Black Unions: Pro and Con
Ellen White and Reformation History

SPECTRUM

A Quarterly Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums

Volume 9, Number 3

July '78

THE SHAKING OF ADVENTISM?

Reviews by Douglass, Ford
Guy, LaRondelle, and an
Interview with Paxton

SPECTRUM

Association of Adventist Forums

SPECTRUM is a journal established to encourage Seventh-day Adventist participation in the discussion of contemporary issues from a Christian viewpoint, to look without prejudice at all sides of a subject, to evaluate the merits of diverse views, and to foster Christian intellectual and cultural growth. Although effort is made to ensure accurate scholarship and discriminating judgment, the statements of fact are the responsibility of contributors, and the views individual authors express are not necessarily those of the editorial staff as a whole or as individuals.

The Association of Adventist Forums is a nonsubsidized, nonprofit organization for which gifts are deductible in the report of income for purposes of taxation. The publishing of SPECTRUM depends on subscriptions, gifts from individuals and the voluntary efforts of the contributors and the staff.

SPECTRUM is published quarterly by the Association of Adventist Forums. Direct editorial correspondence to SPECTRUM, Box 431, College Place, WA 99324. In matters of style and documentation, SPECTRUM follows *The MLA Style Sheet* (rev., 1970). Manuscripts should be typewritten, double spaced. Submit the original and two copies, along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Due to limitations of space, responses from readers may be shortened before publication.

In order to receive SPECTRUM, send a membership fee ($12 per year, except $14 in Canada and in other foreign countries) to Association of Adventist Forums, Box 4330, Takoma Park, Maryland 20012. Single copies may be purchased for $3.50. Send correspondence concerning address changes to the same address, enclosing address labels. Pay by check made out to the Association of Adventist Forums.

26550

In This Issue

About This Issue

Considering the stir which *The Shaking of Adventism* has created within Adventist circles, the title of Geoffrey Paxton's study of the Adventist theology of righteousness by faith may well be prophetic. The book has quickly become the center of controversy. Calling himself an "itinerant Babylonian," Paxton has defended his ideas on a whirlwind tour of America. The strong recommendation by General Conference officers not to allow him to speak in Adventist institutions only heightened the controversy. This issue of SPECTRUM brings together four reviews of the book from a variety of viewpoints along with an interview of its author.

The introductory review by Fritz Guy notes the lessons the church can learn from the book while pointing out some of its weaknesses. The other three reviews, all by writers who play prominent roles in *The Shaking of Adventism*, take varying positions. Herbert Douglass, while agreeing in part with some details, notes in the book several erroneous historical and theological conclusions. Desmond Ford, on the other hand, affirms Paxton's basic thesis and further shows how the presentation of righteousness by faith is in accordance with Pauline theology. Hans LaRondelle examines Paxton's analysis of reformation theology and finds Paxton's work to be weak, in important respects.

The controversy over righteousness by faith is essentially a question of unity. Must the church, as Paxton seems to argue, hold one particular position, or may it allow some theological pluralism? Similarly, the discussion of black unions is essentially one of unity. Calvin Rock argues that cultural pluralism is characteristic of American ethnic life in order to support his call for black unions, "a practical, dignified way of addressing serious logistical needs." In contrast, Lorenzo Grant promotes an alternative which would correct the present poor black representation in the church while avoiding "group exclusivism."

Also in this issue, Eric Anderson describes the historical research of Donald McAdams on Ellen White's sources for the *Great Controversy*. Arguing that McAdams' discoveries will ultimately become "the new orthodoxy," Anderson traces McAdams' systematic investigation of Ellen White's sources on the English Reformation and John Huss. The article raises important questions which our readers will wish to consider.

The Editors

The Call for Black Unions

by Benjamin Reeves

"To God be the Glory" — these words expressed the emotions filling the hearts of over 400 black Seventh-day Adventist workers and their families as they gathered in the Oakwood College church on March 24, 1978. The occasion was the meeting of all regional conference presidents and over 90 percent of the workers of those conferences. In attendance as well were black union and General Conference personnel. The central concern was the clarification of questions concerning regional or black unions in the Adventist Church.

As most of those present recognized, the issue of black unions has a long history. As long ago as April 7-9, 1969, a meeting of the Regional Advisory Committee held in Miami recommended that the General Conference appoint a committee to study the advisability of organizing regional unions. On October 9, 1969, the appointed General Conference committee further recommended that a commission be appointed to study regional unions. On January 13, 1970, the Commission to Study Regional Unions met in the General Conference chapel. After spending some fifteen hours together, the commission tabled a motion that the Church organize two new unions.

Following the meeting, General Conference officers prepared a document setting forth alternatives to black unions and presented it to the commission on April 16, 1970. During that meeting, after a twelve-hour discussion, a motion to form regional unions was defeated by a vote of 41 to 28. Following an appeal for church unity by E. E. Cleveland, the alternative "Sixteen-Point Program" prepared by the General Conference officers was accepted in lieu of black unions. After one year, the commission was to be reconvened to further study and evaluate the program.

Since the 1970 meeting, no other meetings have been called, although the intervening time did see blacks placed in union administrative positions. Many observers interpreted these appointments as hopeful signs suggesting that after gaining union experience in executive positions, blacks would be eligible to serve in union presidential positions. However, this interpretation was mistaken. Since the 1970 meeting, three unions — Lake, Central, Columbia — have elected

Benjamin Reeves is chairman of the theology department, Oakwood College.

presidents. In every case, qualified blacks with extensive conference and union administrative experience who served as union secretaries for extended periods were passed over.

Regional unions were again proposed by black conference presidents in 1977, when a request was presented to PREXAD to establish regional unions. PREXAD, however, rejected the proposal and set up another commission to study alternative means of correcting organizational inequities. A meeting of black conference presidents with General Conference Regional officers then again requested that PREXAD restudy the proposed regional unions.

Because PREXAD released a statement in the *Review and Herald* without providing a balancing opposition statement, black conference presidents decided that it was necessary to provide the balancing information both to laymen and ministers. Thus they chose to discuss the issue at the Oakwood meeting and to print a brochure. The Oakwood meeting was chaired by C. D. Joseph, president of the Lake Region Conference, and the brochure was edited by R. C. Brown, secretary of the conference. Prior to the meeting, 40,000 copies of the brochure were printed.

The Oakwood meeting noted that Adventist church structure has systematically excluded blacks from crucial organizational positions. This exclusion is tragic because, as the opening speaker E. E. Cleveland pointed out, the natural outgrowth of the Three Angel's Message is an awakening sense of self-worth and an increasing desire to serve at all levels of church structure. Also during the meeting, C. D. Joseph described the relationship between church organization and the enlargement of God's work, and C. E. Dudley, president of the South Central Conference, described how the black work has been strengthened under black administration. Isaac Palmer, treasurer of the Lake Region Conference, argued that percentages of tithe returned to the black conferences should be adjusted to compensate for the economic inequities of American life. C. B. Rock, president of Oakwood College, concluded the meeting by describing the New Testament church's use of Gentile leadership to administer Gentile churches. Rock noted that the resulting diversity in leadership added to the unity of the early church.

Since the Oakwood meeting, the regional presidents, along with C. B. Rock and E. E. Cleveland, were invited to Spring Council to discuss black concerns. The question of black unions was once again referred to the PREXAD-appointed commission, which will report to the Annual Council. A matter of some discussion was whether the 40,000 copies of the brochure will be distributed by the regional conference presidents to their constituencies before the 1978 Annual Council. Meanwhile, the General Conference is considering a brochure to explain its position.

Cultural Pluralism and Black Unions

by Calvin B. Rock

Black (regional) unions in the North American Division are necessary structural accommodations which will enhance mobility among black workers — not just *vertically* but laterally. Contrary to the opinion of many, vertical mobility is not as important as lateral mobility, the movement within local conferences — administrative, departmental and pastoral.[1] There can be no question but that lateral mobility, often desirable but difficult in present circumstances, would be greatly facilitated were several black local conference presidents and committees interacting with each other within union boundaries.

Within the North American Division, there are 80 local conferences housing 3,673 individual churches. These local conferences are, in turn, housed in nine union conference structures. Eight of these 80 local conferences are administered by blacks who oversee churches which comprise approximately 90 percent of the black membership within the country. These black local conferences are scattered among several of the various union conference territories of North America where each, along with several white-administered local conferences, comprise a particular union conference. The structural model which this paper suggests would extract all eight black local conferences from the unions where they now hold membership and arrange them into two black union conferences (see map, p. 7). These two black unions would relate to the North American Division as do all other unions in the territory.

Are black unions a step backwards? Would society view them as a sign of the inability of white and black Adventists to work together? Would there be a decrease of interaction between black and white leaders or with white members and black members; and if so, would this delay the day of full brotherhood and understanding between the races within our church? Would not black unions (although open to all races) be an admission of defeat of the church's brotherhood posture enumerated in the statements of 1961 and in the "Sixteen Points" of interaction and accommodation which the church voted in 1970? Will the ends of black progress justify the means? Is this the best possible decision for us to make at this time? Or, to put it another way, are the results likely to be gained conpatible with the gospel ethic? These questions must be considered in the context of the sociological reality of cultural pluralism in American life.

The first part of this paper demonstrates that pluralism is by far the most pervasive

Calvin Rock is completing his Ph.D. in Christian Ethics at Vanderbilt University. He is president of Oakwood College.

assimilation pattern in America, but that while for white America it is so because of voluntary choices in matters of cultural heritage and preferences, for blacks, pluralism is also due to forced separation. In other words, black America has always operated culturally much as a separate wheel, not as a component circle rotating, as most other cultural (ethnic) groups, within the main circle of American culture.

Having done this, the paper takes up the task (using the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a model) of showing how black dignity and progress will result from structural postures which allow for black solidarity (a positive view of pluralism) without encouraging separation or acquiescing to racism. The paper concludes by showing that the New Testament records a remarkable parallel which supports the position advocated in this paper.

Social scientists generally agree that the three major theories or models of assimilation in American society have been those of Anglo-conformity, the melting pot and cultural pluralism.

Anglo-conformity, a term introduced by Steward G. and Mildred Wiese Cole in *Minorities and the American Promise* (1954), denotes complete renunciation of the ancestral culture of the immigrants in favor of the behavior and values of the Anglo-Saxon core group. Anglo-conformity espouses total faith in the desirability of maintaining English-oriented patterns as dominant and standard in American life and embraces related attitudes of "Nordic" and Arian superiority. Thomas Jefferson helped lay the foundation for this social axis when he wrote concerning immigrants:

> ". . . they will bring with them the principles of the government they leave, imbibed in their early youth. These principles, with their language they will transmit to their children. In proportion to their numbers, they will share with us the legislation. They will infuse into it their spirit, warp and bias its directions and render it a heterogeneous, incoherent, distracted mass."[2]

On the other hand, the melting pot theorists differ from the Anglo-conformists in that they argue for a biological as well as a cultural merger. They have envisaged all immigrant groups and all minorities as eventually blending themselves into the indigenous Anglo-Saxon American type. Anglo-conformity has been the most prevalent ideology of assimilation in the American historical experience, but the melting pot theory has been a competing strain from the eighteenth century onward. Ralph Waldo Emerson gave this theory its clearest expression in an 1845 journal entry:

> "Man is the most composite of all creatures. . . . well, as in the old burning of the Temple of Corinth, by the melting and intermixture of silver and gold and other metals a new compound more precious than any, called Corinthian brass, was formed; so in this continent, — asylum of all nations, — the energy of Irish, Germans, Swedes, Poles, Cossacks, and all the European tribes, — of the Africans and of the Polynesians, — will construct a new race, a new religion, a new state, a new literature, which will be as vigorous as the new Europe which came out of the smelting-pot of the Dark Ages. . . ."[3]

Also, Frederick Jackson Turner, best known for his book *Frontier Hypothesis,* became renowned in sociological circles for his bold predictions of cross-fertilization and "amalgamation of all American stock" which he hoped would be productive of a new national stock and world brotherhood. In 1908, Israel Zongwill produced the then popular drama, *The Melting Pot,* in which a young Russian Jewish immigrant who falls in love with a cultured Gentile girl states:

> "Yes, East and West, and North and South, the palm and the pine, the pole and the equator, the crescent and the cross — how the great Alchemist melts and fuses them with his purging flame! Here shall all unite to build the Republic of Man and the Kingdom of God."[4]

The romantic idealism of these theories has failed insofar as blacks are concerned. That the realities of assimilation for blacks in America have been neither Anglo-conformity nor the melting pot is abundantly

demonstrable. The fact is that neither system was designed with blacks in mind. Some blacks have approximated Anglo-conformity culturally and biologically as well. However, news of their African ancestry, be it ever so distant, invariably locks them perceptually into the black minority no matter how near or indistinguishable their features are to those of the "melted" majority.

