignitaries were given a tour of the recently opened LW Clark Tower, named after Adventist HealthCare chief executive Leon Clark.

The 12-story building, which serves as the centerpiece of San’s expansion project, brings the hospital's bed capacity up to 550. The new facility also features a modern maternity unit, state-of-the-art birthing suites, and space for up to 24 operating rooms.

The tour concluded with a walk through the San’s new purpose-built healing garden. The outdoor courtyard area is designed to help patients of the hospital’s new Integrated Cancer Center, which is still in development.

The hospital expansion was undertaken to meet a 50 percent increase in demand by 2024, when the hospital is expected to care for more than 300,000 patients a year.

Abbott said he was impressed that the hospital completed such a major expansion for 200 million Australian dollars.
“And can I say as I was looking at the briefing notes for today’s event, looking at all the things you were able to achieve, 12 new operating theaters, 200 new beds, additional car parking for something like 1,200 cars, all for $200 million? Extraordinary, extraordinary. $200 million of outstanding value,” he said. “I hope our public health planners are taking note because we need to get the best possible value from our health dollar and that is certainly what you do here.”

Read the full transcript of Prime Minister Abbott's speech here.
So, What Shall We Do With the Prophet?

by Dan Appel, October 26, 2014

Whatever one thinks of the prophet and her inspiration or lack of it, one cannot deny that the founding mother of our church has had a very significant place in the thinking and acting of our church for well over 100 years. Whether borrowed or original, compiled or ghost-written, the body of her written and spoken material is phenomenal by any standard. She was, it is increasingly acknowledged by scholars, one of the most significant women of her time.\[1\] Her admonition, encouragement, prognostication and guidance have been translated into most of the languages on earth and can be largely credited with the church that she founded, along with her husband and a few others, becoming one of the fastest growing denominations on the planet.

Revered by millions of Seventh-day Adventists and others as a prophet, her wide-ranging impact on both the church and the world for over a century cannot be denied. But, much as we would like to pretend otherwise, those glory days are largely over. It would be a safe bet to say that Ellen White’s prediction, stated multiple times in various venues, that Satan’s last great work would be to make of none effect the “Testimonies,” has come true. It is very probable that at least 80% of Seventh-day Adventists have not read a whole book by the one they claim to believe spoke for God in the last 10 years. The figure would probably be closer to 90% in the last 5 years. Ellen White, for all practical purposes, has become a symbol or a figurehead, someone we will quote and defend and express loyalty and appreciation for, but who, in a real and measurable way, if anyone dared to plumb it, is irrelevant to most in the Adventist Church.

While the majority of Seventh-day Adventists would probably still defend her as a true prophet, in a practical sense she has very little impact on the daily lives of most Adventists. If they read anything at all that she wrote, it most often consists of brief snippets of her spoken or written work. These proliferate everywhere, abstracted and printed in magazine articles, compilations, whole chapters that are printed in church-sponsored journals, or screeds that are sent out by various groups promoting and trying to promulgate their particular point of view or agenda.

At the outset, I would like to say that in my opinion, Ellen White was a prophet in the same sense that any of the Biblical prophets such as Daniel, Moses or the disciple John were prophets.\[2\] Anything I write will be purposed towards restoring her intended place in our church.

In the next two or three essays, I would like to consider some of the reasons why this may have happened and the implications for us as Adventists; at least some ideas of what we can do to change it; and if, indeed, we should attempt to do so.

The decline and practical demise of Ellen White’s influence can be mostly traced to the misuse and abuse of her written and spoken material by the church she founded and by the people through the years who have used her material for their own ends! While many on the most conservative side of our church would chalk the current state of affairs up to creeping compromise or a lack of spirituality in those who profess to be God’s last day people on earth, I would contend that the greater cause of her decline would be the aforementioned misuse and abuse of what she wrote by some of her most ardent supporters.
The first step we must take in divining the future of Ellen White’s influence is to consider the amazing volume of biographical and written material that is available to us today that is not available for any of the Bible writers - largely due to the advances in printing and other forms of media in the last 200 years. Because of the plethora of material available, we are forced to consider something that has not been an issue since the Old and New Testament churches had to decide how much of Daniel’s or Moses’ or John’s material was inspired.

Daniel or John either produced very little, when considering the span of their lives, or we have a distillation of their writings that the church considered inspired. From a life span of over 80 years, we have just 12 chapters of material to examine and try to understand and apply from the life of Daniel, one of the greatest prophets in history - at least half of which is biographical and historical, the rest being just five visions he had over a life-span of approximately 75 years.

The statistical percentages for John are approximately the same when you consider the whole body of material we have from his pen. The lion’s share is either pastoral or apologetics,[3] while his vision(s) on Patmos comprise a fairly small percentage of his output.

As for Moses, assuming that he wrote all five books of the Pentateuch and Job, we still have a very small output of material from a very long life.

In Ellen White we have just the opposite problem - we have such a nimiety of material it is overwhelming and we are left with the daunting task, which must have entailed considerable work and contention in the church in the cases of Moses and Daniel and John, of deciding what is “inspired” and what is not.[4]

The corpus of the Ellen White material we have is comprised of at least nine different types of spoken, written and the mundane[5] comprising millions of words from an 88-year ministry life-span. They are as follows:

1. Material where she explicitly states in one form or another, “God showed me” - generally in visions or as direct communication from an angel. Some of this visionary output is very literal and some is symbolic. One of the challenges we face as we work to develop a hermeneutic which we can apply to her work is to determine which is symbolic and which should be considered literal.[6] This can be further broken down into several sub-categories. No one knows for certain how many visions Ellen White had - not because a pretty good approximation could not be created, but because no one has ever attempted to tally them.[7]

1. The first category would be material clearly intended for the Adventist Church or, before it was founded, for the group who would become the Adventist Church.

