NEWS

Danish Theologian, Missiologist Borge Schantz Dead at 83: An Adventist European theologian and educator of immense influence and understanding of the Muslim faith is mourned. He was a regular columnist on atoday.org and atodayarchive.org....

Three Adventist Higher Education Institutions Mark Significant Progress as 2014 Ends: Church universities in Australia, Canada, and the Philippines set milestones in development and influence....

Well-known Writer and Poet Max Gordon Phillips is Dead: A superbly gifted literary Adventist voice of the 1960s and 1970s saw his career cut short because of his disagreement with his Church over equal pay for male and female Church employees....

Television Program on World Religions Includes Seventh-day Adventists: The Adventist worldwide community
continues to excite interest among broadcasters who are increasingly featuring the history, growth, and influence of the once-obscure faith....

**New Life Church Offers Community Christmas Meal:**
An Adventist Church in Chattanooga now reaches hundreds each year with a free meal and musical cheer. Should not more Adventists do likewise?...

---

**OPINION**

**Let's Tell the Truth about Ellen White: Charles Scriven Addresses a Critical Issue:** By far, the most controversial figure in the history of the Church is Ellen White. Columnist Ervin Taylor believes that in the face of expanding scholarship about her life and times, we must transparently represent her gifts, roles, and influence....

"**Fresh Ways for New Days**": Canadian-born columnist Jack Hoehn hears a word from the Lord on Capitol Hill, as he ponders the lessons of science and history in America's civic playground....

---

**FEATURE & ART**

**Long Night's Light (DEVOTIONAL FEATURE):** Debbonnaire Kovacs samples a non-Adventist Christian New Year's Eve event and recommends Adventist churches do likewise for the public at a time of the year when there is often much sorrow, hopelessness, and angst....
**Holy Night (VISUAL):** Debbonaire Kovacs shares a view of a nativity set she is creating, with fabric made entirely from hand-spun, hand-woven, hand-crocheted, or hand-knit sources.....

---

**NEW WEBSITE REMINDER**

Welcome to the new *Adventist Today* web site! There are 3 important items you need to know:

First, you no longer have to "log in" to post comments! You simply must supply your name and email address when you post a comment.

Second, for a few weeks, while we put the finishing touches on the new site, you will have access to all content without having to log in. We are in the process of transferring all the subscriber accounts to the new site. Once that is done, we will send our subscribers a link to create a new password and a significant part of our content will be available only to subscribers.

Third, as of December 1, all new *Adventist Today* content is being posted only on the new site. Content posted previous to December 1 will remain on the www.atodayarchive.org site and comments can still be posted with those articles. When transfer of the archives is completed, a notice will be posted on both the old and new sites and subscribers will receive an email. In the future the archives will only be available to subscribers.

We thank you for your patience as we move into the final stages of this transition. If you have any questions or suggestions, please let me know. You can send me an email at atoday@atoday.org if you put "Executive Director" in the subject line. Or you can phone (503) 826-8600 and leave a message for me.

Monte Sahlin  
Executive Director  
*Adventist Today Foundation*
Danish Theologian, Missiologist Børge Schantz Dead at 83

Monte Sahlin

From ANN, Dec. 31, 2014: Dr. Børge Schantz, one of the Adventist Church’s top theologians in Europe, had a life-long passion for mission service and for understanding the Muslim faith. These interests unexpectedly converged in recent months when he was reunited in Denmark with an Ethiopian man whom he had saved from certain death nearly 40 years earlier. Schantz recently baptized the man’s family in what could be viewed as a final testimony to the influence of the Adventist leader who died suddenly on Friday morning, Dec. 12, at his home in Bjaeverskov, Denmark. He was 83.

Schantz served as dean of theology at Newbold College in England and founded the Adventist Global Center for Islamic Studies. He was a missionary in the Middle East and North Africa for many years. He served for a total of 47 years. On top of his undergraduate degree from Newbold College, he earned a theology master’s degree from Andrews University in 1974 and a doctorate from the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, in 1983.

He was a pastor in Denmark, the Faroe Islands, the United States and England, and a missionary in Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Lebanon and Cyprus. For a number of years he was the only staff member at the denomination’s Afro-Mideast Division who was allowed to visit Iraq under the Saddam Hussein regime and Uganda under Idi Amin because of his Danish passport.

Schantz also taught medical ethics to Muslim nurses on special assignment for Loma Linda University in a strict Muslim country for 10 years. “He has done many different things for the church,” said Arne Sandback, a pastor friend who conducted Schantz’s funeral at the Nærum church. “Just to mention a few things, he has been preaching, lecturing at schools, and giving lectures on Islam. He was even scheduled to preach the Sabbath after his death.”

Schantz authored several books and is the primary author of the Sabbath School Quarterly, appropriately on the topic of mission, that will be used by Adventists around the world during the third quarter of 2015. He has been a regular columnist for Adventist Today.

“He was indeed an inspiration to many of us in Ethiopia during the very uncertain times following the end of Emperor Haile Selassie’s reign,” said Ray Holm, who worked as business manager at the college when Scantz was there in 1978 and is now chief financial officer for a branch of the Adventist Medical Center in Portland, Oregon. “Whenever we saw him after that, he was like family, encouraging us in our work and offering counsel with any issues we were facing,” he said. “He made a valuable contribution to the Lord’s work in many parts of the world, and he will be greatly missed.”