A few theorists (e.g., Emerson) did consciously include blacks in their design for cultural assimilation, but most of the early literature shows no concern for inclusion of blacks in Anglo-conformity or biological melting. As the owners of slaves could preach that "God has made of one blood all nations" and pray "Our Father, which art in Heaven" and never perceive the black man as part of the family, so could generations of their descendants theorize about a "melted America" and take for granted that blacks were something separate and apart.

Not that blacks have not tried. Inundated by the psychological and material rewards of meeting the Anglo-Saxon "ideal type" of facial features, hair texture and fair skin, they bleached their bodies, straightened their hair and sought, by intermarriage with the lighter members of the race, to bring their features closer to the Anglo-Saxon model. Further, they have sought to infiltrate or integrate every segment of society in an effort to share the American dream. With the notable exceptions of the Marcus Garveys and Elijah Muhammuds, black leadership has acquiesced to one or the other of these two theories. Like the hopeful suitor, blacks have constantly rationalized demeaning comparisons only to discover that nature prohibits physical conformity without literal disappearance as a race. Two hundred years of slavery, 90 years of Jim Crow and two decades of "white flight" have made it clear that the invitation to melt was never really meant for them and that, in spite of what the law now says about separate but equal, grass roots (structural) assimilation is not a likely reality for blacks in America.

The third assimilation pattern is that of cultural pluralism, which is dominant not only for blacks and other racial or ethnic minorities but also for geographic and religious minorities.

While the constitutional fathers resisted ethnic community *de jure*, it existed *de facto* in first generation America as a result of group settlements built around the various waves of immigrants. Cultural pluralism was a fact in American society long before it became a theory. We had Dagoes, Sheenies, Hunkies, etc., before World War I, but it was about that time that John Dewey articulated the principle before the National Education Association. Norman Hopgood, a prominent author of the day, wrote of America as a democracy which tends to encourage differences, not monotony, a place where we ought not to think of all people as being alike.[5] Randolph Bourne, a young essayist, also contributed to the movement when he spoke of a "transnational" America, a nation having threads of living and potent cultures, blindly striving to weave themselves into a novel international nation, the first the world has seen.[6]

"Black America has always operated culturally much as a separate wheel, not as a component circle rotating, as most other cultural (ethnic) groups, within the main circle of American culture."

Horace Kallen, a Harvard-educated philosopher, championed the cause of cultural pluralism in his *The Nation* articles titled "Democracy Versus the Melting Pot." He spoke of cooperative harmonies of European civilization, affirmation to be different, creation as a result of diversities, and the American way — the way of orchestration. The idealism of Kallen's sophisticated language has not been realized, but his general prophecy has. Even the core culture of white citizenship is largely pluralistic in religion and politics. In terms of demography or living patterns, America still has Polishville, Russianville, Little Italy, German Pennsylvania and Irish Boston, where rudiments of the life style of the original immigrants are still very evident. Will Herberg, in

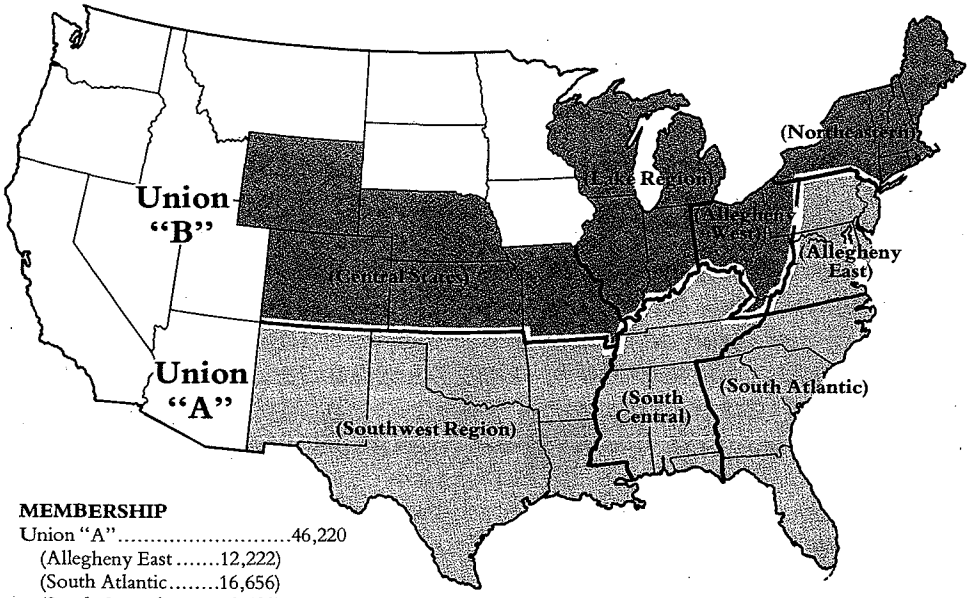
Protestant-Catholic-Jew, prefers to call the assimilation process of most immigrant groups the "transmuting pot" in which all ingredients are shaped like the ideal and differences become occasional. But for racial minorities (identified by color, i.e., blacks, Indians, Mexicans and Orientals), pluralism is not occasional; it is the overwhelming reality, and the darker the skin the more obvious that reality becomes.

This individuality of all minorities identifiable by color (especially blacks) is guaranteed by the boundary-maintaining mechanism which the core group imposes upon them. In *Minorities*, B. Eugene Griessman classifies boundary-maintaining mechanisms by which minorities are excluded from the core culture. The main ones include "physical boundaries (zoning and political restrictions), and social boundaries such as sanctions against private clubs and intermarriage."[7] These sanctions have resulted in what is known as structural *separation*. However, since it is by structural *assimilation* only that Anglo-conformity or the melting pot experience can take place, pluralism is predictably here to stay.

It should be further stated that restrictions upon educational, occupational, geographic and social mobility have forced blacks to structure primary relationships chiefly within their own subsociety, thus strengthening and perpetuating their ethnicity. Migrdal, Steiner and Ross (1944) and later Bobchuk, Thompson and Orum (1962 and 1966) describe this tendency as the "compensation hypothesis." They say:

> Since Negroes are deprived of the usual social and psychological satisfactions of everyday life, they are compelled to seek such satisfaction collectively through other means. Opportunities for association are restricted by explicit or tacit observance of segregation in public places of entertainment. The oppressive atmosphere of slum dwellings also does not offer a congenial environment for social activity. Quite naturally then, clubs and associations become focuses for Negroes' social life.[8]

It may well be, however, that cultural pluralism is not altogether the result of external forces. Ethnicity may well be an innate



MEMBERSHIP

Union "A".....46,220
(Allegheny East.....12,222)
(South Atlantic.....16,656)
(South Central .....10,480)
(Southwest Region ....6,862)

Union "B".....44,396
(Northeastern .....19,263)
(Allegheny West .....7,344)
(Central States .....4,652)
(Lake Region .....13,137)

PROJECTED Organization of Black SDA Union Conferences U.S.A.

(Constituent Black Local Conferences in Parenthesis)

characteristic of man. Weber talks about man's consciousness of common origin, Geerty speaks of "primordial group attachment" and Isaacs writes of "basic membership groups," all hinting that even if a society could be totally receptive to all immigrants and minorities, there would exist a degree of ethnic communality.

For whatever reason, race consciousness for blacks is very real. They are more than zoologically distinguishable people; they are a social and cultural unit, a historic group for whom color is an identifying symbol that intensifies their sense of solidarity. It should be clear that because of both the negative push of structural separation and the positive pull of group attachments, blacks have developed a distinct compartmentalized subnation status in America.

This situation has strengthened the need for black churches, where music, preaching and programming are beamed for their tastes; black families, where socialization of children and companionship of parents can take place along sociocultural lines of commonly shared values; and black higher education, where the student can, if he chooses, earn his passport to respectability in a familiar atmosphere.

"Those who think that the racial and political patterns of the church are different from those of the larger society are either naive or blithely unaware of history's teachings in this regard."

I wish to propose that while racism is chiefly responsible for the maintaining of this social atmosphere, it is neither racist nor capitulation to accept the facts of this very obvious and overwhelming reality. Neither the death knell to separate but equal (1954) nor the mercurial rise of black politicians in the last decade has changed the facts as outlined by the Kerner Commission: "This is our basic conclusion: Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white — separate and unequal."[9] Actually, with the notable exception of Mayor Thomas Bradley's election in Los Angeles, most black electees only highlight the fact that blacks are more and more grouping themselves together in cities from whence whites have fled.

Those who would ignore America's historic and present realities and doggedly hold to their dreams of cultural oneness in this country would do well to consider the words of Bonhoeffer who makes the following illuminating comments on "acting in correspondence with reality":

> For the responsible man the given situation is not simply the materials on which he is to impress his idea or his programme by force, but this situation is itself drawn in into the action and shares in giving form to the deed. It is not an "absolute good" that is to be realized; but on the contrary, it is part of the self-direction of the responsible agent that he prefers what is relatively better to what is relatively worse and that he perceives that the "absolute good" may sometimes be the very worst. The responsible man does not have to impose upon reality a law which is alien to it, but his action is in the true sense in accordance with reality.[10]

Those who think that the racial and political patterns of the church are different from those of the larger society are either naive or blithely unaware of history's teachings in this regard. Those who think structural accommodations in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination are evil must be reminded of the fact that we have always had them and that they were recognized by the prophetess in the early days when she advised, in the wake of the reconstruction, to let whites and blacks labor within their individual races. Those who used to tell us, "Don't come over for the gospel's sake" (a reasonable stance, by the way, in certain places in days gone by), should now be able to understand when we say we must organize our separation (not further separate or discontinue programs of brotherhood, but simply organize what already exists) for the *same reason* — the gospel's sake.

Those who think that the government's

reenforcements of civil rights during the last 20 years is the beginning of Anglo-conformity or melting pot experiences for blacks in America should reexamine the Kerner Commission's report and should see in the battles of Boston's Irish and Catholic communities, Chicago's suburban wars against open housing and the rapidly increasing (not declining) density of America's black ghettos ample reason to believe pluralism is here to stay and to be accepted and accommodated in our programming. Those whites and blacks who wish to hold on to their dreams are entitled to the privilege, but must the work of God suffer while we vainly work and wait for the structure of a whole society to change? As demonstrated by Mr. Carter's slip of the lip when he said he believes cultural subgroups have a right to maintain their ethnic purity, cultural pluralism is as American as baseball, Chevrolet and apple pie; and there is no research that I know of which supports anyone's optimism that time will change this fact.

My point is that black unions are not morally regressive. They do not indicate lack of love or retaliation for past injustices. They are not ego trips for power-hungry people. They are not attempts to withdraw from the mainstream. They are, rather, a practical, dignified way of addressing serious logistical needs. They admit to cultural pluralism within and without the church and propose to eliminate all the current measures of forced structural assimilation and accommodations, however well intentioned. They say that Anglo-conformity and the melting pot do not exist and that candid realization of the facts of cultural pluralism and an authentic structuring of the work of a people already culturally separated from their brethren by living patterns, life style and cultural perceptions is infinitely better than trying to overcome all the resistance afforded by reality.

Segregation says, "We're better, ours will be an I - it relationship" (racism); ethnocentricity says, "We're right, do it our way" (Anglo-conformity); romantic idealism says, "We're fragmented, let's all pattern to the ideal construct" (the melting pot); cultural pluralism, in its positive sense, says simply, "We're different, we will accept and respect our cultural variety."

This position does not deny the obvious fact of degrees of sophistication in group or societal development as seen in the evolution and decay of cultures. This concept does not abdicate responsibilities of brotherhood nor ignore the many benefits of voluntary and structured cultural cross-fertilization. What it does deny, however, is the justice of having any group forced to either extreme of the continuum of social relations, segregation or amalgamation. Of course, cultural pluralism fully comprehends that in the course of time, contact and common experience (acculturation) may produce similarity of perception and life style. But it does all this without assuming a posture which begrudges persons equal access and opportunity as well as the right to perpetuate their lawful cultural distinctiveness. Thus, we conclude, without launching into any history of insults and slights, that because of the cultural realities of America both within and without the church, black unions have a right to exist.