1. Material focused on the “church universal.”

1. Material focused on specific people, groups or situations.

1. Material clearly focused on “the world” at large.
Another type of material is based on her best research - Ellen White had a very large and extensive library for her day and was an active researcher, often assisted by a small cadre of personal assistants and researchers who combed her previous material and that written by other Christian and secular authors which they incorporated in new written and spoken material. In addition, it is apparent that she read widely and voraciously. When she decided something was of value, she never hesitated to share it as truth worth following. Some authors she relied on, subsequent research has shown, were not altogether accurate - even though their material ended up in books such as *The Great Controversy* and *Child Guidance*. A couple of examples might help:

1. Ellen White, based on her research, became convinced that masturbation was one of earth’s greatest evils. She credited “secret vice” as being responsible for most insanity and disease - including but not limited to imbecility, dwarfed form, crippled limbs, missshapen heads and all other deformities, hereditary insanity, lung and liver problems, neuralgia, rheumatism, spinal problems, cancerous humors and diseased kidneys. These, she believed they brought on themselves by their secret habits. In short, masturbation would ruin life and health on earth and preclude a future existence in heaven[8] - since, in her view, there was not one girl or boy out of a hundred who was pure-minded and whose morals were untainted, and their parents were not much better.

Whatever one may think of masturbation, probably even the most conservative Adventist psychiatrist would not attribute most mental illness to this cause, and most physicians, even those at our most conservative institutions, would not ascribe most disease to this practice. If they took this advice seriously, anti-masturbation clinics would be right up there with smoking cessation clinics and cooking schools in their curriculum and outreach programs - a scary thought I pray no one takes seriously.

1. Ellen White opined on a number of occasions on the make-up of the 144,000. In fact, it could be fairly stated that she was all over the map on the subject.

1. To summarize, in her early works Ellen White described the 144,000 as those who went through the “Great Disappointment” and remained faithful and were sealed at that time for eternity. Later she expands this group to include those still alive or who had died at one time or another and were judged to be faithful. In one place she says that she along with the (rest of) the 144,000 would see heaven. In other places she counsels followers of God to pray that they can be in the 144,000 at the time when Jesus returns the second time to earth. And, in *The Great Controversy* she pictures them as those who come through the Great Tribulation and are alive when Jesus returns and who are the only ones who are allowed into the temple in heaven. She even paints them in heaven during the time of trouble, writing that she “heard the voice of God which shook the heavens and earth, and gave the 144,000 the day and hour of Jesus’ coming” which is followed by Jesus’ return to earth.[9] The most amazing statement is found in *Selected Messages, Book 3*, p. 51, where she states that “I have no light on the subject [as to just who would constitute the 144,000]. . . .” In other words, everything she had said previously was just her opinion - which had changed over time.

Ellen White could speak emphatically on subjects she felt strongly about and make it seem that God’s imprimatur was on her opinion, then could change that opinion and speak just as emphatically on that new position.

1. A third example would be her reliance on the work of Uriah Smith, whose *Daniel and the Revelation* has had to be revised several times in order to maintain any credibility, and the work of other accepted historians of her
day whose work has been discredited in some of the areas she used.

1. The next type of material could be described as “My best advice is . . . ,” which can also be broken down into at least 4 categories:

1. Her opinion - the opinion of even very godly people, even prophets, is just that. When they opine, it may or may not be accurate; it is just opinion.

1. One cannot deny that Ellen White was affected by her Methodist Holiness upbringing - something she herself alludes to at times. Her upbringing and experiences affected her opinions - such as her early openness to and participation in “signs and wonders,” a view which changed as she was influenced by James White’s Christian Connection views, which were considerably more staid and “high church” and intellectual.

1. Another form her opinion took is found in what might be called “It is accepted that” statements. When there was no immediate reason to doubt it, Ellen White often seems to have just accepted the prevailing attitudes and opinions on various Biblical subjects and often referred to these casually.

1. An example would be her occasional references to the age of the Creation. At least 30 times, Ellen White mentions the earth, the Creation, etc., as being 6,000 years old. It is obvious to any impartial observer that she accepted the conservative Christian view of her day that Bishop James Ussher’s chronology was accurate and mentions it in passing as she worked to make other points - always as a casual reference. In all cases her point was something else - the effects of sin, etc. Not once does she ever state that God or the angel or any other heavenly being told or showed or revealed to her that was the case.[10]

1. A final type of opinion is found in the reams of letters filled with the advice of a godly woman of faith and a leader in her church to all manner of people in all kinds of situations and places. As was the custom of her day, far removed from the days of telephones and smart-phones, she wrote copious correspondence which was faithfully copied and catalogued by her assistants.

1. A fourth type of material from Ellen White might be classified under “My best recollection is . . . ” Across the board, current neuroscience and psychological research show that all memory is selective, biased by our perspective and increasingly inaccurate the further we are from the event. Even godly, inspired people’s memories are increasingly inaccurate the further they are from an occurrence. Five minutes after an accident, people start remembering details differently and the longer it has been, the more we fill in the gaps with our own ideas. The books *Life Sketches* and *Early Writings* would be examples of this kind of material in written form.

1. Next we have all of the mundane material which has been able to be collected due to our proximity to the time of the prophet and our current penchant to collect even the most meaningless material from a person’s life.
We have an embarrassing supply of things such as shopping lists, friendly letters, etc. While these can be informative because they reveal some of her routines late in life (such as her shopping list requesting that oysters be purchased for her when she was in Elmshaven), most people would not give them the same degree of importance as, say, her visionary material.

1. An area that research continues to revealing more is the degree to which her assistants either assisted her in preparing her material or prepared it for her final approval with varying degrees of oversight and direction and involvement. Examples of this material would be the Conflict of the Ages series and the Testimonies.

1. Related to this (#6) are those areas where someone collated or compiled the material. This automatically reflects the bias of the compiler and may result in skewing the material to fit the preconceptions or agendas of the compiler. Examples would be: *Adventist Home, Child Guidance, The Truth About Angels, Counsels on Diet and Foods, Sons and Daughters of God, Selected Messages*, and *Mind, Character, and Personality.*[11]

1. A rather humorous example would be “Things I Thought I Heard Ellen White Say.” This area is larger than one might initially assume because “urban legends” - both in and out of the Church - about Ellen White and what she supposedly said have always proliferated. One only has to sit in certain Sabbath School classes to hear all kinds of things the prophet supposedly said that cannot be documented. A few are mentioned at the back of Volume 3 of the Ellen G. White Indexes published before the CD ROMS were available. The list is representative but by no means exhaustive.