His reunion with Hassen Anbesse, who was abandoned by his Muslim parents after a hyena bit off much of his face, received prominent coverage in Denmark’s biggest newspaper on July 20. The story began in 1978 when Schantz was the speaker for a week of prayer at Ethiopian Adventist College in Kuyera, Ethiopia. The badly disfigured Anbesse, who lived at a nearby Adventist orphanage, was seated with other children in the front row. Born among nomads who wandered on Ethiopia’s border with Somalia, the boy had been attacked by a hyena at the age of 4 while he slept in a tent. An adult had chased the animal away before it killed the boy, but doctors had not been able to do much in the way of reparative surgery.

“He made a deep impression on me,” Schantz recently told the Adventist Review, the denomination’s official journal. “What kind of future would he have?” A gaping crater marked the spot where Anbesse’s nose once stood. His eyelids and surrounding skin were missing from his eyes, and his mouth sagged. As the boy listened to Schantz speak about Jesus and heaven, a desire welled up inside him for a new face. He knew that without one, he would end up an
outcast and die early.

The boy approached Schantz after the meeting and blurted out, “When Jesus comes again, I will get a new face from Him.” Schantz said the words stuck in his head for weeks afterward. When Schantz returned to Denmark on furlough, he convinced journalists at the BT newspaper to raise funds among readers to bring the boy to Denmark for surgery. The newspaper published a story with the headline, “Help Hassen Get a New Face,” in large letters across its front page on July 26, 1978. The effort raised 80,000 Danish crowns, a considerable amount at the time.

Anbesse underwent a series of operations with a plastic surgeon who waived his fees. Afterward, he stayed in Denmark for a few years, moved to Norway, returned to Ethiopia, and settled back down in Denmark. “His life with a very visible scar on his face after the operations was not easy,” Schantz said.

In Copenhagen, Anbesse met and married a fellow Ethiopian immigrant, Helen, and they had three children. He lost contact with Schantz after the operations, and eventually stopped attending the Adventist Church, Schantz said. But “He lived an active life.”

In the spring of 2014, Anbesse’s wife, Helen, started taking the family to an Adventist church to worship. She was a faithful Coptic Christian, but knowing her husband’s Adventist background, decided to take a closer look at his neglected faith. “A few months ago I preached at the Holbaek church and there in the audience I found Hassen and his family,” Schantz said. “What a reunion!”

After receiving a tip from Schantz, the BT reported the reunion in its widely read Sunday edition, which has a circulation of 269,000. The report, which mentioned the Seventh-day Adventist Church several times, filled seven pages and included 10 photographs. “I think I have a very good life,” Anbesse told the newspaper. “Maybe there are some who are still a bit taken back when they see me. Although I’ve got a face, it’s still not quite like everyone else’s. But I am very happy with the result. I have a new face, a new country, and a wonderful family.”

In the months after the surprise reunion, Schantz and his wife met regularly with the family and gave Bible studies. At the request of Helen and the two older children, Natinael and Meron, Schantz baptized the trio on Oct. 18, less than two months before his death. Hassen’s membership was transferred to Denmark from a church in Ethiopia’s capital, Addis Ababa.

Schantz is survived by his wife, Iris; two sons, Steen and Kim; and two grandchildren. Even in retirement he continued to preach regularly in the churches throughout Denmark.

*The Adventist News Network (ANN) is the official news service of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination.*
Three Adventist Higher Education Institutions Mark Significant Progress as 2014 Ends

Monte Sahlin

By AT News Team, Dec. 31, 2014: Higher education institutions affiliated with the Adventist denomination in three nations around the world announced significant achievements as 2014 came to a close. Campuses in Australia, Canada and the Philippines have attained higher status and wider reach with changes made by government agencies.

Avondale College in New South Wales, Australia, is the first institution beyond the established universities in the country to be granted full self-accreditation status by the national government’s Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, reported *The Australian* in its December 16 issue. “This is an important step,” Chief Commissioner Nick Saunders was quoted in the national newspaper. “Avondale College went through a rigorous assessment.”

Self-accrediting status has been a hallmark of university autonomy in Australia, as well as giving the institution a market edge because it can more rapidly respond to demand with new programs. Avondale currently has degrees in the humanities, business and teaching, as well as a nursing education program in collaboration with Sydney Adventist Hospital.

The fact that Avondale is the first institution to achieve this status has resulted in considerable attention by the news media across the country. The assessment “looked for evidence of proven experience, a history of low risk and most importantly, strong academic governance and the ability to self-assure critical higher education processes,” Saunders told *The Australian*.

Avondale has an enrollment of nearly 1,500 and a faculty of 89 according to the most recent *Annual Statistical Report* of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. It is the largest Adventist school in the South Pacific and the only Adventist institution of higher education in Australia.

The Philippines Focuses on Southeast Asia

The Adventist University of the Philippines (AUP) has joined a number of universities across Southeast Asia preparing to integrate the higher education systems in the ten nations that belong to the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), a regional body that is part of the United Nations. The P2A alliance seeks to provide all graduates with the cross-cultural competencies to fill professional positions in any of the collaborating nations.