Black unions would be a type of accommodation, but blacks are already experiencing many types of accommodation. We are accommodated at union elections when, after considerable negotiation, we wring out an agreement — much to the displeasure of many of our white brethren assembled — which provides "X" number of positions for blacks only. And to insure this agreement, only black names are put on the board (the one way, it seems, to guarantee success in secret ballots where the majority votes are white). We are accommodated at General Conference sessions when, for the same reason, all black North American Division delegates are extracted from their individual unions to choose delegates for the nominating committee. Thus, blacks operate for all practical purposes at the highest level of our political process as a quasi-black union, anyway. We are accommodated when, at meetings of our union presidents, various black brethren are invited to make certain that the black view is heard.

All of these and other measures have been employed in good faith, and we appreciate

them under the circumstances; but they just do not solve the problem. Blacks are still unhappy because much of their structuring is forced, if not contrived. Many whites are not happy because of the tactics blacks must use to accomplish the job and because of having to go along with what they regard as (in many instances) pressure tactics and with what they think are fabricated positions. Then to add to the problem, blacks who are placed in union jobs find themselves either ambassadors to the black people in their unions, thus falsifying the nature of their titles, or too busy to do the kind of coordinating of black needs mentioned in the earlier part of this paper.

One might, of course, argue that what our country (and our church) really needs is a commitment to alter the basic situation, to attack so vigorously the systems which, in the words of the Kerner report, have created and maintained this separate nation. That task, I contend is both improbable (considering the historic pattern of race relations in America), unreal (considering the physical magnitude of the challenge) and unnecessary considering Gordon's definition of pluralism as "a complete and honest respect for culture variation. . . ."[11] Griessman notes the following:

> Relations among groups can be visualized as a continuum with separation at one end and complete assimilation at the other. Pluralism is located between these poles. Pluralism implies pride of group, but it probably is true of groups, as of individuals, that respect for others is impossible without self-esteem. Admittedly, group pride can lead to tribalism; but it need not if it can be coupled with tolerance.[12]

This positive concept of pluralism applied to church organization is clearly explicated in the New Testament writings of Paul. The group relations issue, so pervasively treated in the Pauline epistles, impinged very directly upon the structure of the early church. John Yoder is most incisive when, in analyzing Paul's ethical philosophy, he states:

> In sum: the fundamental issue was that of the social form of the church. Was it to be a new inexplicable kind of community of both Jews and Gentiles or was it going to be a confederation of a Jewish Christian sect and a Gentile one? Or would all the Gentiles have first to become Jews according to the conditions of pre-messianic proselytism?[13]

The model which Paul's writings create is clearly focused in his counsel regarding the relationships within the church of dialectical elements: circumcised and uncircumcised, slave and master, bond and free, parent and child, male and female, husband and wife, Jew and Gentile.

First of all, it is evident that Paul consistently recognized the diversity among believers in matters of culture as well as roles and functions. This is demonstrated by his running polemic with Judaism (and Judaistic Christianity in particular) evidenced in Galatians and Romans. This counsel makes it clear that the universalizing of salvation as called for in the Christian church supports the fact that there are no national, social, racial or other anthropological prerequisites imposed by the gospel and that it embraces all sorts of men.

Second, Paul's imagery of temple, household and particularly "body" in addressing and describing the church is here most significant. Characteristic of the apostle's language in this respect are his repeated references of the "many" (I Cor. 12:12, Rom. 12:5). Rather than general encouragement of dissolving of social roles and diversities, a task logistically inconceivable in light of the cognitions and structures of his day (although he did encourage slaves to be free if they could, I Cor. 7:21), the apostle's thrust in this regard was for a revaluing or reinterpretation of existing roles and relationships.

What is remarkable is not that Jews and Gentiles experienced meaningful integration at the level of primary relationships; this simply did not happen. Nor, as this paper seeks to demonstrate, is it likely to occur meaningfully with strong, contrasting cultures today. Furthermore, there is nothing in the Pauline epistles which shows this integration to be part of the New Testament gospel ethic.

What is most remarkable, however, is that in the early church widely differing cultures were uniformly affected by the gospel, that Jews and Gentiles could be separate and autonomous culturally and to a great extent structurally while yet maintaining consensus and unity in doctrine and brotherhood.

Third, those denominations which today house the ten percent of black Christianity which do not belong to black-administered denominations need not apologize because they recognize the right of that minority to maintain its culture and the resultant need of that minority to exercise self-determination on whatever levels of organization native intelligence is required. The New Testament should be a constant reminder of the fact that such a posture is not inimical to consensus in matters of institutional purpose, doctrinal unity and, as in the case of the Good Samaritan story and the Philemon-Onesimus relationship, full brotherhood when everydayness does produce contact. Paul's writings show that New Testament church governance was receptive to organizational lines which accommodated its cultural diversity.

"Paul consistently recognized the diversity among believers in matters of culture as well as roles and functions."

Hans Küng, in *The Church,* makes a persuasive case for the existence of two major forms of organizational development within the New Testament church: 1) The Jerusalemic-Palestinian conception (seen in the book of Acts) which was developed by the original disciples and followed a constitution that tended toward presbyterial or episcopal forms, and 2) the Corinthian-Gentile conception which was structured in Pauline epistles and tended toward lines of charismatic leadership. Küng states, "It is necessary to accentuate the contrasts in the New Testament constitution of the Church, and to stress certain features, in order to be able to draw important distinctions in our examination of the historical reality."[14]

Having drawn the distinctions alluded to above, he gives four common features which he sees as uniting the idea of a ministry exercised by special appointment (Jerusalem-Palestinian) with that of one inspired by the free gift of the spirit (Corinthian-Gentile). These common features which allowed diverse, distinctive operations to coexist within the church are: 1) belief in the original witness and commission of the apostles; 2) faith in the gospel including, particularly, receiving of baptism and participation in the Lord's Supper; 3) the spiritual nature of all the ministries of the church; 4) the subjection of the church's ministries to the discernment of the community of believers.

Küng concludes, "These are the common features which enabled Jerusalem and Corinth, the Jewish and Gentile Christian Churches to live together in one Church," and "explain why, when the later Church came to decide on the New Testament canon, it accepted and included non-Pauline as well as Pauline writings (or alternatively included Pauline as well as non-Pauline writings), as a valid and genuine testimony of its own origins."[15]

Fourth, the apostle taught that the church's witness of unity in diversity is its primary critique of society's social injustice. By use of the word "body," Paul denotes the necessity of a visible manifestation of the unity of the church (I Cor. 1:13; 12:1; Rom. 12:4,5; Eph. 4:15). We are not simply the "many," but the "many-in-one." "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ" (I Cor. 12:12). Again, quoting Küng:

> It is not necessary for this diversity and variety to breed dissensions, enmity and strife. . . . As long as all have the one God, Lord, Spirit and faith and not their own private God, Lord, Spirit and faith, all is in order. . . . It is not the differences in themselves which are harmful, but only excluding and exclusive differences.[16]

Thus, the very existence of the church wherein Jew and Gentile, who formerly walked after the beggarly elements of the world, lived together in peace is a proclamation of the lordship of Christ. Praising God,

singing psalms and sharing a common hope (but not a common culture), each group had its life style leavened by the common denomination of the gospel of Christ. It was this that made the early church a spectacle, the visible manifestation of that mystery which for ages had remained hidden.

The principle of action which allows the diverse parts to live in harmony without discrimination or amalgamation is love, a gift which converts simple accommodation into glorified brotherhood because it involves what Yoder calls "radical subordination" of each to the other. This peaceful coexistence of disparate cultures that enjoyed a spiritual unity within the household of faith, was, in the absence of alternatives, the most revolutionary demonstration available to the early believers and the natural result of being in Christ. II Cor. 5:17 explains why: "When anyone is united to Christ, there is a new world. . . a new order has already begun" (NEB). Thus slaves and servants rendered faithful service but were received as brothers; the Christian Jews could not force the converted Gentiles to be circumcised and the Gentiles would cease eating meat offered to idols. All would avoid the appearance of evil. Furthermore, the leaders of the various ethnic groups could go to Jerusalem for counsel and debate and return to their separate cultural enclaves diverse in folkways and mores, but one in faith and belief. Not an altogether surprising development in the history of a people whose foundation was laid at Pentecost when each heard the gospel ". . . in his own tongue" (Acts. 2:6).

Given existing social and political structures as well as the church's eschatological expectations, we can understand why the apostle had no concept of any premillenial revolution of the social order:

> For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. . . . Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. . . (I Thess. 4:15, 17).

However, the unheard of concessions and privileges which he demanded that oppressors and the advantaged give to the oppressed and the less-advantaged (male to female, master to slave, Jew to Gentile) were so radical a departure from existing social patterns that he is certainly exonerated from any charges of insensitivity toward social injustice.

While the church's alternatives for social protest have greatly expanded (we now have more latitude for direct action), the fact of our philosophical and doctrinal unity while maintaining cultural (and where necessary, structural) diversity remains our primary witness. Thus considered, cultural pluralism for the church in general and for blacks in particular is seen as something more than resigned accommodation to the status quo of racism or capitulation to what *is* in the light of apparent difficulties in obtaining what *ought* to be. Rather, it becomes a bold and dynamic concept, the actualization of which in the contemporary community of faith can help make of us, as it did of the early church, a witness for all people as well as a flaming protest in society against the inequities of the present social order.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Of course, vertical mobility is important, since union presidents have pivotal roles in local conference operations. They also chair all local conference elections and serve on most of the key decision-making bodies of the world church.
2 Quoted by Milton M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life* (New York, 1964), pp. 90-91.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 121.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 140.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 141.
7. Eugene B. Griessman, *Minorities* (Hinsdale, Illinois), p. 96.
8. Quoted in "Ethnicity and Participation: A Study of Mexican-American Blacks and Whites," *American Journal of Sociology,* 80 (1975), 1194.
9. *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (New York, 1968), p. 1.
10. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* (New York: MacMillan, 1955), pp. 227-228.
11. Gordon, p. 17.
12. Griessman, p. 17.
13. John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), p. 220.
14. Hans Küng, *The Church* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1976), p. 536.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 538-539.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 356-357.

Ethical Implications of The Quest for Black Power

by Lorenzo Grant

Today, among many black Seventh-day Adventist ministers and laymen, there is a growing interest in further refining the church organization to pay greater attention to the peculiar needs and interests of the black mission. At least one level of black leaders, the conference presidents, are solidly recommending that this come in the form of black or "regional" unions. The issues, however, are not at all clear and create ambivalent feelings on the part of both black and white members of the church as well as its leaders.

The purpose of this study is to examine the church's commitment to the unity of the worshipping community and to deal with the rightness or wrongness of the current demand for greater self-determination by blacks in the Adventist Church. In doing so, it will contain the most recent official actions and statements by the church on the question of black unions and will recommend a creative, alternative approach to dealing with the problems discussed. This alternative is a middle ground approach not as yet proposed by either side of the current dialogue and will necessitate some new organizational structures. This paper's approach is as follows:

1) Blacks have endured a significant degree of racism within the Adventist Church, largely because of a confidence in the uniqueness of the church's calling which rests upon the imprimatur of the "Spirit of Prophecy." Therefore, a careful examination of the teachings of the Spirit of Prophecy on the matters of race and church organization should determine the compatability of those teachings with the New Testament.

2) The impervious pockets of racism in the church claim the same imprimatur which, in effect, equates racism with good religion. This problem the author credits to a failure on the part of the clergy. It should be ascertained why and at what stage of training or orientation such failure occurs.

3) If, as we suspect, this religious sanction reinforces the racism already prominent in American society at large and covers it over with an apparent piety and dedication to things holy, one might inquire what is being done to educate the church in Christian principles of human relations. In fact, significant efforts have been made both in administrative councils and in institutions of learning. However, these have only been small ripples in a vast sea of complacency and confusion. Dr. C. C. Crider, chairman of the behavior science department, Andrews University, has developed a very sophisticated series of Human Relations Workshops and long-range approaches to community building. But the Human Relations Workshops have only been tested in a few northern cities and

Lorenzo Grant received his Ph.D. from Howard University. He teaches theology at Southern Missionary College.

await the invitation of pastors and officials throughout the rest of the country. Positive statements on human relations have been published in the *Church Manual* and the church paper but have largely gone unheeded, or been accepted as platitudinous concessions to blacks and "pushy liberals." Therefore, it will be generations before any program of reeducation would have observable effect upon the day-to-day operation of the churches and their institutions. Besides, very little is being attempted in the south where attitudes are still quite rigid.