1. Finally, there is material we have no idea what to do with. This naturally occurs in some of the above areas, but deserves special note. Examples would be her absolute affirmation early in her ministry of the “Shut Door” doctrine that contended that the door of salvation was closed for anyone who had not come through the “Great Disappointment” unscathed - a view she based on what God had revealed to her and which she later changed 180 degrees.

1. Then there is her statement that the angel had told her that some in her day would be alive when Jesus came back while others would be “food for worms.”[12] Another was her vision in 1881 where James, after his death, assures her that he will continue to be with her in her ministry and her comfort in that fact.[13]

At this point, the question of inspiration, when it comes to her inspiration, becomes more than just an academic exercise and turns intensely personal. Often, fearing a spiritual shipwreck, we take the ostrich approach and avoid the question altogether. But pretending the submerged rocks are not a hazard in the long run is a recipe for spiritual disaster - because sooner or later we will have to face them. Better to do it intentionally when you can think clearly rather than in a time of crisis. We are in the situation we find ourselves in today when it comes to Ellen White because we have intentionally avoided or papered over the hard questions in the past. We have obfuscated and stone-walled and danced around the dilemma of her inspiration in ways that are coming back to haunt us and our church and Ellen White today.

So, take a moment and ask yourself the tough question:
Imagine the different types of material from the voice and pen of Ellen White, what we have outlined above, arranged on a continuum. Where would you draw the line between what is “inspired” and what is not, and why? What are the criterion you use to assess what is inspired, or what is not? How would you explain your position to your children, to the students in an academy Bible class? to a fellow church member? to someone who at the moment has no confidence at all in the written material from Ellen White? to a neighbor who heard about her place in our church on the internet and who wants to know your opinion on the matter?

Now that we begin to have a handle on Ellen White’s lifetime of material, in our next essay(s) we will examine three basic questions: How much of this material is “inspired? how do I decide “what is inspired and what is not”? and how should it then impact my life, my witness, and the life of my church?

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[1] The recent volume edited by Terrie Dopp Aamodt, Gary Land and Ronald L. Numbers establishes this in a number of places.

[2] Walter Rea would have said that I was denigrating the Biblical prophets with such a view. I would respond that I am merely recognizing her place in the same genre with equal inspiration qualitatively - without granting her equal authority - something she herself affirmed. (The fact that so many insist on focusing on the “lesser light” rather than the greater might demonstrate the fact that babies prefer pablum while the growing and mature prefer something more substantial.

[3] The branch of theology concerned with the defense or proof of Christianity.


[5] Others may break this down into slightly different categories, but these are what work for me.

[6] For instance, when considering Ellen White’s descriptions of the heavenly judgment, a subject almost entirely comprised of symbolic material in the Bible’s pictures, we have tended to take what she wrote very literally.
The White Estate representatives in personal conversations said that apparently no one has ever bothered to add them up and that they had never before been asked for the number. They suggested I get one of the old sets of EGW (Ellen G. White) Indexes and count them. The editor of the recent EGW Encyclopedia in personal correspondence said he had "no idea," after I failed to find an answer in that exhaustive and well-written volume and contacted him. I received the same response when I contacted others who I assumed would have the answer on the tip of their tongues. This is quite frankly amazing to me, considering how important she is to the history of our church. Herbert Douglass, one of Ellen White’s most ardent supporters and biographers, also does not supply a definitive answer but contends that approximately 20% were for “the Adventist Church and its leaders” - a very approximate number indeed, considering that no one seems to have any idea how many visions she actually had - which means that 80% were for private individuals or groups in specific situations. (Note: his material can be found on the Ellen G. White Estate website.) One individual I contacted wryly commented that my question would probably mean that some seminary doctoral student would be tasked with coming up with an answer.


References include: 1Testimonies, p.59; Early Writings, p.14; A Word to the Little Flock, p.14; Experiences and Views, pp.11-13; Spiritual Gifts, Vol 1., p. 98,

I have asked both the White Estate scholars and the Geoscience Research Institute to help me find just one instance where Ellen White says definitively that she was told or showed that the earth/solar-system/cosmos/universe were 6,000 years old. They have affirmed that none exist.

Grace Jacques, Ellen White's granddaughter who grew up at Elmshaven while the prophet was still alive, told me emphatically in personal conversation that Messages to Young People, Child Guidance, and Adventist Home would definitely have not been written the way they were had Ellen White been alive, and that in many instances they did not at all reflect her general views.

1T 131

10 MR 40.1
It Can Be Documented?

by Andy Hanson, October 26, 2014

The following is a quote from God’s Final Message and Your Role, Ted Wilson’s closing address at a 10-day International Conference on the Bible and Science in St. George, Utah, on August 24, 2014. (1)

As part of God’s final message to the world, embodied in the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14, we are to proclaim to the world the perpetual memorial of creation, the seventh-day Sabbath, which caps the literal week of creation telling us where we have come from. [It is] the same seventh day on which we worship every week and the day on which we worshiped yesterday. The actual seventh day has never been lost. It can be documented through history and through astronomy.

The claim that a particular day in our present seven-day weekly cycle is the same twenty-four hour time period that was called the Sabbath by Old Testament Jews, is magical thinking. (2)

If one is interested in documenting the geologic history of our planet, I recommend The Rocks Don’t Lie by David R. Montgomery.

If one believes the literal account of human history as recorded in the biblical genealogy (Noah’s flood occurred about 2349 BC, and the Tower of Babel around 2242 BC), I suggest researching the civilizations of the Indus Valley, (3) South America, (4) and/or Egypt. (5).