At a November 26-27 meeting, Dr. Miriam Narbarte, academic vice president for AUP, signed Memoranda of Agreement with three other institutions: Muria Kudus University in Indonesia, Chiang Mai Rajabhat University in Thailand and Duy Tan University in Vietnam. The joint activities will take the form of study tours in which students participate in multicultural and interdisciplinary learning.

As the economies of these ten nations become more integrated there is a growing need for professionals in business and other areas who have a knowledge of the local cultures. The P2A program will help the graduates of AUP and the other participating universities to have the knowledge, understanding and multicultural competencies necessary to operate successfully in an increasingly “flat” world.

AUP has autonomous status under the Commission on Higher Education of the Philippine government and is fully accredited by both the International Board of Education and Theological Education of Southeast Asia, according to its official Web site. It has an enrollment of more than 3,500 and a faculty of 226 according to the most recent *Annual Statistical Report* of the denomination.
New Status, New Name in Canada

The Alberta government has given the Adventist college in Canada full status as a university and on December 15 the institution’s board voted to approve the name Burman University. Charles and Leona Burman were the couple who founded the school in 1907. He served as president and she taught English, science, geography and physiology, according to a news release from the new university.

Located in Lacombe, the institution asked local residents, as well as the faculty, students, alumni and Adventists across Canada to participate in focus groups to find a new name to recognize the new status. More than 100 suggestions came from the search and these were tested in focus groups in three regions of Canada.

“It was because of their selfless dedication and sacrifice” that the campus was established, stated Dr. Mark Haynal, the current president. “In every season of their ministry both … exemplified the mission of our school. They thought with discernment, believed with insight and commitment, and acted with confidence, compassion and competence.”

The school evolved into a junior college in 1919 and started its first four-year degree program in 1947. It currently has an enrollment of more than 500 undergraduate students and a faculty of 60. It is the only Adventist institution of higher education in the country.
Monte Sahlin

By AT News Team, Dec. 26, 2014: Max Gordon Phillips was a bright star in the generation of Adventist young adults that came of age in the 1960s. He wrote many short stories, poems, columns and magazine articles; successfully launched a new brand of books; and then sacrificed a promising career at Pacific Press when he supported women employed at the publishing house in what was eventually ruled by the courts to be illegal wage practices. He died earlier this week in Redlands, California, still active in a Sabbath School class at the Loma Linda University Church.

The son of an Adventist pastor in Lansing, Michigan, Phillips won the grand prize in the first literary magazine published at La Sierra University in 1964. He was one of nine La Sierra graduates from the Class of 1964 to be accepted for graduate school at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University (AU) along with several who became well-known preachers, theologians and church administrations, including John Brunt, Bailey Gillespie, Darold Retzer and Larry Veverka.

While at the seminary completing a master's degree in theology, Phillips helped organize the Seminary Student Forum weekly discussion group together with Nils-Erik Andreasen (AU president today), Robert J. Wieland (a widely-read theologian now), Larry Geraty (noted archaeologist and retired president of La Sierra University), Melvyn Hayden (pastor of several large congregations in America's largest cities over the years) and Dick Winn (cofounder of Weimar Institute now a key administrator for the regional accrediting body for higher education in California). Phillips was given an award by AU in 1965 for his regular columns in Student Movement, the campus newspaper.

After graduating from the seminar in August, 1966, Phillips was hired by the denomination's Southern Publishing Association in Nashville as assistant editor of These Times, a magazine published for the general public which was later closed down but once had a circulation of more than 100,000. The appointment was approved by the denomination's governing body (the executive committee of the General Conference) in December of that year.

By early 1969, Phillips had moved to Pacific Press, the denomination's west coast publishing house located at the time in Mountain View, California. He interviewed Dr. Paul Ehrlich, famous for his predictions of a global population explosion but still controversial at the time in the wider society, for the March 1969 issue of Signs of the Times, the outreach magazine still published by Pacific Press today.

In 1971, Phillips was given the responsibility of being the brand manager for a new book series at Pacific Press; Agape Books targeting young adults. The first title released was Mission to Black America by Ron Graybill, the young historian who had recently been invited to join the staff of the Ellen G. White Estate in Washington, D.C., after previously authoring E. G. White and Race Relations during key years of the American Civil Rights Movement. And the second title was Inscriptions, a collection of Phillips' short stories and poetry, perhaps one of the most sophisticated literary works ever published by an Adventist publishing house.

A special issue of Signs of the Times the following year, themed to the "youth revolution" sweeping across American society at the time, included an article by Phillips entitled, "Hope for Hippies." It told the stories of "several one-time hippies [who] had been converted to Jesus Christ, had quit taking drugs and were studying at Pacific Union College in Angwin, California, for a life of Christian ministry."

In the fall of 1973, Phillips was the author of a news release from Pacific Press published in the union conference papers across North America telling about initiatives that the publishing house was taking to market Adventist materials in non-traditional ways, including through the Christian Booksellers Association. The press had hired a young Adventist marketing executive away from GTE-Sylvania Corporation to work specifically on getting Adventist books into the secular marketplace.
At the same time, trouble was brewing at Pacific Press which would both generate major change in the Adventist denomination and derail the career of the promising young writer and editor because of his principled stand while administrators above him were making shameful decisions.