4) Therefore, since no such program of reeducation is as yet underway on a large scale, and since the demands of the black work are increasing in numerous ways, there is a growing need for black-white relationships to be dealt with promptly and on the highest levels.

Segregation on the congregational level is generally accepted as "natural" and even necessary. H. R. Niebuhr makes some significant observations which apply to the Seventh-day Adventist Church as well as to other older denominations which faced the racial problem much earlier:

> Complete fellowship without any racial discriminations has been very rare in the history of American Christianity. It has existed only where the number of Negroes belonging to the Church was exceptionally small in proportion to the total membership, where the cultural status of the racial groups in the church was essentially similar, or where, as among some Quakers, racial consciousness was consciously overcome.

Niebuhr further observes that an important indicant to genuine integration is "equal privileges of participation in the government of the particular unit [of the church organization]."[1]

"Prior to 1969, not a single union conference in North America had a black officer on its staff."

Since, in 1944, Adventists were not disposed either to "consciously overcome" racial consciousness or provide "equal privileges of participation in government," it was clearly necessary to opt for organized segregation, which in that year came about in the form of black (regional) conferences. Niebuhr makes a poignant observation in this regard: "The segregation of the races into distinct churches was not, therefore, wholly a retrogressive step, involving the decline of a previous fellowship. Sometimes it was a forward step from an association without equality, through independence, toward the ultimately desirable fellowship of equals."[2]

Whether the idea of black unions came originally from black leadership or the white leaders is not clear, but Elder H. D. Singleton (formerly secretary of the General Conference Regional Department) reports that it was discussed as a viable option in the highest councils of the church as early as the 1950s. The incoming General Conference president, Elder W. H. Branson, felt it was a good idea and suggested its implementation. However, it was rejected by black leaders for fear it would not only successfully thwart all effort toward integration, but would also deny even that representation on union conference boards and committees which blacks were then allowed.

In 1969, the mood in the black community had changed from one desiring integration to one accepting the church's seemingly insurmountable segregationist patterns. Black awareness and black identity were the themes that could be heard from the bar to the pulpit. Thus, early in that year, Elder J. R. Wagner wrote Secretary Singleton expressing a concern among "the young ministers" about vertical mobility for black workers. Wagner urged that a meeting of black leaders from across the country be convened to discuss this and other issues important to the growing black constituency.

The occasion for just such a meeting came with the *Message* magazine rally held on the campus of Oakwood College. At that meeting, Elder Singleton was severely grilled

about the effectiveness and responsiveness of his office to the needs of the black work. It was suggested that stronger administrative clout needed to be given to black leaders. The idea of black unions was presented to the large gathering of black ministers and a straw vote was taken to determine their support. Without any thorough explanation of what it would involve and in the heat of the discussion, 89 percent present voted for black unions. Jacob Justiss reports in his outstanding history, *Angels in Ebony:* "On April 27, 1969, at a meeting of representatives of all eight regional conferences at Oakwood College, 130 voted in favor, 11 against, and eight abstaining in a vote on black unions."[3]

The matter was subsequently placed on the agenda for the next North American Regional Advisory. This official advisory committee was comprised of all black conference officials and General Conference personnel, as well as other black leaders and laymen of influence. This meeting resulted in a recommendation that the General Conference give serious study to black unions. The General Conference complied by establishing a special "blue ribbon" commission of blacks and whites to study the question. After some preliminary work, the commission convened in April 1970, in the General Conference chapel.

Time after time when the case for black unions had been clearly and forcefully stated, someone would call for the vote. Skillfully — some thought manipulatively — the chairman refused to entertain the motion. Speeches were long, loud and impassioned, but finally the noon hour came. The vote was postponed until after lunch. Many saw this as a stalling tactic by the chairman, Elder N. C. Wilson, usually considered the closest top-level friend of the black work.

The atmosphere became such that it appeared a calamitous schism was about to occur. It was love for the church and respect for his brethren that caused E. E. Cleveland, the dean of black preachers, to walk to the front. Though he had been decidedly in favor of black unions and anxious for the vote, Cleveland pleaded through bitter tears for unity.

The vote was finally taken and the motion for black unions was defeated. To say the least, it was a sharply divided group. Nevertheless, as a compromise, it was voted to implement a Sixteen-Point Program of adjustment and correction of racial inequities in the church. This alternative was to be given a two-year trial and then evaluated. This action at least kept alive the hope of those who were convinced of the hopelessness of the white man's capacity for just and altruistic relationships with blacks. In two years, they would be back, their ranks larger, stronger, their argument more refined.

The church acted with all deliberate speed to implement the Sixteen-Point Program. Prior to 1969, not a single union conference in North America had a black officer on its staff. Only two unions had black departmental leaders — the Southern Union had an associate publishing man and the Atlantic Union had a secretary for public relations. After the 1970 Spring Council voted the "Sixteen Points," the first black union officer and the first black departmental director were elected in North America. From 1970-1976, seven black leaders have been elected as union conference officers and 14 as union departmental directors.

In 1972, sufficient progress had been made that brethren of good faith looked forward to allow the "Sixteen Points" a longer time to work out some of the deeper problems still persisting in the church. The issue of black unions, however, remained alive and well, occasionally fed by embarrassing racial incidents. It was taken up by a major committee in August 1976, when PREXAD (the General Conference President's Executive Council on Administration) invited a number of black leaders to present papers on the subject. Several were prepared for the occasion, but all the black leaders present who supported black unions agreed that the paper by C. B. Rock on "Cultural Pluralism" had adequately and eloquently summarized their views. (For a version of this paper, see pp. 4-12.) For the purposes of this paper, then, Elder Rock's statement will represent the proposal for black unions.

The black demand for organizational adjustment, whatever form it may ultimately

take, must meet two important criteria if it is to be taken seriously:

1) It must be articulated from a context of pragmatic intelligence. That is, it must reflect some awareness of the history and structure of the church, especially relating to the black work.

2) It must acknowledge a serious commitment to the spiritual goals of a worldwide church.

A strictly sociological approach lacks an adequate context from which one might draw ethical conclusions about an ecclesiological situation. Rock, for instance, would employ sociological strucures to arrive at ecclesiological conclusions. The two spheres are functionally not analogous. However, since *polity* is what the question of black unions is all about, political models and axioms are more readily transferable than are sociological ones. The sociological model of Rock and the political model which I prefer agree concerning the depth, effect and tenacity of racism in the church. They disagree, however, concerning the possibilities, approaches and, therefore, solutions to the problems caused by this racism.

Black leaders almost unanimously agree that the present organizational structure with its *de facto* white supremacy is not accomplishing the mission of black Adventism. In interviews and conversations, black conference administrators and scores of black pastors cite a number of areas as needing change:

1) representation on the committee of union conference presidents;

2) a structure providing for discussion of problems, exchange of ideas and personnel between black conferences (present policy prohibits this except under the supervision of the next higher echelon, the union);

3) readjustment of financial policy so that black conferences can set their own priorities and not in effect subsidize programs and projects which are not relevant to the black mission;

4) the image and dignity that comes with being one's own "boss." It appears demeaning for blacks always to have to go to whites for permission, counsel or funding for their work.

These needs have been born out of a long history of institutional racism in and out of the church. White leaders now in authority may or may not have had anything to do with the discrimination and disenfranchisement that has created this imbalance of power, but the imbalance must surely be obvious to them at this point. To the extent that they fail to address themselves to it in creative terms, they betray a gross insensitivity or an ignorance steeped in the stereotypes of black incompetency. This passive racism is just as lethal as the active type. Until very recently, the church had done virtually nothing about this kind of racism and now, unfortunately, it may be too little too late. Benevolent neglect seems as entrenched and potently virulent as out-and-out racism. This is what has created the radical approach by many black leaders today.

"Whites find it impossible to perceive themselves or their structures . . . as oppressive; however, this is exactly the way many blacks see it."

Alistair Kee observes the following while comparing black theology with the developing nations of the Third World:

> But as in the development debate, ironically, dependence was finally broken when it was demonstrated by the rich countries that the gap between the two groups was not going to be eliminated or even threatened, so the greatest advance among Blacks was made when the white community in America made it very clear that Blacks would not be fully accepted.
>
> To pursue the parallel with the development debate, in which the closing of the door to development led to a reappraisal of such goals in any case, the denial of equality and integration led to a questioning of these objectives. And more importantly, the experience of the closed door led to a raising of consciousness in the Third World about their real situation.[4]

Kee asserts that the one constant, between

blacks and the Third World "emerged as *dependence* — economic, cultural and even to some extent, spiritual." For blacks in North America as with many of the nations of the Third World, the answer was "power," Black Power.

Most white leaders do not immediately perceive themselves as power figures. The term causes some embarrassment, as though it were a dirty word. It is usually employed in a pejorative sense toward those of unholy ambition. They would rather consider themselves the legitimate stewards of the household of faith, with the sanction of God and the "committee." Therefore, any effort to dislodge or counterbalance them is perceived as "disloyalty," "rebellion" or "divisiveness":

> The moral attitudes of dominant and privileged groups are characterized by universal self-deception and hypocrisy.... The most common form of hypocrisy among the privileged classes is to assume that their privileges are the just payments with which society rewards specially useful or meritorious functions.[5]

Black leaders are usually viewed as self-seeking when they talk about black unions or mobility or "positions" for blacks. This is the typical attitude of the power party. Whites find it impossible to perceive themselves or their structures with which they identify as oppressive; however, this is exactly the way many blacks see it. The church may yet escape the indictment of J. P. McPherson, however: "The enormity of your guilt, the immensity of the wrong does not appear in contemplating what you have made us, but in the consideration of what you have prevented us from being."[6]

James J. Cone explains the basis of Black Power: "Simply stated, freedom is not doing what I will but becoming what I should. A man is free when he sees clearly the fulfillment of his being and is thus capable of making the envisioned self a reality. This is Black Power!"[7] A more euphemistic way of putting it might be "self-determination," but it is the same animal — freedom! This, of course, is wholly compatible with the gospel. In fact, as Cone sees it, it is charitable: "Christ in liberating the wretched of the earth also liberated those responsible for the wretchedness. The oppressor is also freed of his peculiar demons."[8] It is important for the white man for his own soul's sake to begin to relate to the black man as a "thou" and not an "it."

If all this sounds racist, it is no wonder. Dr. Rosemary Reuther acknowledges the tendency:

> Is black theology just a new form of racial propaganda making Christ in the image of black exclusivism, just as whites made Christ in the image of their exclusivism? I believe that black theology walks a razor's edge between a racist message and a message that is validly prophetic, and the character of this razor's edge must be analyzed with the greatest care to prevent the second from drifting toward the first.[9]

Let me warn here that this solemn responsibility is not the domain of the white hierarchy. The black theologian must in his inmost soul be true and honest with God.

One of the strongest demands of black leaders is an appeal for equality — equitable representation, equal treatment from institutions such as schools and hospitals, equal opportunity for employment and service. Normally, these appeals are regarded as, in the words of one pastor, "little more than impotent whimpers." The disproportion of power sustained, if it did not breed, blatant inequality of privilege within the church. This, as Reinhold Niebuhr points out, "became the basis of class division and class solidarity."[10] The brick and mortar of race and class have constituted formidable walls isolating the typical white middle-class aspiring church member.

The sense of powerlessness on the part of blacks in the Seventh-day Adventist Church centers largely on economic factors. A major concern of black administrators is to be able to "slice their own pie."

> Whatever may be the degree of the self-consciousness of classes, the social and ethical outlook of members of given classes is invariably colored, if not determined, by the unique economic circum-

> stances which each class has as common possession.[11]

So blacks have felt exploited because of having to come hat-in-hand asking for their own money for their priorities. This is why nearly every appeal for black unions or further integration is accompanied with a financial statement showing the monetary involvement of blacks in the world program of the church.