In terms of astronomical evidence, I know of only one creation scientist who proposes that there is astronomical evidence for the young earth model. Barry Setterfield has proposed that:

“The speed of light and rate of radioactive decay have and continue to decrease. This provides evidence for the creation of the universe as being a rapid expansion as stated in 16 verses in the Bible in both the Old and New Testaments (God spread out the heavens). It also refutes Big Bang theory, since this expansion took place at a rate vastly faster than the BB theory could possibly allow. It also discredits the claim that red shift is evidence the universe is billions of years and provides for a young universe.”(6)

This theory has been abandoned by almost all other creation scientists (7) and is classified as “woo-woo” science by credible scientific authorities. (8)

Note:
A friend asked me why I would waste my time questioning the qualifications of the GC President to speak authoritatively about “scientific evidence” that supports Adventist doctrine. He argued that religious faith is conservative and based on tradition, and the rational testing of faith might be viewed as misguided or worse. When I tried to explain my idealistic motives, he said the only thing I could hope for was to avoid the fate of Isaiah.
1 http://www.adventistreview.org/affirming-creation/%E2%80%98god%e2%80%99s-final-message-and-your-role%E2%80%99

2 See my 2013 Adventist Today blog, Samoa, the International Dateline Shift, and the Seventh-day Sabbath. 

3 In the vast Indus River plains (located in what is today Pakistan and western India), under layers of land and mounds of dirt, archaeologists discovered the remains of a 4,600 year-old city. A thriving, urban civilization had existed at the same time as Egyptian and Mesopotamian states — in an area twice each of their sizes. 
http://www.uhistory.org/civ/8a.asp

4 3500 BC: The peoples of the New World have, by this date, domesticated a much greater range of plants than have those of the Old. The largest and most numerous villages are to be found on the coasts of Peru, Ecuador and Colombia, due to the Pacific Ocean currents that produce a rich harvest of marine foods. By this date these communities are shifting to a more agricultural economy, and their populations are growing. The inhabitants of some of the larger villages are beginning to construct ceremonial platforms, a feature which will be very prominent in later South American civilization. 
http://www.timemaps.com/history/south-america-3500bc

5 By about 6000 BC, a Neolithic culture rooted in the Nile Valley. During the Neolithic era, several predynastic cultures developed independently in Upper and Lower Egypt. A unified kingdom was founded in 3150 BC by King Menes leading to a series of dynasties that ruled Egypt for the next three millennia. 

6 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QdTIOVTDnNU

7 Even at the Institute for Creation Research (ICR) in the USA, Gerald E. Aardsma (1988) said there was no discernible trend in the data presented by Norman and Setterfield.

8 A Scientist's Perspective by Eric Ayers 
Barry Setterfield gets full credit for imagination. His hypothesis that the speed of light is slowing exponentially with time is much more creative than the usual woo-woo that masquerades as science in the Biblical-literalist literature. But creativity [refreshing as it may be] is not sufficient; in science, a hypothesis must be supported by the data. There is so much that is wrong with everything Mr. Setterfield is proposing that it's difficult to know where to begin; so in the interest of economy, I will deal only with the core of his argument.

His entire hypothesis rests on the idea that the speed of light has changed wildly over the history of the universe. He argues that the speed of light would have had to be fast enough in the past that light from a visible object millions of light-years away could reach earth in just 6,000 years. If only we had a way of measuring the speed of light thousands of years ago... And we do!

Supernova 1987A was surrounded by a ring of gas that had been ejected from the star before it went nova. When this ring of gas was hit by the ultraviolet ash from the supernova, it began to fluoresce. We can (and did) measure the time between the supernova explosion and when the ring began to glow. By measuring the angular size of that ring and the distance to the star (168,000 light-years) we can use simple trigonometry to calculate the distance from the star to the ring. Distance divided by time gives us speed. According to Mr. Setterfield's hypothesis, that speed would have to be at least 28x the currently accepted speed of light, but the observed speed, as measured by an event 168,000 years ago, was within measurement error of the speed of light now.

And with that, we're done. There's no need to respond to the rest of Mr. Setterfield's arguments, or marvel at how "miraculously" he makes the entire history of the cosmos fit within Ussher's chronology. Consequently, there is no need to poke holes in the rest of his work. His hypothesis, and everything dependent on that hypothesis, is disproven.
Notice this quote from Augustine:

*Often a non-Christian knows something about the Earth, the heavens. . . the motions and orbits of the stars, . . . and this knowledge he holds with certainty from reason and experience. It is thus offensive and disgraceful for an unbeliever to hear a Christian talk nonsense about such things, claiming that what he is saying is based in Scripture. We should do all that we can to avoid such an embarrassing situation, lest the unbeliever see only ignorance in the Christian and laugh to scorn.⁹*

These words, written some 1,600 years ago, are no less relevant today.

Bio:
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⁹from *De Genesi ad litteram; the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, an unfinished work
This article is not about the timing or the duration of Creation. It is about freedom of conscience, freedom to think, freedom to disagree and freedom of religion promoted by Seventh-day Adventists, versus manipulation, thought control, and domination of thought by the coercion of powerful religious leaders long opposed by Seventh-day Adventists.

Adventism has a magazine known as “The REVIEW,” recently moved into the offices and control of the administrators of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. It was the child of James Springer White and inspired wife, and has been the main voice of Adventism throughout our century-plus of existence. I have been published in its pages, and have been a subscriber or reader all my life. In 2012 I began writing and commenting for Adventist Today instead of the Adventist Review. But I still subscribe to the paper Review and read its online edition.

My wife has been disturbed with the unprecedented prominence in the REVIEW of the activities and opinions of the present General Conference President. She has developed the habit of scanning the pages of each issue for a news article, opinion piece, or other account of Ted N. C. Wilson, and remarks if there ever is an issue that does not mention his name. To her it has begun to feel like a political magazine dedicated to advancing candidates.

If one goes to the REVIEW website and searches for “Ted N. C. Wilson,” you get 1,130 hits in 0.24 seconds! (“Jack,” on the other hand, got only 174, including BLANCO, PROVONSHA, and DANIELS! “Hoehn” got 16 hits, most from my non-relative, Pastor Jim Hoehn.)

Here are some articles from two eras of the REVIEW, 2014 and 1896 (with emphasis added).