The Merikay Silver Case

While a teenager at Grand Ledge Academy in Michigan in the 1960s, Merikay McCleod (later Silver) wrote a 45-page novella which portrayed the final events before the return of Christ based on her understanding of chapters from *The Great Controversy* by White. Pastor Fordyce Detamore, the leading Adventist evangelist in North America at the time, liked the story so much that he distributed more than 100,000 copies of the small book.

Phillips had met Silver when she was a freshman in college at AU and encouraged her to write for his section of the campus newspaper. In 1971 he recommended her for a job at Pacific Press and she was hired in a position parallel to his. A year later, when he husband decided to go to graduate school, Silver asked for “head of household allowance” to be added to her wages as was true for Phillips since she now would be the sole bread-winner in her family. Despite the fact that denominational guidelines clearly stated that this was to be applied “without discrimination on the basis of … sex” (among other factors) and that White had long ago told Adventist leaders not to discriminate in payment of female workers, the Pacific Press management refused Silver’s request stating that it was not available to women.

Silver was told that this violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and consulted an attorney, eventually leading to a complaint being filed by the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC), the Federal government agency responsible for enforcement of laws meant to end gender discrimination in hiring and wages. The case drug on for a decade with denominational leaders attempting to argue that the First Amendment exempted church entities from observing the law and maneuvering to fire both Silver and Lorna Tobler, another woman working at Pacific Press, and eventually to kick them out of the church too.

Most famously, Neal C. Wilson, then president of the denomination’s North American Division, is on record testifying that the Adventist religion has a hierarchical system of governance despite its historic stand against papal type structures and White’s specific condemnation of “kingly power” in Adventist organizations. All of this in an attempt to keep feminist ideas out of the Adventist movement at all costs; to hold on to gender discrimination in wage scales.

Of the four lawsuits filed throughout the complicated case with large amounts of legal maneuvering, Pacific Press settled one out of court, paying Silver $60,000. The EEOC won the other three cases despite appeals that ran on until December 1983. Finally the denomination’s leadership decided that it had to obey the law regardless of its inclinations and historic changes were made to assure that men and women doing the same job would have the same pay, at least in the Adventist organizations in the United States.

In September 1982, Phillips was fired by Pacific Press and given six months of termination pay signifying that he was not to be hired by any other denominational entity. He was last listed in the 1983 edition of the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* which had evidently already been prepared for publication at the time of his firing the previous fall.

For a short time Phillips worked as an editor at Stanford University and then for a number of years as a staff member at *Health Scene* magazine in Washington state. Adventist Today published some of his articles, but official denominational publishers would not touch his work.

Like many in his generation of American Adventists, Phillips must have developed a significant level of disappointment with the denomination. The experience did not live up to its promise. In June 2000 he wrote a response to an Adventist Today editorial and his piece was published in the online forum of the Former Adventist Fellowship. But he still maintained an Adventist identity, participating in the Sabbath Seminars group in Loma Linda where his friends reached out to him during health problems over the past year and are planning a funeral for him.

Phillips’ elegant and emotionally compelling stories and poems can still be found on the Internet if you use a search engine for his name. His body of work includes at least one poem mixed with music and moving pictures which is...
available on Vimeo. To the end, his work expressed his faith in a loving God. He is survived by his brother Marshal; a
daughter, Jana S. Kopp, and a son, Craig N. Phillips; as well as two grandsons, Anders and Soren Kopp.
Television Program on World Religions Includes Seventh-day Adventists

Jeff Boyd

By AT News Team, Dec. 31, 2014: On December 14 CBS aired a television program that looked at three faith communities—Mennonites, Sikhs and Seventh-day Adventists. The 27-minute program, which can be viewed online (link), includes ten minutes of coverage on the Adventist Church.[1] The rationale for selecting these three faiths is not explained.

The segment begins with a description of the Millerite movement of the mid-1800s. William Miller, a Baptist, led the movement that expected Jesus to return in 1844. Bill Knott, editor of the Adventist Review and Adventist World, explains that roughly three percent of the United States’ population supported or were somehow connected to the movement. Richard Duerksen of Maranatha Volunteers International shares that he is impressed that the group did not give up when Jesus did not return as expected, an experience known as the Great Disappointment. Viewers could be confused by this section because it is not explicitly clear that while Seventh-day Adventists grew out of this Advent movement, Miller himself was never a Seventh-day Adventist.

Ellen Harmon—who eventually married James White—is introduced in this context because she was moved by Miller’s presentations. Ella Simmons, a vice president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, describes White’s early experiences: “Because of injuries she had sustained as a child, she was confined to home. And she says sometimes she was so overwhelmingly lonely that she sought for some comfort so she started to read the Bible. And she says in the Scriptures she found Jesus as her friend who was always there for her.”

The program’s focus then turns to the topic of health. Duerksen says of White, “She received what she called a vision from God, saying ‘If you’re going to go to heaven, if you’re really going to live as one of my followers, you need to be healthy.’” While health is an important value for Seventh-day Adventists, Duerksen’s phrase could be interpreted to mean that Adventists believe a person needs to be healthy in order to go to heaven, that sick people are not accepted. Instead, he likely intended to convey that people who are concerned about heaven in the future should also be concerned about their health today.