The intensity of the appeal of blacks for greater self-determination has been caused by the intensity of an unjust resistance. This resistance does not necessarily mean that those who either in the past or presently oppose black unions are vicious racists seeking to keep blacks in their "place." It does suggest that the church in times past characteristically has been insensitive and unresponsive to legitimate appeal. This has resulted in the unification of black leadership in a posture which threatens the unity (or supposed unity) of the church. But there is a danger that blacks must beware of. Niebuhr suggests that this "simple animal egoism" called "self-respect" can be corrupted into pride and the will-to-power.

Surveys and interviews with white leaders and pastors demonstrate that their overriding concern is for the image of the church: "How will it make us look to the world?" When it is brought to their attention that there are presently, with no embarrassment to the denomination, churches where blacks cannot attend, there is often an expression of disgust but no inclination to deal with the situation. As for representation on important boards and committees, the most frequent response is that "these things are a matter of working one's way up—faithfulness and perseverance would surely pay off." Any radical adjustment is perceived as "discrimination in reverse."

Nevertheless, man's most loathsome deeds are often informed by grace. It has been this very concern for the church's image that has caused its leaders to respond to the "threat" of black unions with creative alternatives such as the Sixteen Points. While this program of integration may not have been born of the most altruistic motives, it has in fact benefitted the black work. To cite only one example, in the last seven years, Oakwood College alone has doubled in enrollment while maintaining the lowest tuition of any of its sister colleges. At the same time, it has undertaken an unprecedented program of capital improvements due to heavy subsidies from the General Conference. Other benefits have accrued to the black work and to the cause of integration because of the Sixteen Points. However, two factors should be borne in mind: 1) these actions were literally wrung out of the power structure by constant cajoling and finally the threats of black leadership; and 2) the Sixteen Points still leave serious inequitites in the distribution of power and responsibility.

Yet, the idea of black unions, besides the negative effects on the church's image for both blacks and whites, would not solve all the problems cited by black leaders without exorbitant cost. Alternative proposals are often received by leaders and laymen with surprise if not enthusiasm. It is obvious to this writer that more viable alternatives need to be explored by both black and white leadership.

The ethical dilemma must lie at the door of those who have the oversight of the total church. Denominational leaders must aggressively seek at least a rough justice for all the church's diverse constituencies, including blacks, Latins, females and youth. Otherwise, these groups must either go neglected — and thus their mission suffer — or they must beat the drum for attention as blacks have done. Church leaders must also accept and appreciate the tension between the legitimate demands of bona fide black leaders and the ideal of a household of faith without walls of partition.

This presents two inescapable issues — one particularly the concern of General Conference leadership, the other the special purview of black leadership. The first issue is the church's willingness to bring sanctions against churches, institutions and individuals unresponsive to official policies encouraging integration. Only through the threat of sanctions can the church clearly purge itself of a racist image and state clearly to the world its

convictions about brotherhood and the gospel. But this of itself would still not guarantee total community. Cultural barriers would still persist, and largely along racial lines.

"The second issue is whether the black clergy will fight for integration or flee. Unfortunately, black leaders have already given their answer. The black union demand is a withdrawal."

The second issue is whether the black clergy will fight for integration or flee. Unfortunately, black leaders have already given their answer. The black union demand is a withdrawal. The words of Paul may be appropriate for black leaders to ponder here:

> Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand safe against all strategies and tricks of Satan.
> For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against persons without bodies — the evil rulers of the unseen world,
> Those mighty satanic beings and great evil princes of darkness who rule this world;
> And against huge numbers of wicked spirits in the spirit world.
> So use every piece of God's armor to resist the enemy whenever he attacks,
> And when it is all over, you will still be standing up.
>
> (Eph. 6:11-13, *Living Bible*)

The prayer of our Lord in John 17:21 makes unity the *sine qua non* of the witnessing community. Thus, anything that would destroy or inhibit that unity tarnishes Christian witness. One can appreciate the black leadership's concern for their peculiar witness to the black community. But let them remember that men only plant and water, God gives the increase. Therefore, it is of *primary* importance to remain in His will.

If the present structures are dysfunctional, let the leaders of the church alter those structures or replace them with the view of facilitating the most effective witness by all its members. Concerns about the church's image need not be placed over against black demands. Those demands can be dealt with specifically without reference to preconceived structures (i.e., black unions) or public relations. The first responsibility of the church's leaders is to be responsive to the Lord. As Hans Küng states:

> The Church cannot face these problems and use these opportunities if it is a prisoner of its own theories and prejudices, its own forms and laws, rather than being a prisoner of its Lord. . . .
>
> All too easily the church can become a prisoner of the image it has made for itself at one particular period in history.[12]

The church indeed must be functional, but its first function is to be a church — a house belonging to the Lord. Neither structures, hierarchy or black leadership must be allowed to usurp the Lord's work and prerogatives. Adventist brethren, black and white, must prayerfully come together and inquire of the Lord what He would have them do. If this is done and legitimate demands are addressed without bias or emotion, new forms may begin to emerge out of the corporate creative spirit. The following is one possible model that could result from such an approach.

In its report to the General Conference, a subcommittee (Committee No. 3) commissioned to study the case for black unions, March 8, 1977, listed among others the following ten needs which it suggests might be met by the establishing of regional unions. In each case following the need as expressed by Committee #3, I suggest an alternative approach.

Need 1 (I. b. c. d.): to facilitate use of public evangelists on a more extended basis; to share programs of evangelism on interconference level; to supervise, plan and finance evangelism at union level. *Alternative:* since black unions would not abrogate conference sovereignty nor usurp the local conference committee's rights and responsibilities to evangelize its own field and allocate its own budgets, and since there is very little evangelism coordinated from the union level presently — even among white conferences — it is not apparent how black unions would overcome local conference autonomy in this area. The best arrangement would be an In-

terconference Evangelism Council which would meet periodically to explore and develop plans, discuss personnel and budget problems, and make year-by-year recommendations to be referred back to the local conference executive committee. This council could be comprised of local ministerial secretaries and such pastor-evangelists and administrators as might be assigned or invited. Such a council could be established under the present union setup under the coordination of the General Conference Office of Regional Affairs (ORA).

Need 2 (III): to provide a natural black presence at Union Presidents' Councils. *Alternative:* the Union Presidents' Council is powerful and important in its influence. But it is essentially an advisory body. Therefore, it would involve no great disruption or compromise to change its shape. In fact, there is nothing in the working policy or actions of the official body or council of the church establishing this group. It is in fact a nonconstituted entity subject to the call of the president of the North American Division, but responsible only to the individual consitituencies represented. It effect is two directional: it allows the voice of the respective unions to be heard in the highest councils of the church, and it also allows those constituences represented direct access to the resources, goods and interests of the world church leadership. The key dimension in this arrangement is representation. With this understanding, there are those segments of black leadership who presently might serve on this council quite naturally:

1) Officers of the Office of Regional Affairs;

2) Union secretaries who in most cases are black;

3) Black conference presidents who, in most cases, represent the black constituencies encompassed within the Union.

In terms of "rank," the black president would be the least likely to fill this role. But the function of the Union Presidents' Council has nothing to do with rank; neither do the interests expressed by black leadership. The key concern is representation. Black presidents are the only group mentioned above who have a constituency to represent. For union secretaries to assume this function would compromise their positions as secretary to all members of the union. The officers of the Office of Regional Affairs should be represented, since they bring a breadth of perspective that even the presidents do not have. But, again, the important concept is that of representation. This is most effective when it is most direct. It is a matter of advise and consent on issues that will affect local conferences most directly. There should be the *constitutional** inclusion of four regional presidents on this council as fully bona fide voting members on a rotating basis (represented conferences would change every two years). A geographical range should be sought. This would include Pacific and North Pacific Union Regional Departments as well.

"Black unions . . . would unquestionably facilitate the natural tendency toward group exclusivism to an extent inconsistent with the gospel."

Needs 3 and 4 (IV, II. b.): to provide a natural outlet for developing administrative leadership; to aid in the accommodation of the explosive evangelistic growth; to organize new regional conferences within existing union territories. *Alternative:* most blacks will admit now that they have equalled if not surpassed their white brothers in quality of church and conference administration. Where they seem to lack in expertise is in the area of institutional administration, since they have so few institutions. But I doubt that anyone would advocate multiplying black institutions just to provide training groups for administrators. Although the organizing of new black conferences is good and ought to be done under the present form of organization, blacks still face the challenges of infiltrating existing Adventist in-

*I strongly urge that this group become a constitutional body to serve as an advisory to the president of the North American Division. It is frightening that so powerful a group is so nebulously constituted.

stitutions which in most cases they have helped to build and support, which serve them and their children, and which should employ and involve them to a far greater degree than they do at present. Greater employment could be implemented with firm direct action by the General Conference.

Need 5 (V): to provide machinery for interconference exchange of workers. *Alternative:* presently, this exchange is accomplished in a limited and awkward way by phone and casual encounter or semiofficial communications between presidents who work out more-or-less gentlemen's agreements concerning the exchange of workers. This method is frequently followed by white conference leaders also, although they do have a convenient forum, usually once a quarter when they come together for union committee meetings. Black presidents meet together only twice a year. However, the Regional Advisory brings black leaders from all over the country, allowing a wider selection of contacts. Black unions may or may not increase the frequency of these get-togethers which are presently coordinated by the Regional Department.

Exchange of administrative personnel is more difficult. This has caused some embarrassing, if not abominable, situations. A definite need for some coordinating administrative umbrella exists. The most natural vehicle would again be the Regional Department. In these days of modern travel and communication, there is no need for geographic proximity if the central elements remain in touch and responsive to the field. Black unions would have no more administrative authority to "place" an ousted administrator, or call a desired one to the local conference than the Regional Department does now. What might be needed is more administrative authority for the Regional Department to convene black presidents' councils and present accumulated agenda items. In turn, the Regional Department must be upgraded in the General Conference hierarchy to give it greater efficacy and credibility.

Need 6 (VI): to provide white workers the opportunity of working under black leadership. *Alternative:* this need can be accomplished most meaningfully under the present structure. What inhibits integration most are social, economic and cultural factors. To be a real learning experience, whites should begin to work with blacks at the local level under black leadership.

Need 7 (VII): to increase meaningful black participation on decision-making committees (including finances). *Alternative:* it is not clear how black unions would meet this need better or to any greater extent than is possible under our present arrangement.

Need 8 (VIII): to provide black leadership with a deeper sense of belonging. *Alternative:* again, black unions would not necessarily accomplish this faster or more effectively than would pressing for fuller participation in the present structure. If the present black participation in "white" unions continues to be as salutory as it has been, it is not far fetched to expect that there may soon be a black union president, and if one, why not two, or four? No one would want to give up the democratic principle entirely. Through the outstanding evangelism of black pastors, the charismatic presence of black leaders, and a little political orientation of our members, it is not unrealistic to suppose that a black minister could be elected president of a union.

Need 9 (IX): to provide greater union departmental services to the black work. *Alternative:* meeting this need depends to a large extent on the local departmental man. It is doubtful that the departmental man of a black union, being spread over so vast a territory, would be any more available than would the present union man who in many instances is black or has a black associate. In those cases where the white departmental man lacks the sensitivity or expertise to be of any real service to the local field, he is usually bypassed for some other union or General Conference person who can conduct the workshop or speak to the rally as the case may be. More detailed projects are rarely handled by union persons now and would probably not change appreciably under black unions.

Need 10 (XII): to reevaluate the financing of the regional work to meet the inadequacy

of the black income base (the ratio is 49¢ to the dollar). *Alternative:* this need, of course, does not address black unions *per se* but it does raise a very valid point. Reevaluation is indeed in order. New fiscal formulae should be worked out through the proper channels to the mutual satisfaction of all — if this is ever possible.

The primary question the church faces in the black union debate is, "Where (or which way) are we going?" In regard to the church's very nature and charismatic character, it must be asked, "Is she tending toward her own highest ideals or away from them in impotent acquiescence to the molding influences of the society she would judge?" The case for black unions falls on this crucial question. It would unquestionably facilitate the natural tendency toward group exclusivism to an extent inconsistent with the gospel.

What this paper suggests, is, first, that an alternative approach might be more faithful to the *ideals* set forth by C. M. Kinney: 1) the action should be pleasing to God (moral); 2) should not compromise the church (presumably in the eyes of authorities); 3) should be for the best good of the cause (not hinder evangelism); 4) should be acceptable to black people; and 5) should be accompanied by ongoing dialogue and education in areas of human relations.