**Adventist Review-2014**

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<td>“GOD’S AUTHORITATIVE VOICE”—TED N. C. WILSON</td>
<td>August 18, 2014</td>
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<td>“IT CANNOT BE REINTERPRETED”—TED N. C. WILSON</td>
<td>August 25, 2014</td>
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<td>“If one does not accept the recent six-day creation understanding,</td>
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<td>then that person is actually not a “Seventh-day” Adventist...”</td>
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<td>[Elder, this has never before been the definition of Seventh-day Adventist.]</td>
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“The precious Biblical truth of a recent literal creation … is even being dismissed by some who claim to be Seventh-day Adventists. Do not believe them or participate in this manipulation of Biblical truth regarding creation…”

[Avoiding and silencing a fellow believer is an attack on the person, not on their ideas.]

“As teachers on the campuses of Seventh-day Adventist academies, colleges and universities, and leaders in God’s church, through God’s power, hold firmly to a literal recent creation…”

[“Literal” and “creation” are not issues with any Adventist. It is only the chronology of creation we don’t all agree on.]

“A church employee who teaches theistic [God did it] or pure [it happened by itself] evolutionary theory should not even exist in a Seventh-day Adventist school or church pulpit.”

[But you know they do, and there are other opinions not “evolution” called ID that you refuse to consider.]

“The honorable thing is, and I say this with all kindness, for a person to resign from their position…”

[“Kindly” stop caring for your family, abandon your life-long commitment to your church, and your convictions about truth?]

“It puts an individual above the plain approach of the Scriptures and gives inappropriate license to decide what he or she perceives as truth based on the resources and education of the critic. Reject this approach, which is self-centered and inspired by the devil.”

[God has given all church members “license to decide” what is truth. No human is permitted to think for others. The devil tries to dictate what to believe.]

“We are a direct creation of God and not from deep-time evolutionary or theistic evolutionary process. …The wording of the fourth commandment is so plain. It’s so direct. It was obviously intended to counter any other alternative explanation.”

[“Deep-time” seems well established in this universe. “Very Short Time” seems quite questionable.]

“It’s obvious…When we indicate we are Seventh-day Adventists, we stand for a literal creation and global flood. It cannot be reinterpreted in any other appropriate way.”

[Of course it can. What you call “obvious” isn’t obvious to your fellow SDAs.]

“reject the false teachings of evolution, theistic evolution and any other false aberrations that are products of false gods…”

[Well at last he admits there are possible alternatives to “evolution.” But sadly he takes no time to think about them.]

“Don’t let anyone undermine your biblical beliefs in a private or public setting or wherever you may be.”

[Thinking even in “private” about alternative chronologies is forbidden? Does the word “thought-police” enter your mind?]

“You may not be able to scientifically prove all things, but you can see the results of God’s creative power in nature and also, very importantly, you can see the results of God’s power in human nature — God’s power to re-create a new heart and life.”

[The question is not about “God’s power.” The question is what power uses force and manipulation to dictate to God’s children what they have to think about the timing and duration of Creation.]
**It is vital that every employee** — whether an administrator, pastor, teacher, or whoever — should strongly believe in the fundamental understanding of creation as the Seventh-day Adventist Church enunciates it. **To continue to be employed and hold a view other than that would not be compatible** to the very reason for the existence of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As far as church members in general are concerned, it's a personal matter that they need to discuss with the Lord in earnest.

<table>
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<th>August 25, 2014</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Don’t break out with hives</strong>—Michael L. Ryan</td>
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<td><strong>Now I am going to ask that the theologians don’t break out with hives, and to grant me a little hermeneutical leeway.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>We do not come to the subject of creation in neutral. Some may think that we have come to define, adjust and re-shape our creation theology. No.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>We believe in a short chronology.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>We believe that the world was created in six literal contiguous days.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>We believe that the denial of the literal reality of Genesis 1-11 leaves this church with a compromised message and a mission house that is built on sand.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Now, I probably should have spoken clearly so you’d know how I really feel.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Job was tempted but didn’t</strong> “… jump into the cesspool with a collection of riff-raff mythical gods.”</td>
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<td><strong>Moses was also</strong> “… surrounded by a blizzard of academic swagger and buried in Ivy League pomp and arrogance…”</td>
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<td><strong>Teachers who don’t agree with my chronology</strong> “You’ve met them. They say they will work in the vineyard but they never show up. Worse yet, they want to plant weeds in the vineyard and call it “so doing.” … They want to have it both ways. They want to be big shots in the vineyard but they don’t believe in the vineyard.”</td>
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Elder Wilson is an employee. Why is he behaving as though he is the boss of thought of other employees? Creation is a fundamental belief. The timing and duration of Creation is one possible interpretation.]
“Their self-worth and standing requires a cluster of smug companions who envision themselves as mavericks, liberated thinkers, enlightened beyond faith and the Word. Criticism is an essential talent if they are to be credible, card-carrying members of the Weed Planters Union. Oh, how thrilled I am that there are none attending this conference. But they have been known to attend Bible and Science conferences.”

[It appears that any possible criticisms of the pre-decided conclusions were carefully “weeded out” by the organizers. Elder Ryan has now constructed a straw man of those who differ with him and shared his anti-intellectual “feelings” about those who might dare think out of his tiny "literal, contiguous, recent, global" box.]

“Do you think saying this in a sermon gives me any joy? I am weeping inside.”

[Me too, brother, me too.]

Now I wish to present, in contrast to the above articles, a different article from a different era, when the founder of the Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald was still living, and then some advice she left behind for today’s Review writers and editors. I limit my comments to headings and bolding key thoughts of the selections below.

I understand that Ellen White accepted and supported the short chronology of Creation she found in the margins of her Bible from Bishop Ussher. But I also understand that she taught that this kind of questions would be solved by discussion and reason, not by manipulation and coercion. Prophets are human and make mistakes. But Ellen White’s understanding of the God-given right of freedom of conscience, not to be trampled upon in the name of politics or religion, was not one of them.