The health theme is continued with a short consideration of John Harvey Kellogg and the Battle Creek Sanitarium, followed by a brief look at the medical facilities in Loma Linda, California.

Next, attention turns to the Sabbath. Simmons explains, “When sunset comes around, different families have their different rituals or traditions, but we all stop.” Knott adds, “The notion of refraining from work, from trying to get ahead, pushing business—God is trying to encourage us to take a day for reflection, for family, for rejuvenation.”

Finally, the narrator transitions from the Sabbath to community service: “Saturday Sabbath usually consists of worship and a walk in nature or charity work. Adventists share a strong commitment to serving their fellowman.”

Simmons expounds on this value. “We have community service in practically every part of the world. “We serve the community in ways that they need.” “Mission is our reason for being.”

The television program concludes with a remark by Duerksen: “I want in my Seventh-day Adventist community for every single member to be transformed by the indwelling Jesus that makes me kinder, compassionate, genuinely interested in the needs of others, ready to respond whenever the Spirit says, ‘Turn left.’”

NOTE: The Mennonite portion of the program is also of special interest to Seventh-day Adventists because Adventists are positioned theologically in the Anabaptist stream of the Radical Reformation. Adventist Today assistant
news editor Jeff Boyd demonstrated this in a three-part series on the Young Anabaptist Radicals blog (Part 1, Part 2, Part 3).

New Life Church Offers Community Christmas Meal

Jeff Boyd

By AT News Team, Dec. 30, 2014: On Christmas day New Life Seventh-day Adventist Church in Chattanooga, TN, hosted its annual community meal. In addition to the free meal, the event included Christmas caroling. The “church is doing its part to spread the word of God, and provide a hot meal to the community,” reports the CBS television affiliate in the area.

June Kingry, who volunteered at this year’s event, understands the impact of the service. She first attended the meal four years ago when she was homeless in the neighborhood. “Members welcomed her in with open arms, gave her a Christmas dinner and helped her find strength and faith through prayer,” says the local NBC affiliate. Now Kingry supports the event and attempts to encourage others who are still in difficult circumstances.

“She sometimes all you need is someone to just hug you and just to know you are loved. Just to let people know that we care and that’s what we’re supposed to do as human beings, is care for each other,” says Gustinia Stewart, a member of the church, according to the NBC report.

Patricia Stoudemire, a member who estimated the attendance at more than 200 people, told CBS, “We have some people who have been down, cause I’ve been down myself before. And sometimes you need somebody to help lift you up. So, we want to be the light on this corner.”
Let’s Tell the Truth about Ellen White: Charles Scriven Addresses a Critical Issue


Comments by Ervin Taylor, December 30, 2014: For various reasons, commenting on something published in Spectrum on the Adventist Today web site is something that is rarely seen. However, for the recent editorial by Charles Scriven in Spectrum’s Fall 2014 issue, an exception must be made. This is because Dr. Scriven has called for all of us to do something that will be very hard for some to carry out, but it must be done for the long-term intellectual and theological health of Adventism in the 21st century.

I suggest that anyone seriously concerned with the long-term viability and credibility of the institutional Adventist faith community in the modern world among educated individuals must carefully read and consider the points raised by Dr. Scriven. His message is a straightforward plea: “Tell the truth about the Adventist prophet.”

As pointed out by Dr. Scriven, thanks in part to the appearance of Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet, edited by Terrie Doop Aamodt, Gary Land, and Ronald Numbers and published by Oxford University Press, members of the Adventist Church now have at their disposal for the first time in one source, carefully researched, detailed non-apologetic historical data about the full range of the various elements making up the religious career of Ellen G. White (EGW). For many years, Spectrum has been in the forefront of publishing important, well-documented information about various aspects of EGW’s exceptional career. Adventist Today has also published materials that reveal heretofore unknown aspects of her career. For example, an article that appeared in Adventist Today revealing for the first time in print aspects of events occurring at the time of the burials of Ellen and James White. This article, by Dr. T. Joe Willey, was also published in a slightly revised form as a chapter in the Ellen Harmon White volume.

There is no question that many things she wrote and talked about became the basis on which the Adventist community created hospitals and educational institutions that have helped and will continue to help tens of thousands of individuals in many parts of the world. No one questions her positive contributions and the salutary parts of her legacy.

However, the chapters in that volume include analyses of the sources of many of her theological concepts and how she interacted with others at the founding and later institutionalization of the Adventist Church. We also learn in that volume the steps that led to the creation of EGW as an oracle by her later followers, not only as a source of theological authority, but then as the final authority on scientific and historical interpretations, i.e., to quote an author in that book, an authority that “ascribed to her a kind of ‘fundamentalist inerrancy.’”

According to Dr. Scriven, what must be done? He suggests that a “good first step would be to cut the overstatement. Traits attributable to God alone should not be attributed to Ellen White or anyone else.” He continues, “Her own statements such as ‘God and heaven alone are infallible’ could not be clearer . . . I don’t know what could be clearer, except that it’s still not clear to conventional Adventism. From the press and the pulpit, these passages should be repeated again and again—not to discourage us but to make us truthful as well as passionate in faith.”

May I suggest that for those of us privileged to be associated with the independent press in Adventism—both those affiliated with Adventist Today and those affiliated with Spectrum—EGW’s statement on this topic should be repeated as many times as possible.