Second, what has been presented here is essentially a conciliar model. This is compatible with the findings of a special General Conference committee commissioned in 1972 to study reorganization of present unions. The substance of this committee's findings indicated that there was presently a good bit of duplication of effort and material which could best be eliminated by what the committee called "consolidation of departments and coordination of departmental programs."

Black leaders have proposed two unions. The 20 percent of tithe which would go to those unions might more advantageously go to the Regional Department which could then begin to function with the same degree of financial autonomy as the Temperance or Publishing Departments presently do. This would necessitate another person to act as treasurer. A second might also be added to assist in coordinating departmental councils and projects. Other sources of financing the peculiar functions of this office might be: an annual Regional Evangelism Offering to be taken in all regional churches; and an increased Regional Capital Reversion Fund. Furthermore, the present unions having black conferences should remit an appropriate percentage of their evangelistic fund to the Regional Department or lower their assessment of the regional conferences based on a recognition of the disparity between the economic base of the black and white conferences.

The main effect of the increased coordination and consolidation suggested here would be a more effective proclamation of the gospel, which we, as Adventists, believe will hasten the eschaton. We prayerfully recommend these observations to improve our denominational witness to the consideration of all Adventists in North America, black and white.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Helmut Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1957), p. 254.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 263.
3. Jacob Justiss, *Angels in Ebony* (Toledo: Jet Printing Service, 1975), p. 138.
4. Alistair Kee, ed., *A Reader in Political Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), p. 114.
5. Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (New York: Scribner, 1932).
6. Quoted by E. E. Cleveland, "White Paper on Black People," August 1976.
7. James H. Cone, *The Gospel of Jesus, Black People, and Black Power* (New York: Seabury Press, 1969), p. 42.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
9. Rosemary R. Reuther, *Liberation Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1972), p. 129.
10. Niebuhr, *Moral Man,* p. 114.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 116.
12. Hans Küng, *The Church* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc. 1976), p. 22.

Ellen White and Reformation Historians

by Eric Anderson

She often copies, without credit or sign of quotation, whole sentences and even paragraphs, almost word for word, from other authors," charged Dudley M. Canright in 1887. Just commencing his melancholy career as Seventh-day Adventism's great heresiarch, Canright had very specific complaints about Ellen G. White's use of historical sources. "Compare 'Great Controversy,' page 96, with 'History of the Reformation,' by D'Aubigné, page 41," he urged his readers. "This she does page after page. Was D'Aubigné also inspired?"

Over the years defenders of the faith have responded to Canright and other critics by assuring church members that Mrs. White's "literary borrowings" were "limited," and that she only used historians to supplement and support what she had already seen in vision. Francis D. Nichol, author of the comprehensive apologetic work *Ellen G. White and Her Critics,* noted that "only 12 percent" of the 1911 edition of *Great Controversy* was directly quoted material, and the bulk of this was simply "the words of some notable person in history, such as Luther or some martyr." Arthur L. White, the prophet's grandson, explained her use of historians in this way:

> Just as her study of the Bible helped her to locate and describe the many figurative representations given to her regarding the development of the controversy, so the reading of histories of the reformation helped her to locate and describe many of the events and the movements presented to her in vision.

Recent research by historian Donald R. McAdams, president of Southwestern Adventist College, shows the problem to be "far more complex" than either critics or defenders had recognized. In the light of McAdams' work, the old answers to objections are now totally inadequate.

After extremely thorough investigation, McAdams has come to a conclusion which may startle some Adventists, though many scholars have long held similar views privately. "The historical portions of *Great Controversy* that I have examined are selective abridgments and adaptations of historians," writes McAdams in a 250-page document entitled, "Ellen G. White and the Protestant Historians." "Ellen White was not just borrowing paragraphs here and there that she ran across in her reading, but in fact following the historians page after page, leaving out

Eric Anderson teaches history at Pacific Union College. His Ph.D. from the University of Chicago is in American history.

much material, but using their sequence, some of their ideas and often their words." He adds, in a highly significant sentence, "In the samples I have examined I have found no historical fact in her text that is not in their text." Mrs. White relied upon her historical sources "not only for descriptions of events," but also, in many cases, "for the ordering of events and the significance attached to them." In the light of this heavy dependence, it is not surprising that Mrs. White repeated some of the historical errors of her sources. As McAdams cautiously puts it, "[Mrs. White], at times, described events inaccurately."

For all its revisionism, McAdams' work is not an attack on the "spirit of prophecy" or denominational leadership. Far from being heresy, McAdams' views are likely to become the new orthodoxy. "Ellen G. White and the Protestant Historians" is a cautiously written document which deliberately avoids the icon-busting gusto that some readers saw in Ronald L. Numbers' *Prophetess of Health,* though both works portray an Ellen White heavily influenced by her environment. Its author has been careful, at every step of his research, to cooperate with the Ellen G. White Estate trustees and other "brethren of experience."

McAdams' study of Ellen White's historical sources began more than six years ago when he was a history professor at Andrews University. Asked to lead a discussion on a book of his choice for a Sabbath-afternoon book club, he thought of a volume he had recently read, *The English Reformation* by the distinguished modern historian A. G. Dickens. "It occurred to me," says McAdams, "that the students might enjoy reading this book along with the chapter in *Great Controversy* on the English Reformation." McAdams had been struck by the fact that "Dickens, like Ellen White, saw the English Reformation as essentially a spiritual movement" having nothing to do with Henry VIII's concupiscence, and he hoped "that I might discover that Ellen White had anticipated modern historians." But careful study revealed something entirely different — Ellen White's extensive use of nineteenth-century historian J. H. Merle d'Aubigné.

Fascinated, yet troubled by this subject, McAdams first prepared a short paper, for private circulation, entitled "Ellen G. White and the English Reformation," and then resolved, in order "to strengthen my conclusion," to study another part of *Great Controversy*, as well as to review Ellen White's personal explanations of her historical work.

He found further strong evidence that Ellen White employed nineteenth-century Protestant historians, rather than visions, to fill in a great deal of historical detail. He also found a reassuring explanation for Mrs. White's use of the historians in her own statements. Particularly important, he felt, was the introduction to *Great Controversy*, with its often-overlooked statement of purpose: "It is not so much the object of this book to present new truths concerning the struggles of former times, as to bring out facts and principles which have a bearing on coming events." Ellen White made little effort to hide her reliance on Protestant historians:

> The great events which have marked the progress of reform in past ages are matters of history, well known and universally acknowledged by the Protestant world; they are facts which none can gainsay. This history I have presented briefly, in accordance with the scope of this book. . . . In some cases where a historian has so grouped together events as to afford, in brief, a comprehensive view of the subject, or has summarized details in a convenient manner, his words have been quoted; but in some instances no specific credit has been given, since the quotations are not given for the purpose of citing that writer as authority, but because his statement affords a ready and forcible presentation of the subject.

The second section of *Great Controversy* which McAdams examined was a portion of chapter six, dealing with the life and martyrdom of the Bohemian reformer John Huss. With infinite patience, McAdams prepared 73 pages of parallel columns, placing Ellen White's work on one side and on the other her source, James A. Wylie's *History of the*

Reformation (1874-77), a militantly anti-Catholic source. All of the details of the historical record — names, events, dates, quotations — came from Wylie, and almost always in the same sequence. Most of the time, *Great Controversy* did not follow Wylie's words exactly, but simply paraphrased closely. A number of historical inaccuracies in Wylie's text found their way into *Great Controversy*, McAdams discovered. Wylie and White attribute to the pope an ineffective interdict issued by the archbishop of Prague, and they describe the interdict as a fearful calamity, although, in fact, the king simply forbade its observance. Huss's chapel, rather than the University of Prague, is erroneously presented as the center of the reform movement. Following Wylie, Mrs. White has Huss withdrawing to his native village at a time when he was actually in Prague, and, later, preaching with zeal and courage when, in fact, he was in exile, visiting his parish only in secret. The beginning of Huss's friendship with Jerome is misdated by more than a decade. *Great Controversy* mistakenly assumes that Huss disagreed with basic Catholic doctrines, rather than merely attacking corrupt practices in the church.

"For all its revisionism, McAdams' work is not an attack on the 'spirit of prophecy' or denominational leadership. Far from being heresy, McAdams' views are likely to become the new orthodoxy."

McAdams described his research in a second paper — a shorter version, basically, of the present manuscript "Ellen G. White and the Protestant Historians" — and in February 1973 mailed copies to about a dozen Adventist leaders, including Richard Hammill, Willis Hackett, Arthur White, Mervyn Maxwell, and Molleurus Couperus (SPECTRUM's founding editor) asking for "criticisms, suggestions and advice." "I have chosen not to seek publication at this time," McAdams wrote to these men of influence, "because I recognize that many people are not prepared for the evidence I present." The off-the-record reactions he received indicated that his evaluation of Ellen White's historical work was a realistic one, acceptable to responsible church leaders.

During the next summer, McAdams made a remarkable discovery, indeed a providential discovery, as he sees it, which added a new dimension to his research. While working on another denominational history project at the White Estate in Washington, D.C., he learned that portions of Ellen White's rough draft for the 1888 edition of *Great Controversy* were still in existence. According to McAdams, none of these manuscripts had ever been "transcribed into typescript or even read except for an isolated page here and there." The most important fragment was 64 pages long, and it was the draft for the very section McAdams had been examining — the half-chapter on Huss.

With this new information, McAdams was now able to compare Mrs. White's historical sources with both her rough draft and the final printed version of *Great Controversy*. The newly discovered fragment provided overwhelming evidence (though the point was already established) that Mrs. White was heavily dependent upon Wylie. If McAdams' research had dealt with any other writer, he could have proved his thesis with a few dozen pages of comparison, but since it was Ellen White's way of working which was at issue, he felt impelled to move very cautiously, proving and reproving each of his contentions. Using a triple-column format, he incorporated Mrs. White's rough draft into his previous research, charting the development of the Huss narrative across 186 typed pages. Most readers will find this mass of material tedious going, but few are likely to challenge the thoroughness of McAdams' work.

Mrs. White's rough draft was written under the pressure of a deadline, and it is filled with misspellings and poor grammar. She speaks of the "Yoak" of Christ, His model "charicter," calling Him the "Captan of my Salvation." Adequate punctuation is often missing and singular verbs frequently clash with plural nouns. The messiness of this manuscript has made the White Estate unwilling to allow widespread circulation of

McAdams' manuscript. The document has been available, under careful restrictions, for a few months at Adventist college libraries in North America, but "the transcript of the rough draft may NOT be copied in any form," according to a form letter sent to chairmen of religion and history departments. Explains the White Estate's Ronald Graybill, author of the letter: "This material was not intended for publication in its rough-draft form, and because of the mechanical imperfections of the document, it raises questions about Mrs. White's style and method of writing which ought to be answered in the context of all the material on *that* subject."

Much more important than the good form of Mrs. White's rough draft is the question of the changes made by her literary assistants. About half the rough draft is entirely Mrs. White's own work, with no debts to James Wylie or other historians. These portions of the manuscript deal with the cosmic significance of earthly history, quite literally the great controversy between Christ and Satan. There is, for example, an extended comparison of the deaths of Huss and Christ. None of this material was included in the final draft of *Great Controversy*. In short, McAdams found that "the only completely original part of the manuscript was all cut out and in fact has never appeared in print anywhere."

Most of the remainder of the rough draft is simply copied from Wylie, in many cases word for word. In two instances Mrs. White notes the specific page from which she is working. "Insert page 148 paragraph on second column," she notes parenthetically at one point. Mrs. White's contribution was to abridge Wylie's material, reducing 33 pages of Wylie to 14 pages in *Great Controversy*.

The rough draft was later polished considerably, probably by Marion Davis, Mrs. White's literary assistant, so that the final version of the Huss story appeared in graceful paraphrase of Wylie, rather than simple, direct borrowing. A few new paragraphs from Wylie which had not been used in the rough draft appeared in the printed version, added apparently by Miss Davis in the late stages of editing.

McAdams' work shows beyond cavil that Wylie was the source for the historical details in the Huss narrative. It is also reasonable to believe, as McAdams does, "that not all of the historical events described in *Great Controversy* were first seen in vision by Ellen White." Certainly, nearly all Seventh-day Adventist historians are comfortable with McAdams' interpretation. McAdams presented his research to a session of the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Historians in Dallas in December 1977, and his conclusions were thoroughly discussed at the 1978 meeting of the Association of Western Adventist Historians. Not one of his peers criticized McAdams' thoroughness or challenged his thesis.