ADVENT REVIEW & SABBATH HERALD--1896

“The Kingdom of Christ” – Mrs. ELLEN G. WHITE  August 18, 1896
“Christ found the kingdoms of the world corrupt. After Satan was expelled from heaven, he erected his standard of rebellion on this earth, and sought by every means to win men to his standard. In order the more successfully to gain the allegiance of the world, he put on the garb of religion.

“In striking contrast to the wrong and oppression so universally practiced were the mission and work of Christ. Earthly kingdoms are established and upheld by physical force, but this was not to be the foundation of the Messiah’s kingdom. In the establishment of his government no carnal weapons were to be used, no coercion practiced; no attempt would be made to force the consciences of men. These are the principles used by the prince of darkness for the government of his kingdom.”

“He planned a government which would use no force; his subjects would know no oppression. The symbols of earthly governments are wild beasts, but in the kingdom of Christ, men are called upon to behold, not a ferocious beast, but the Lamb of God. Not as a fierce tyrant did he come, but as the Son of man; not to conquer the nations by his iron power, but “to preach good tidings unto the meek;” “to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;” “to comfort all that mourn.”

“In the eyes of the world, Christ was peculiar in some things. Ever a friend of those who most needed his protection, he comforted the needy, and befriended those shunned by the proud and exclusive Jews. The forsaken ones felt his protection, and the convicted, repentant soul was clothed with his salvation. And he required of his subjects that they give aid and protection to the oppressed. No soul that bears the image of God is to be placed at the footstool of human power. The greatest possible kindness and freedom are to be granted to the purchase of the blood of Christ. Over and over again in his teaching, Christ presented the value of true humility, showing how necessary it is that we exercise helpfulness, compassion, and love toward one another.”

“Professed Christians of today have the example of Christ before them, but do they follow it? Often, by the hardness of their hearts, they make it manifest that they do not belong to the kingdom of Christ. Too many educate themselves to censure and condemn, repulsing with harsh, stinging words, those who may seek their help. But cold-hearted worldliness excludes the love of Jesus from the heart. We can cooperate with Christ in the upbuilding of his kingdom only by being sanctified by his Spirit. We must use no force, take up no weapons to compel obedience; for to do this would be to exhibit the same spirit revealed by the enemies of Christ.”

“No confidence can be placed in human greatness, human intellect, or human plans. We must place ourselves under the guidance of an infinite mind, acknowledging that without Jesus we can do nothing. “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.” “Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”

“And all who are members of the kingdom of Christ will represent him in character and disposition. Who are thus working out their lives in the service of Christ? All such will sit with him on his throne. But all who exalt themselves, all who oppress their fellow men in any wise, do this to Jesus Christ.”

“How long God will bear with the heartless indifference shown in the treatment of men toward their fellow men, we cannot determine. But ‘whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.’ “This earth is his purchased inheritance, and he would have men free and pure and holy.”

“And though Satan works through human instrumentalities to hinder the purpose of Christ, there are triumphs yet to be accomplished through the blood shed for the world, that will bring glory to God and to the Lamb. His kingdom will extend, and embrace the whole world.”
DOCTRINAL ENFORCEMENT—ELLEN G. WHITE,

(Compiled from Counsels to Writers and Editors.)
There is no excuse for anyone taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all our expositions of Scripture are without an error. The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation...

Shall we drive our stakes of doctrine one after another, and then try to make all Scripture meet out established opinions?...Long-cherished opinions must not be regarded as infallible...Those who sincerely desire truth will not be reluctant to lay open their positions for investigation and criticism, and will not be annoyed if their opinions and ideas are crossed. This was the spirit cherished among us forty years ago. We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. God and heaven alone are infallible...

The Rebuke of the Lord Will Be upon Those “Guardians of Doctrine”

When our schemes and our plans have been broken; when men who have depended upon our judgment conclude the Lord would lead them to act and judge for themselves, we should not feel like censuring, and like exercising arbitrary authority to compel them to receive our ideas. Those who are placed in authority should constantly cultivate self-control. The rebuke of the Lord will be upon those who would be guardians of the doctrine, who would bar the way that greater light shall not come to the people...

As real spiritual life declines, it has ever been the tendency to cease to advance in the knowledge of truth. Men rest satisfied with the light already received from God’s word, and discourage any further investigation of the Scriptures. They become conservative and seek to avoid discussion. The fact that there is no controversy or agitation among God’s people should not be regarded as conclusive evidence that they are holding fast to sound doctrine...

Agitate, agitate, agitate! The subjects which we present to the world must be to us a living reality. It is important that in defending the doctrines which we consider fundamental articles of faith, we should never allow ourselves to employ arguments that are not wholly sound. These may avail to silence an opposer, but they do not honor the truth. We should present sound arguments that will not only silence our opponents but will bear the closest and most searching scrutiny...

The present attitude of the church is not pleasing to God. There has come in a self-confidence that has led them to feel no necessity for more truth and greater light...

We Must Not Become Set in Our Ideas: No Living Man Should Think for Us

“You may question matters with yourself and with one another, if you only do it in the right spirit...There was no dissension, no enmity, no evil-surmising, no misjudging of brethren [in 1844]. If we but knew the evil of the spirit of intolerance, how carefully would we shun it!...

Suppose a brother held a view that differed from yours, and he should come to you, proposing that you sit down with him and make an investigation of that point in the Scriptures...To ridicule his ideas would not weaken his position in the least if it were false, or strengthen your position if it were true. If the pillars of our faith will not stand the test of investigation, it is time that we knew it. There must be no spirit of Pharisaism cherished among us...