Scriven also suggests that Adventist progressives should be willing to “tell the good stories and quote the best [EGW] quotes with open, grateful hearts. No one should roar into the Michigan camp meeting bent on sledgehammer
iconoclasm . . . [However, we] can no longer listen uncritically [to EGW's views], but we can still listen, and we should. Her guts, for one thing, could inspire us to show some guts.”

In the final paragraph, he quotes the NAD President, Dan Jackson, that the “Seventh-day Adventist movement . . . Will. Not. Fail.” Dr. Scriven comments that “it will fail—unless we tell the truth.” And then he concludes with an answer to the question of “What Shall We Do with Ellen White?” His answer is: “We. Must. Tell. The. Truth.”

PS: While considering Dr. Scriven’s editorial, readers might also wish to consider the comments of Dr. James Londis in an article in the same issue of Spectrum, entitled “The Hermeneutics of Disappointment: What Does the ‘Delay’ of Jesus’ Coming Do to the Adventist Story?” In its own way, this article also asks a similar question “What Shall We Do with the Second Coming Concept?” A good answer suggested by Dr. Londis’ article is, “Tell the Truth About It.”
“Fresh Ways for New Days”

by Jack Hoehn, December 26, 2014:

Jack hears a word from the Lord on Capitol Hill.
The Beautiful Capitol Hill SDA Church, Washington DC

Washington DC

I consider Washington, DC a Disneyland for adults. It is so full of marble and pillars and monuments and vistas and parks and parades and pomp and circumstance and Smithsonian and Holocaust and Mt. Vernon and Jefferson and Washington and Lincoln that I could easily spend a month there having fun every day. And most of it is free. I mean, it is your tax-dollars at work, so why don’t all Americans enjoy this fantastic city. And I am born a Canadian!

Contact your local congressperson or senator and they can get you tickets to government buildings and tours, sometimes even giving you're an intern of your own for a private tour.

Whatever you do, however, don't bring a car or rent one. Parking is terrible and expensive and rare, but the public transportation (again thanks all you tax-payers living everyplace else) their public transportation system is large and comprehensive and inexpensive. So if you don’t mind walking (hey we ate well at places like Pizza π, The Bombay Club, Aqua Al 2 and still lost weight, walking and using public transport instead of a car) you can ride the subway quickly and busses anyplace (even down the Potomac to George Washington’s slave run plantation at Mt. Vernon) using a magic plastic card you wave at the transport for $20 or $30 for a whole week. Parking costs you at least $15 a day and $17 a night, and even street parking costs you $50 for a permit if you can find a space. Taxis are everywhere for times when the Metro subways or busses won't do.

So when the American Academy of Family Physicians sourced their annual meeting in Washington, DC, for October 2014, Deanne and I signed up and rented a vacation apartment for the week about 12 blocks from the Capitol of the United States of America along the blocks of brick row-houses behind the Capitol called Capitol Hill. George Washington’s French friend, L’Enfant, laid out this great city with wide streets rationally named, and boulevards that point to monumental views, so we could look down Pennsylvania Avenue or Independence or Constitution and all pointed to the dome of the Capitol that starts the great green National Mall ending 3 km away in the Lincoln memorial.

Smithsonian Museum of Natural History

My medical meetings at the Convention Center kept me busy during the week, but I was emancipated from the meetings by the Sabbath.

Friday evening the AAFP had arranged for several Smithsonian Museums to be opened exclusively to the doctors and their families as a social event, so Deanne and I walked through the Museum of Natural History Friday night, looking at all the evidence from God’s Second Book that makes a recent Creation chronology impossible. And that confirms the conviction that all creatures great and small were in fact Intelligently Designed and nicely adapted to the circumstances of life as it was on earth both in recent and in ancient times. Cataclysmic destructions like Noah’s have indeed happened several times in the history of life on earth. Progressive creation, change, adaptation, and growth are laws of life, just like Genesis 1 teaches, and destructions and new beginnings happen just like Genesis 9 teaches.

Adventist minds need to be unleashed to interpret all this evidence using Scripture as a guide not to the scientific details or as a basis of simplistic chronology, but as to the meaning and significance of life in an obvious Great Controversy between good and evil, beginning from Creation Day 1.

Capitol Hill SDA Church
Sabbath morning we Goggled an Adventist church, and found the Capitol Hill Seventh-day Adventist church only 3 blocks from our rental. So we walked through Lincoln Park past the statue paid for at great expense by recently freed African-Americans in 1874 showing Abraham Lincoln with a grateful ex-slave kneeling in gratitude at his feet. And then another block away was a beautiful white church with a large central dome, stained glass windows, and a $2 million dollar recent remodel paid for by present day Seventh-day Adventists of the same heritage, largely African-Americans.

Dr. Rasheed, an impressive woman and a church elder, greeted us at the door of her beautiful church. Five of the 7 adult Sabbath School classes were taught by black women teachers, and a black woman Pastor gave the morning 9:00 am short worship sermon. So the male headship heresy was not in charge of this African-American upscale congregation. Free men and free women don’t need to be told that one gender or the other is to be the boss, and that women are not allowed to speak in church or to teach men!