McAdams insists that his work will not disturb any reader who has a sound understanding of Mrs. White's role in the church. Far from undermining faith, his examination of the sources of *The Great Controversy* should contribute to a mature and secure confidence in the prophetic gift. "We must read [*Great Controversy*]," McAdams says, "according to the purpose for which it was written and not damage its effectiveness by making claims for it that can only result in destroying the faith of many who might otherwise respond to its message." For all its borrowing, the book far transcends the derivative. "With its over-all purpose and its powerful concluding chapters to give meaning to the history, *Great Controversy* cries out to our spirit like no work of history."

The McAdams paper raises important questions which deserve further investigation, particularly the matter of how Ellen White's manuscripts were edited. No further research is necessary, however, to demonstrate that *Great Controversy* should not be taken as an independent or infallible historical source.

CONFESSION

I must repent these convenient,
Too-ordered ways; pairings of phrase,
Meter and rhyme entombing time,
Stars, God in grace. I must efface
This universe, destroy,
Disperse
With primal fire this form-fouled world,
Until my lyric
Rips like limbs,
Like roots,
To substance;
Gouging air,
Gorging earth,
And girding space.

---Russell Stafford

LATRIA

Twenty-four lifetimes I have seen
this minute renaissance:
Unapologetically here,
Uncompromisingly now,
entirely present,
Sublime with the ignorance
of never having learned,
Wise beyond understanding,
Swollen with importance
of being.
Inexorable.

Immensely comforting epiphany
to recognize the force
That drives this fragile flower
to the sun
And beyond.

---Judith L. Miller

Russell Stafford received his B.A. at Atlantic Union College. He will begin graduate work in English this fall.

Judith L. Miller, a graduate of Walla Walla College, has taught English at Walla Walla Valley Academy. She begins law school this August.

THE SHAKING OF ADVENTISM?

I. A View from the Outside

by Fritz Guy

The central thesis of Geoffrey Paxton's book is that Adventism is facing a major crisis over the proper understanding of righteousness by faith. The argument this Australian Anglican employs in advancing his thesis is clear enough: it comes in seven easy steps.

1) The best way to think about a religious movement, church or theology is in terms of its central claim, its "heart," rather than its peripheral characteristics (which may be more or less attractive or objectionable). 2) The "real heart" of Adventism is "its conviction that those within it constitute God's special last-day propagators of the gospel in such a way as to make them the only true heirs of the Reformation" (11). 3) The "true heirs of the Reformers" are those who do not modify but build directly upon the central affirmation of the Reformation—the doctrine of justification by faith alone (purified of any notion that salvation in any sense depends upon sanctification). 4) Adventism has generally had an inadequate doctrine of justification, because it has emphasized the importance of sanctification, which sometimes led to perfectionism and which, in any case, is suspiciously like the Roman Catholic view of salvation. 5) Significant progress toward a clearer, more truly Reformation view may be seen in the message of righteousness by faith at the 1888 General Conference, in the book *Christ Our Righteousness,* written by A. G. Daniells and published in 1926, and, since 1950, in the work of such theologians as Edward Heppenstall, Desmond Ford and Hans K. LaRondelle. 6) An opposing view, emphasizing sanctification and perfection, has been recently championed by Herbert Douglass of the *Review and Herald* and other denominational leaders in Washington and in Aus-

Fritz Guy, a regular SPECTRUM contributor, received his doctorate at the University of Chicago. He is professor of theology at the Seminary. This review was presented first as a lecture to the Andrews University Forum.

tralia. 7) The resulting polarization of these two views — one true to the Reformation and the other an essentially Roman Catholic view — means that Adventism is headed for a "shaking": "Contemporary Adventism — especially in the 1970s — is in conflict over the nature of the gospel of Paul and the Reformers" (147).

What can we learn from Geoffrey Paxton's look at Adventism from the outside? Let's consider some instructive insights which the book provides.

First, it underlines the need for clarity of thinking and carefulness of formulation regarding the relation of justification, sanctification and salvation. It seems clear to me that Adventists have said some things about these matters that were misleading, even wrong. Paxton's numerous examples show that we have often failed to think through the implication of some of our statements; and, in some cases, we have been genuinely confused. Although, for instance, we have all repeated and affirmed Ellen White's statement that justification is "our title to heaven" and sanctification is "our fitness for heaven,"[1] we have sometimes talked as if, when everything is said and done, in the day of final judgment a person's *title* to heaven in fact depends on his *fitness,* so that sanctification is the crucial issue in salvation, after all. Such confusion must surely lead us to agree that we need to think more clearly and talk and write with more theological precision.

"What we need to remember is that a certain pluralism is healthy, and change is essential to life (theological as well as biological). Thus, diversity is good. . . ."

The book also reminds us of the fact of variety in the history of Adventist thought, which is nowhere nearly as simple and uniform as we usually suppose (or as some wish they could now make it). On the one hand, there is pluralism — a diversity of views, a diversity of understanding and formulation even on so central a matter as the central issue in personal salvation. The simple fact is that we do *not* all see things the same, and we do not use the same words to express our understanding. On the other hand, there have been change and development. In some cases, this has reflected a maturing religious experience and theological understanding as the church has lived and studied and grown during the past 134 years. In other cases, the change has resulted from the fact that we are speaking to an ever-changing audience in an ever-changing world, with new problems, new perplexities, new understandings and misunderstandings.

What we need to remember is that a certain pluralism is healthy, and change is essential to life (theological as well as biological). Thus, diversity is good — not because we suppose that theological correctness does not matter (for, in fact, it matters very much), but because we recognize our limitations, and because we have so much to learn. "The fact that there is no controversy or agitation among God's people," wrote Ellen White, "should not be regarded as conclusive evidence that they are holding fast to sound doctrine. There is reason to fear that they may not be clearly discriminating between truth and error. When no new questions are started by investigation of the Scriptures, when no difference of opinion arises which will set men to searching the Bible for themselves, to make sure that they have the truth, there will be many now, as in ancient times, who will hold to tradition, and worship they know not what."[2]

Another insight from the book concerns the importance of continuing dialogue among those who reflect on the church's message, the importance, to put it another way, of *corporate* investigation of eternal truth. Paxton notes that the unfortunate division created by the preaching of Waggoner and Jones in 1888 and afterward had two costly consequences: 1) Those who opposed the new emphasis on righteousness by faith thereby limited their own experience and understanding, and thus reduced the experience and understanding of the whole church. 2) Because the polarization strained relation-

ships between those who needed each other's friendship and constructive criticism, "Waggoner and Jones missed out on a *corporate* investigation into truth — an investigation which might have preserved them from pantheism" (67). Do I dare make an application to ourselves? In our present discussions of the nature of Jesus, or of the age of the earth, it is absolutely imperative that those who seriously disagree with each other keep on praying for and talking to each other, so that they can learn as much as possible from each other.

We may turn now to some weaknesses and limitations of Paxton's book, bearing in mind that these, like the book's insights, are instructive for us. To begin, the peril of oversimplification — a kind of monocular vision that is confined to a single idea — afflicts Paxton's work on at least four levels.

1) The book ignores much of the New Testament, giving exclusive attention to the understanding of Paul. We must remember that there is more to Christian truth and theology than what the great apostle articulated. There is, above all, the primary witness to the words and works of Jesus in the four canonical Gospels — and one wonders if the Sermon on the Mount, for example, would pass Paxton's doctrinal filter. An unintentional (and therefore all the more significant) confirmation of Paxton's limitation here is his repeated reference to "the gospel of Paul and the Reformers."

2) The book also ignores much of the Reformation's theology, which does not limit itself to the doctrine of justification as Dr. Hans LaRondelle makes clear in his critique of Paxton (see below, pp. 45-57). The truth of justification by faith may be the heart of Reformation belief; but the heart cannot be understood apart from its relationship to the whole body. In fact, Luther and Calvin spent less time talking about the doctrine of justificaton than they did talking about Christ, repentance and faith.

3) The book ignores much fundamental Adventist belief. There is, I believe, only one passing reference to the Sabbath; and it is hard to imagine a book seriously claiming to deal with the heart of Adventism that does not look carefully at the theology and experience of the Sabbath. And there is no reference at all to the doctrine of the great controversy, which, although surely not the center of Adventist religion or belief, is just as surely a distinctive theological motif, which provides a context for our understanding of all other doctrines, including justification and sanctification.

4) Finally, the book ignores other issues in the church that are currently being discussed as vigorously as that of justification. For many Adventists, the "burning issue" is *not* "the message of 1888" (81), but rather the tension between "preserving the landmarks" and the theological development of the church. Without minimizing the importance of an adequate understanding of justification and righteousness by faith, and without slighting either the dignity or the theological concerns of our brethren in Australia, it is hard to escape the conclusion that Paxton's view of "the shaking of Adventism" is profoundly influenced by his particular geographical position and by his close personal acquaintance with Robert Brinsmead.

From the peril of oversimplification, we may turn next to the danger of an "eccentric" theological norm — substituting for the Biblical revelation some particular understanding of it, and thus making something other than Scripture the central theological criterion. The book picks one point in religious history and regards it as normative for the whole of history. Now, as a matter of fact, in regard to the doctrine of justification, the Reformation view is essentially true to the New Testament, and Adventism ought to have no quarrel with it. But the principle here is a methodological one: not whether the Reformation view on this or any other doctrine is correct, but whether it ought to be regarded as the criterion by which all other views are to be judged.

One of the fundamental convictions of the Reformation was expressed in the affirmation, "Ecclesia semper reformanda est" — "The church is always in need of reformation," because it is imperfect. This conviction applies not only to the piety of the church, but also to its theology. And so, to be

true to the Reformation means not to recite its formulas and slogans forever and ever without change, but to share its fundamental commitment to truth. Here we may well recall that one of the most important elements in our Adventist heritage is the notion of "present truth" — truth that has come newly alive and has become newly understood and significant because of a new experience, a present situation. What is important, then, theologically and experientially, is not whether our understanding is just like that of the Reformers; what is important is whether our beliefs are *true*.

A third weakness is that Paxton has yielded, it seems to me, to the temptation to read only words, without going to the trouble of probing for their deeper, authentic meaning. What I am getting at here is that words (and theological formulas) may mean different things to different people. Yet, Paxton seems to overlook this. It is correct that we often speak of ourselves as "heirs of the Reformation," and we cannot complain that Paxton has heard us saying it. But, instead of trying to discover what we mean by this kind of talk, Paxton decides what we *ought* to mean and then proceeds to use that assumption as a criterion for a theological evaluation. That, I am saying, is a questionable procedure.

I am reminded, having made these criticisms, of Hugh of St. Victor, who once said (in a quite different context, to be sure) that one ought not to be ashamed to learn from anyone. Geoffrey Paxton has provided us not only a "view from the outside," but also an incentive to think about ourselves — our theological past and our present beliefs — with clearer vision and deeper understanding. This is good; this can be very useful; and I hope that we make the most of it.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Review and Herald,* June 4, 1895 and *Messages to Young People* (Nashville: Southern Publishing, 1930), p. 35.
2. *Testimonies to the Church,* Vol. 5 (Mountain View: Pacific Press, 1948), p. 707.

II. Paxton's Misunderstanding of Adventism

by Herbert E. Douglass

It can be argued from several viewpoints that Geoffrey Paxton's *The Shaking of Adventism* has done everyone a favor. Although the various reasons for this observation may be mutually exclusive, this volume is the first to expose publically some of the interesting doctrinal developments within the Seventh-day Adventist Church during the last quarter century.

In less than 156 pages, the author touches on many events and people dear to Adventists, and although I can commend him for his frequent moments of perception, I must also say that his exposure to Adventist history does not seem to have been thorough enough to support his conclusions. His own presuppositions color the work more, I think, than he may realize.

The review will note, first, my appreciation of the author's perception in analyzing historic Adventism's self-understanding; second, my pleasure in identifying with certain basic judgments; third, my commendation for certain historical observations with which others may yet disagree with him; fourth, my distress with certain conclusions he draws from Adventist history and teaching; and fifth, some questions I would like to ask the author in the interest of further clarification.