“We must study the truth for ourselves. No living man should be relied upon to think for us. No matter who it is, or in what position he may be placed, we are not to look upon any man as a perfect criterion for us. We are to counsel together, and to be subject to one another; but at the same time we are to exercise the ability God has given us to learn what is truth. Each one of us must look to God for divine character that will stand the test in the day of God. We must not become set in our ideas, and think that no one should interfere with our opinions...
“If a brother differ with you on some points of truth, do not stoop to ridicule, do not place him in a false light, or misconstrue his words, making sport of them; do not misinterpret his words and wrest them of their true meaning. This is not conscientious argument. **Do not present him before others as a heretic**, when you have not with him investigated his positions, taking the Scriptures text by text in the spirit of Christ to show him what is truth. You do not yourself really know the evidence he has for his faith, and you cannot really clearly define your own position…

“Hear before you condemn…Refusing to hear because you are prejudiced against the message or the messenger will not make your case excusable before God. **To condemn that which you have not heard and do not understand** will not exalt your wisdom in the eyes of those who are candid in their investigations of truth. And to speak with contempt of those whom God has sent with a message of truth, is folly and madness.

“If our youth are seeking to educate themselves to be workers in his cause, they…are not to make up their minds that the whole truth has been unfolded…If they entrench themselves in the belief that the whole truth has been revealed, they will be in danger of discarding precious jewels of truth that shall be discovered as men turn their attention to the searching of the rich mine of God’s word.”

I find two different attitudes presented in the *Review* of 1896 and the *Review* of 2014 under control of the present officers of the General Conference. Who is an Adventist, and what is an Adventist is as much about the spirit and methods being used, as it is about the ideas being discussed. We cannot claim to be doing the Lord’s work if we are using the devil’s methods to enforce one Biblical interpretation against another.

¹All emphasis in quotations in this article has been added.
A Tale of Two Saints

By Debbonnaire Kovacs Submitted October 29, 2014  This week is a bittersweet one for me, every year for the past three years. October 28 was the 20th anniversary of the day my beloved husband, Les, and I were married. It was also his birthday. He died 3 ½ years ago, and the active pain is gone, but I still miss him and always will.

November 2 is my mother’s birthday. Nine months after Les died (an expected and merciful death after a long, long illness), she was found dead on her floor with no warning and for no discernible reason. That one was harder to take in some ways, because it was such a stunning shock and because I had been depending on her love as I navigated the maze of grief after Les’ death.

So for my devotional writing today, I am taking one verse of this week’s lectionary passage, Matthew 23:12, and considering these two saints who blessed my life in so many ways. I hope you can use these words to consider your own life, loves, and losses.

“The greatest among you will be your servant. All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.”

Both my mother and my husband were intrinsically humble and both had the gift of giving. Neither one seemed to think much about it—they just gave of themselves at all times and on all occasions. A story about each will suffice to demonstrate their personalities.

My mother lived the last 25+ years of her life within the Lummi Indian Reservation near Bellingham, WA. I say “within” because her land was no longer reservation land, having been sold out many years before. However, she became a well-known and beloved figure in the Lummi community; I believe it was at least in part her doing that the small Adventist church on the reservation fed many children every Sabbath morning. I know she taught them and told them stories and made Sabbath School materials by hand for them, as she did for my brothers and sisters and me.

One night she was driving down the main road through the reservation and saw a young woman staggering along the side of the road. She pulled over (she wouldn’t have considered any other action) and got out to ask if she could help. It was obvious that the young woman was extremely drunk. When she saw my mother, she cried out, “Oh, auntie, I don’t want to live like this!” (“Auntie” and “Uncle” are the courteous terms for any older person in Native American culture.) My mother put the young woman in the car, and it is characteristic of her that I actually don’t know the details of what happened next. Did she take her home? Take her to the Lummi help agencies? I know she would have prayed for and with the young woman, and continued to help as she could.

Les and I lived for the first 12 years of our marriage on his farm in central Ohio. He was not Adventist, but attended church with me faithfully, and was beloved of everybody. One day one of the oldest women in the church had the announcements. She began by asking prayer for her family because a member of it had died. “The funeral is today, but I couldn’t afford to drive [to a city six hours away],” she said.

Les cried out, “Why didn’t you say something? I would have taken you!” I was surprised. Les was very quiet, never speaking up in services, and rarely in classes; in fact, he was a low-words kind of a guy generally, though he could tell some great stories. For him to shout out right in the sanctuary was kind of a big deal.

The lady was flustered, insisting that was too much to ask, and so on, and in any case it was now too late to go. Les
wasn’t able to convince her to let him take her even now, to be with her family even if she missed the funeral. He made a practice of driving his mother and aunts on trips as far away as visiting family in other states or, on one memorable trip, going all over the Civil War battle sites in Pennsylvania, so it would have been nothing to him. He was quite upset, reverting to the subject on the way home with me that day.

Of all the people who have influenced my life for good, these are the two greatest, though there are several others high on the list. Their gentleness, unconditional love, and quiet, matter-of-fact giving profoundly shaped me. Mommie and Les, I want to be just like you. And I can’t wait for the day we meet again and I get to see you exalted, as Jesus promised.

Sleep well. I’ll see you in the morning.

To consider: Who are the saints in your life that have shaped you and helped to make you what you are today? In what ways do you honor them by imitation? Have you thanked them directly?
Visions of Mentoring: A Round-up from AAW 2014

http://www.atodayarchive.org/article/2766/features/articles/visions-of-mentoring-a-round-up-from-aaw-2014

By Debbonnaire Kovacs
Submitted October 30, 2014

In teaching about mentoring at last week’s Association of Adventist Women Conference, several different women brought differing, though complementary, factors to the discussion. Here is a round-up of some of the more definitive descriptions, approaches, and recommendations.

Nearly all of the speakers shared stories of mentoring in their own life. Dr. Ella Smith Simmons shared her experience as an eager young woman who believed, when her church’s nominating committee called her, that “it was pretty much the voice of God.” So, even though she didn’t know anything about being a church clerk, she just took a deep breath and said yes. She assumed that the older woman who had done the work for years would be a help and a mentor. Instead, the woman apparently felt threatened, and was very hostile, withholding not only help, but necessary information. Years later, Simmons said, the same thing happened to her in a professional setting outside the church, except that this time, the hostility was masked under smiling faces.