Then Dr. Davidson in splendid preaching robes took the pulpit after soul music with swing, percussion, piano (pianist from Tacoma in my Washington State), and keyboards, and a prayer service with large parts of the audience kneeling down at the altar. The women Deaconesses had on smart looking uniforms. And the male Deacons were promoting a Deacon’s Ball with a $55 admission per head next week. There was nothing second class about this active church, even though its culture and presentation was quite different from the Anglo churches I was raised in, and the African churches I attended for 13 years in Lesotho, South Africa, Zambia and Malawi. African Americans are a unique culture all their own, and this one was alive, worshipful, kindly, progressive, Christian, and happy in Jesus.

Dr. Davidson was a master of alliteration. His vocabulary was large and clever and many of his points were emphasized by using the poetry of alliteration. He preached on David and the Philistines and made the story bend to Christ. He spoke the idiom of how oppressed people in history and by present circumstances (young David and his small army) could overcome the oppressors (mighty armies of Philistia) by listening to God.

Pastor Davidson could talk quiet, but he often preached loud, and his congregation egged him on from point to point. It was a service of chant and response as people in my pew called out to his messages and points, “My, My, My!” “Mercy!” “Teach, Pastor, Teach” the whole hour sermon.

There were many side points made, but the center lesson had to do with the fact that at the first battle David went to God and was given one kind of instruction. And at the subsequent battle David again wisely went to God and was given a very different kind of instruction. What God had done with David in the past, how He worked in 2 Samuel 5:17-21, was different from the way God had David work in 2 Samuel 5:22-25.

**God Reserves the Right to Change How We Work**

“Fresh Ways for New Days,” rhymed Dr. Davidson. “God reserves the right to change how we work,” he thundered. “My, my, my” said the pew. “Old problems may need New strategies,” he explained. “Teach, Pastor, Teach,” said the pew. “God shifted the strategies. Don’t depend on yesterday’s word for today’s vision!” “Mercy, Mercy,” we cried.

“God’s plan for yesterday may not be God’s strategy for tomorrow.” “There is a way that seemeth right unto a man,” he warned and then paused. The congregation filled in the rest of the verse, “But the ends thereof are the ways of death!” God moving forward and our duty to follow was the message. Faith is not static, it is active. Yesterday’s truth is not always today’s burden.

The Israelites from slavery in Egypt to freedom in Palestine was a movement, a progression. “The Pillar of Fire and the Pillar of Cloud moved.” “When He moves, you move, when He stops you stop.” “Yesterday’s word is not Today’s word”. “The Holy Spirit has a Right-Now-Word, not a Back-Then-Word.”

The point is: Don’t just repeat your past understanding, but go to God today asking for today’s Manna for today’s problems.
Adventism Adapts to Culture, It can Adapt to Science

I don't know if Pastor Davidson was thinking at all about progressive Adventism. I don't know if he has any opinion if our former doctrine of a recent creation 6,000 years ago needs to be updated to new evidence and information? I don't know how he feels about those voices not far from his church out in the suburbs of DC who want to return Adventism to some imaginary fixed perfection of a past understanding of creation, instead of opening Adventism to new applications to new problems and present understandings. I don't know if this was even on his mind?

He may have been thinking about his church members with new problems with jobs and housing and education and health, and keeping the Sabbath holy in a secular world.

But the Holy Spirit took this White boy in a Black upper-class church in Washington DC and reminded me that Adventism adapts to Anglo-culture with quieter congregations and classical organ music; and to Zambian-culture with brick seats and thatched roofs with no piano but human voices; to African-American-culture with professional drums, keyboards, men and women dressed to the T, singing in rhythms and crying in blues, with whispered and shouted sermons and lively responsive congregations.

So why then can’t Adventism adapt to new facts about the history of Creation and the age of the Earth, with a new approach, a broader more inclusive doctrine of Creation, instead of a narrower more restrictive yesterday interpretation? Adventism can adapt to culture, why can't it adapt to scientific truth?

Who is an Adventist?

There is a Bible definition of Seventh-day Adventists quite different from the recent teaching of the General Conference’s chief executive officer, that if you don’t believe in a recent 144 hour creation 6,000 years ago, you aren’t fit to be an Adventist.

The Bible definition of Adventists is found in Revelation. In chapter 7 verse 17 we are promised that “The Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of water.” To “shepherd” is to move the flock to a new location. “Living fountains” are active and fresh doctrines, fresh new water, instead of the stale water of empty broken cisterns with broken, inadequate, partly true doctrines of the past. In Revelation 14, the 144,000 Remnant are not singing the same old songs, they are singing “a new song.” And they are moving along, progressing, for “They follow the Lamb wherever He goes.” The Lamb is moving.

Finally the 3 Angels of this same chapter don’t tell us to “worship how and when God made the earth”, they tell us to Worship Him who made the earth, not to worship how he made the earth! To Worship Him who made the seas, not to worship when he made the seas!

It may be that our older 1800’s interpretation of creation “seemeth right” to the present General Conference administration, but isn’t it is possible that God’s “way-of-yesterday” may not be suitable for today? Sticking with yesterday’s understanding, may not be God’s message for today.

The Adventist church was not meant to be standing still looking backward, the Lamb is not stuck with Ellen White’s 19th century science or Bishop Ussher’s 17th century chronologies. God reserves the right to change how we work and how we understand His creation. God’s message for Ellen White yesterday, may not be God’s strategy for understanding Creation today.

The pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud have moved beyond a recent creation about 6,000 years ago. Adventists, follow the Lamb, move beyond your previous understandings to better ones. It’s time for “Fresh Ways for New Days.”

And the people cried out, “My, My, My,” “Preach, Pastor, Preach,” “Mercy, Mercy, Mercy.”
Long Night’s Light

Debbonnaire Kovacs

Debbonnaire Kovacs, Dec. 31, 2014  It is evening, and dark, on or near winter solstice, the longest night of the year. As you enter the quiet chapel the atmosphere is one of peace, candlelight, and gentle music. Some people are dressed in sweats and sitting with downcast eyes, often isolated near the back and sides of the room. Others are in small groups of family or friends. A few clutch tissues from the boxes in every pew. Before the evening ends there will be many tears and the boxes will be depleted. No worries; there are more.

The pews are arranged to create an open square near the front. The center of this square holds a table with lit candles, an unlit Advent wreath, and a pottery tray bearing two large pottery goblets and a loaf of bread. There are also trays of unlit votive candles and a candle lighter. Drapings here and at the altar are dark blue. An open Bible at the front is flanked by white poinsettias and more candles. Above it hangs a handmade tapestry of the cross surrounded by an array of brilliant colors. It’s to remind us of both the darkness and the beauty that bring us all here.

The service begins with a welcome whose most observable feature is kindness. The pastor reassures us (as he has during all announcements leading up to this annual event) that this is not a time where we are expected to dress up, wear perky Christmas bows and sing carols, or in any way celebrate. “There will be singing,” he often says, “but you don’t have to sing. There will be prayers, but you don’t have to pray. You will be offered the opportunity to partake of communion, to light candles, and to receive a special blessing. You may participate in any, all, or none of these. This service is for you.”

It’s the Long Night Service at Church of Christ, Union, in Berea, Kentucky. It’s created especially for those who are feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or sorrowful, whether due to losses through death or divorce, or any other stresses, pains, and difficulties.

During the darkest, coldest days of the year, human beings feel a deep inner longing for the light to come back. Quite aside from physical health issues such as Vitamin D deprivation, low serotonin production, etc., depression and other challenges to mental health may arise in force. In the northern hemisphere, this time coincides with the season of Christmas and other winter holidays, which makes it particularly easy for those who are not feeling merry to feel left out or isolated, or to fear that their feelings are not heard, understood, or important; however, in any winter season anywhere it would be a good time to reassure those in low spirits that God is with us, always, and it’s okay to cry.

At Union Church, the service is perhaps 30-45 minutes long and includes Bible and poetry readings, music, silence, and the lighting of the Advent wreath, first the four candles representing hope, peace, joy, and love, and then the Christ candle, which represents the presence of Emmanuel, the true light bringer. After about 20 minutes, those gathered are invited to get up if they wish, and do one or more of three things.

They may go to the table and light a votive candle for themselves or someone else.

They may take communion. Someone will be standing by the communion elements to say something like, “The body of Christ,” or “Bread for the journey,” and “The blood of the new covenant.” Communion is taken by intinction, which means taking a piece of bread, dipping it in the cup and then eating it.

They may also go forward to a cushioned kneeling bench where they may stand or kneel to receive a special blessing. A pastor will place hands on their head and pray, “The Spirit of the Living God, present with us now, enter you body, mind, and spirit, and heal you from all that harms you.”

Union Church’s Long Night service is not particularly different from those of many other churches and denominations. It is possible that some Adventist churches present something like this, though I have never experienced it. I was
asked to write about this event, whose Adventist connection is myself, because it is something that many find to be of great value and that our churches could easily do. We could create our own service, full of light and gentleness and healing, redolent with the presence of the Holy Spirit. We could do it during the long nights in whatever place we live.

Speaking for myself alone, I would not miss the Long Night Service. Having been raised in a way that made it very suspect to kneel before someone else because you might be kneeling to that person, I find it particularly moving to kneel and receive the blessing. I know, and so does the pastor, that I am in no way kneeling to him. He is, as he is called by God to do, passing on the blessing of Christ to me. I can't describe how much this helps me.

For several years, I was mourning the long, slow death of my beloved mate. Then I was mourning his death. Then I was mourning my mother’s death. Simultaneously, I’ve grieved my own inner needs and losses. This year I was grieving the loss of my father. It’s normal—here, that is. It’s an expected part of life on this planet. It hurts. We can’t remind ourselves and each other enough, both that God is “present with us here” and wants to “heal us of all that harms us” and that he’s coming back, bringing everlasting light with him. It helps us hold on. And in the meantime, we hold on to each other, and we carry our tiny candles, and we feel our way through the dark.
Debbonaire Kovacs

Photo, Debbonaire Kovacs, Dec. 31, 2014  
I have embarked on a years’ long quest to create a full nativity scene whose clothing, blankets, etc. will be from entirely hand spun, hand knitted, woven, or crocheted fiber. Here are Mary
and Baby Jesus, surrounded by animals covered in real fur, which I lucked into in Mexico one year. Mary’s robe and veil, and the baby’s blanket, are made from sheep wool. The brown blanket is camel down, and the baby’s swaddling clothes (not visible in this picture) are linen.