Simmons turned to an older church woman she looked up to, and she reports that the woman told her, “That’s the way it is in the world. You can’t change it. But don’t worry, you can take it. You don’t know what people need or what’s going to happen, but the Holy Spirit does, and He has your back.” The woman then shared some Bible passages with Simmons, who says the whole conversation “made a difference to my whole life!” Ultimately, it was the leading and support of God and of godly mentors that made her capable of holding the position she has now as GC Vice President and of facing the opposition she has faced.

In last week’s feature, we listed Simmons’ five tips for finding a mentor: Define what skills you need to develop, expand your network, approach people with mentoring requests, be humble, and have fun. Simmons also shared the following passage from The Adventist Home, p. 45, directed toward people considering marriage:

“*Weigh every sentiment, and watch every development of character in the one with whom you think to link your life destiny. The step you are about to take is one of the most important in your life, and should not be taken hastily. While you may love, do not love blindly. Examine carefully to see if your married life would be happy or inharmonious and wretched. Let the questions be raised, Will this union help me heavenward? Will it increase my love for God? And will it*
Simmons pointed out that these same points are good ones when considering a mentor, particularly one who will have influence over one’s spiritual life. Finally, in advice to mentors, she pointed out that often, women who mentor are more likely to only “do the feel-good, encouraging stuff,” while men are more likely to open doors of opportunity for each other, spending social capital to advance the mentee. She recommends both.

Dr. Edith Fraser spoke in particular about mentoring people of color, either within one race or culture, or cross-culturally. She pointed to Ruth and Naomi as a biblical example of effective cross-cultural mentoring. However, the skills of a good mentor which she listed are true for any mentor, no matter what race, culture, or gender one comes from. The good mentor is a good listener, paying attention to both career and psycho-social needs. She reflects and analyzes, and helps mentees do the same, as well as helping them find areas for further development. A good mentor will be transparent, sharing his/her own mistakes. Mentors believe in their mentees and look past exteriors. They set high standards, but not so high as to make mentees feel inadequate. In so doing, Fraser pointed out, mentors learn, too, and get better at their own jobs. Finally, she said, “Teach your protégé how to fly! When they succeed, you succeed.”

Regarding cross-racial mentoring in particular, Fraser said mentors must be “extra sensitive. There are things that might be misunderstood because of the race relations we’ve had in this country. Encourage the mentee to feel free enough to tell you that what you said or did felt a different way to them, and help them think through why.”

She added that this goes for both sides; there is such a thing as “white privilege,” but each person must “recognize the ways you have privilege no matter what group or class you belong to: education, money, whatever.”

Fraser learned of a program at another university, where experienced professors met with new professors for a full year. Because of it, she started a program at Oakwood University in which they have learned by trial and error that mentoring networks work best, at least in their particular situation; that is, one person will have several different mentors, one for people skills, one for balancing roles, one for teaching skills, etc. In this way, no one mentor is too burdened and the mentee gets more rounded help.

Dr. Tara VinCross, pastor of a church she and her husband planted in Philadelphia, spoke of this same concept of mentoring networks. “Women,” she said, “bring nurturing, relationship-fostering to the table. We get hung up on the perfect, ideal whatever, but we won’t find the ideal mentor—we need to seek a multi-faceted fashion of mentoring. It’s like crowd funding.
Everyone gives a little, and you can go further than you could alone, or usually even with one donor.”

VinCross has identified five types of mentoring:

1. Pioneers: The first in a given field. In the context of the AAW conference, she was referring particularly to those women pastors who were commissioned when the Adventist church in North America first began to go back to its roots and encourage women pastors again. Southeastern California Conference President Sandra Roberts emails all her pastors regularly, and VinCross shared that she has a friend who forwards the non-confidential ones to her. “I love watching Sandy’s style and how she reaches out to her pastors.”

2. Fellow Travelers: those on parallel journeys. VinCross has three colleagues who have a spiritual retreat yearly and call or email each other throughout the year, mentoring each other spontaneously and informally.

3. Encouragers: These are people who share each other’s work with their networks and thank God for each other’s ministry. They can not only hugely encourage each other, but can also create opportunities and enlarge the reach of those they encourage.

4. Advocates: vocally and publicly support leadership and open a way for those below them. (These were called sponsors by other presenters.) They create funding, put their own reputations on the line, and stretch their proteges to do things they think they can’t.

5. Learners: VinCross believes we must encourage the young to begin to mentor others with what they know, before they think they’re “ready.”

Her final advice: “Realize it’s messy and risky, and nurture complex nurturing relationships.”

Pastor Jennifer Scott of Keene Seventh-day Adventist Church didn’t list specific mentoring advice, but she may have summed up the most important point for all of us at the conference when she said, “Mentoring may be for personal goals, or for careers or a lot of other things. Christian mentoring goes to another level—How can I influence someone else for their eternal spiritual life?”

To consider: who are or have been your mentors? Whom do you mentor?
Japanese Kids Send Video to Philippines after Typhoon


Submitted by Debonnaire Kovacs
October 30, 2014

This is a great little video, with English subtitles, of Japanese youth sending encouragement to the Philippines after this fall’s typhoon. Apparently, the Philippines had supported and encouraged Japan after its major earthquake in 2011, and these kids wanted to return the favor.

This video, with others, is posted on the ADRA website under Multimedia. Check it out!

www.adra.org

https://www.youtube.com/v/UjnNkm5kCaA?version=3&f=user_uploads&app=youtube_gdata&autoplay=1
Adventist Songwriters' Opportunity

http://www.atodayarchive.org/article/2759/poetry-the-arts/news-notes/adventist-songwriters-opportunity

Posted by Debonnaire Kovacs
Submitted October 27, 2014

Here's an important note for Adventist songwriters! You can click the links for more info, but hurry! It's going on now!

A Allan Martin 2:37pm Oct 23

Adventist Songwriters - The inSpire songwriting contest is in full swing, and if you are a songwriter, we'd love to hear from you!
Submissions are being accepted through November 19, 2014. The best news is that you can submit your song for FREE!

An iPad and cash awards will be given!

Even though it is sponsored by the Pacific Union Conference, it is open to Adventist songwriters throughout the North American Division.

For details: http://www.visitinspire.org/songwriting2015