To begin, the author's awareness of his-

Herbert Douglass, a former assistant editor of the *Review and Herald,* took his Th.D. from Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley. He is an associate book editor at the Pacific Press.

true to the Reformation means not to recite its formulas and slogans forever and ever without change, but to share its fundamental commitment to truth. Here we may well recall that one of the most important elements in our Adventist heritage is the notion of "present truth" — truth that has come newly alive and has become newly understood and significant because of a new experience, a present situation. What is important, then, theologically and experientially, is not whether our understanding is just like that of the Reformers; what is important is whether our beliefs are *true*.

A third weakness is that Paxton has yielded, it seems to me, to the temptation to read only words, without going to the trouble of probing for their deeper, authentic meaning. What I am getting at here is that words (and theological formulas) may mean different things to different people. Yet, Paxton seems to overlook this. It is correct that we often speak of ourselves as "heirs of the Reformation," and we cannot complain that Paxton has heard us saying it. But, instead of trying to discover what we mean by this kind of talk, Paxton decides what we *ought* to mean and then proceeds to use that assumption as a criterion for a theological evaluation. That, I am saying, is a questionable procedure.

I am reminded, having made these criticisms, of Hugh of St. Victor, who once said (in a quite different context, to be sure) that one ought not to be ashamed to learn from anyone. Geoffrey Paxton has provided us not only a "view from the outside," but also an incentive to think about ourselves — our theological past and our present beliefs — with clearer vision and deeper understanding. This is good; this can be very useful; and I hope that we make the most of it.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Review and Herald,* June 4, 1895 and *Messages to Young People* (Nashville: Southern Publishing, 1930), p. 35.
2. *Testimonies to the Church,* Vol. 5 (Mountain View: Pacific Press, 1948), p. 707.

II. Paxton's Misunderstanding of Adventism

by Herbert E. Douglass

It can be argued from several viewpoints that Geoffrey Paxton's *The Shaking of Adventism* has done everyone a favor. Although the various reasons for this observation may be mutually exclusive, this volume is the first to expose publically some of the interesting doctrinal developments within the Seventh-day Adventist Church during the last quarter century.

In less than 156 pages, the author touches on many events and people dear to Adventists, and although I can commend him for his frequent moments of perception, I must also say that his exposure to Adventist history does not seem to have been thorough enough to support his conclusions. His own presuppositions color the work more, I think, than he may realize.

The review will note, first, my appreciation of the author's perception in analyzing historic Adventism's self-understanding; second, my pleasure in identifying with certain basic judgments; third, my commendation for certain historical observations with which others may yet disagree with him; fourth, my distress with certain conclusions he draws from Adventist history and teaching; and fifth, some questions I would like to ask the author in the interest of further clarification.

To begin, the author's awareness of his-

Herbert Douglass, a former assistant editor of the *Review and Herald,* took his Th.D. from Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley. He is an associate book editor at the Pacific Press.

toric Adventism's self-understanding seems right in the following respects:

Seventh-day Adventists do see themselves as standing in the Reformation stream, clarifying, correcting and consummating the glorious work to which we are all indebted (11, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 52, 77, 85, 91, 106, 108, 115). The concept of the "shaking" is a significant event in Adventist eschatology and the issues involved in "righteousness by faith" may be its probable cause (12). Seventh-day Adventists understand themselves to be entrusted with God's last-day message of invitation and warning (23, 24).

Moreover, Adventists believe that through the gracious power of the Holy Spirit, the Christian will be enabled to live Christ-reflecting, loving, holy lives (74); that righteousness by faith includes, by God's grace, victory over sin (75); that there is eschatological urgency in the Biblical doctrine of moral perfection (97); and that there is an experiential element in the total concept of justification (139).

With respect to the following judgments, I also agree with Paxton:

It is true that the crux of current discussion among certain Seventh-day Adventists is the relation of justification and sanctification (148), and that the sixteenth-century Reformers were unanimous on the centrality of justification by faith (35). (However, Paxton does not recognize some of the differences among the Reformers regarding the implications of justification, and his understanding of Luther often seems contrary to what this reviewer has read in Luther.)

"Paxton asserts, I think rightly, that denominational leadership seemed to show ambivalence in the 1960s on key doctrinal issues."

It is also true that the basis and cause for justification lie outside the believer (38); that the error in the Roman Catholic doctrine of justification lies in mingling two types of righteousness, in confusing imputed justification with imparted sanctification (39); that the righteousness in the believer is not the basis, or the cause, for his or her acceptance by God (46); and that one of the reasons that justification seems to be emphasized especially by certain Protestants is that they believe that God's law can never be kept at any time (49).

The author has also correctly described some crucial aspects and developments of Adventist history. It is right, for instance, to say that the 1888 syndrome has been a continuing influence on Adventist thought (29), that "most" rejected the "message" in 1888 (30), that the 1888 episode appears to be inadequately treated by denominational historians (30-34) and that there are crucial questions Adventists should have been asking themselves since 1888 — questions that were, it seems, never raised publicly until the 1973 Annual Council Appeal (33).

Paxton rightly observes that there are numerous instances when Adventists have wrongly (though, in most cases, inadvertently) referred to justification as "mere" and as pertaining to "past" sins only (56, 71). Also, some unfortunate expressions regarding the relation of justification and sanctification indeed have been made (77) during the past century.

Paxton is accurate, too, I think, in these assertions regarding several key figures of Adventist history before the 1950s:

Jones and Waggoner, in the 1888 episode, did include sanctification in the total doctrine of righteousness by faith (66). L. E. Froom did teach that major issues, such as the Trinity, the full Deity of Christ and the "correct" understanding of His humanity were the special accomplishments of the 1888 emphasis (69, 87). W. W. Prescott (69) does seem to be (Ellen White aside, one assumes) the most creative Adventist thinker in the early twentieth century. A. G. Daniells, General Conference president (1901-1922), after recognizing that the message of 1888 was not fully understood even in 1926, did propose a solution that has been, in some respects, confusing (75). And M. L. Andreasen's general theses did represent basic, historical Adventist thought prior to the 1950s (76).

Paxton is also, I believe, correct in saying that some denominational spokesmen repudiated basic, historical Adventist teachings in the 1950s (76), and that this repudiation of certain basic Adventist doctrines tended to polarize the Seventh-day Adventist Church (82). Moreover, the Australasian Division's definition of justification in 1959 (91) does seem defective, although it seems to the reviewer that if the authors had expressed their meaning more fully there may not have been such a stark violation of Biblical intent as the truncated definition seems to indicate.

The following claims about various theologians from 1950 onward also seem justified:

Branson, Jemison and many others did believe in the possibility of overcoming all sin by the enabling grace of God (95). Branson, General Conference president (1950-1954), did represent, in his many publications, the basic and typical Adventist position on moral perfection (98).

As for Robert Brinsmead, it is true that in the 1960s he was troubled with his own understanding of original sin, leading to several theological changes and ambivalences (99-101). And Paxton may be right in saying that the General Conference Defense Literature Committee, in their dialogue with the Brinsmead development, did not focus enough on Brinsmead's real theological errors (110). In any case, it is true that for many, the Brinsmead-Ford alignment did seem to be "an almost unbelievable turn of events" and a "dangerous threat" (124).

Paxton asserts, I think rightly, that denominational leadership seemed to show ambivalence in the 1960s on key doctrinal issues (119-120, 127). He is also right in saying that the editors of the *Review and Herald* have represented the historic Adventist positions on the central doctrines of Christianity (124, 126, 127, 133, 142, 144), and that the disagreement that Brinsmead-Ford have with the *Review and Herald* positions is not merely semantic but represents two different theologies (126-127).

Finally, Paxton is accurate in stating that Basham in Australia saw clearly the antithetical nature of Brinsmead-Ford doctrine when compared with traditional Adventist thought (128-129), and that the Palmdale conference appears to have settled nothing and revealed Brinsmead's contribution to Ford (132).

Having set down some points of agreement with Paxton, I will now consider some substantive disagreements. Again, I feel some embarrassment for what will appear to be only a fast overview lacking in-depth reasons for any disagreements noted. But the most that can be done in a few pages is to note specifically the disagreements and hope that Paxton will sense the fraternal desire to be helpful and candid.

It seems to me that Paxton has not personally read much of A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner. Forcefully endorsed by Ellen White, these two position-makers in 1888, and years thereafter, included far more in the phrase, "justification by faith," than Paxton or Brinsmead do; they were not "obsessed with the doctrine of justification by faith alone" (30) unless Paxton concedes that they included far more in that phrase than he does, or than Luther and Calvin did (63).

Strawmen seem to spring out from many a page of the book. Seventh-day Adventists do not believe that justifying righteousness dwells in the believer at any time (41-49), but they do believe that, in addition to imputed righteousness, the Bible is also teaching an imparted righteousness. To emphasize this imparted righteousness is not "to lapse back into the synthesis of medieval Catholicism" (46); nor is the anticipated result of imparted righteousness "imperfect" (45) or inadequate (47). But in saying this, Adventists do not for a moment believe that imparted righteousness constitutes our basis for acceptance and pardon.

Moral perfection, or mature sanctification, or the spontaneous impulse of love's motivating every thought and act is called for and expected in Biblical thought. It is the result of the Holy Spirit's work in cooperation with man's diligent effort (not unaided human will power) and thus the actual "appropriation" of the virtue, merit and provisions of our Lord's atonement. "Active righ-

teousness" is thus not the "work of sinful men" *alone* (45).

Paxton seems to make no effort to differentiate between the Biblical doctrine of Christian maturity (moral perfection) and "perfectionism" (47). The call to Christian perfection is not an echo of the Council of Trent. Paxton, after further reflection, may not wish to be so sweeping when he connects John Wesley as well as basic Adventist thought with the errors of the Church of Rome: "All who insist on perfection in the believer in this life, in whatever shape or form, reiterate the teaching of the Reformers"(46-49).

Without exception, Paxton applies the pejorative terms, perfectionistic and perfectionism, to anyone in the Adventist church who disagrees with him regarding sanctification or the concept of a prepared people in the last generation (142). C. M. Maxwell, Morris Venden, Lawrence Maxwell, J. L. Tucker, K. H. Wood, R. H. Pierson, Neal Wilson, Hans LaRondelle, this reviewer, and a host of other current leaders are not perfectionists. But they do believe that by God's help men and women can live without sinning and for such people God waits!

Adventist theology before 1888 is not to be equated with Tridentine theology (56). Although there may be phrases and even emphases that could be improved upon, most of the Adventist spokesmen Paxton quotes knew well enough not to imply that the faith of the penitent is infused goodness which gives some basis for justification; they knew well that faith has no merit in itself, that it is the condition for justificaiton and not its cause or basis. The fact that these writers insisted that there must be growth in grace in order to retain a justified experience did not make them Tridentine theologians!

Paxton has sometimes quoted Ellen White hastily or in snippets. Rarely, it seems, is there a quotation that does not misrepresent the general tenor of its context. For example: Ellen White *does* agree with her husband and most other Adventist leaders when she sets forth the Biblical position that God is calling for sinless, overcoming Christians, especially in the last generation (60). Moreover, Ellen White's sermons in 1888 are hardly an echo of Luther, or Calvin, regarding justification: "Righteousness of Christ in connection with the law"—a central theme of Waggoner, Jones and White in 1888 and afterwards—stressed a fuller understanding of righteousness by faith than Paxton has seen (64). It is true that Paxton quotes what seems to be an unqualified statement by Ellen White regarding Martin Luther (19), but he closes a sentence where she did not, and fails to give the proper thought in context—a context that would have canceled out his argument.

"Without exception, Paxton applies the pejorative terms, perfectionistic and perfectionism, to anyone . . . who disagrees with him regarding sanctification. . . ."

Contrary to Paxton, Jones, Waggoner and White were Biblically correct when they joined justification and sanctification in the larger term of "righteousness by faith" (67). Imputed and imparted righteousness is all of God's doing, always "by faith," but never without man's diligent effort. The sovereign God imputes and imparts His righteousness only when man chooses to cooperate with His enabling Holy Spirit.

Unfortunately again, Paxton apparently has not had the time to research the Kellogg — *Living Temple* issue or he would never have confused Kellogg's position with the Biblical concept of "cleansing of the temple of the human heart" (68).

It is interesting to note that Paxton believes W. W. Prescott to be the only creative Adventist thinker between 1905-1920s (69). This *Review and Herald* editor, college president and seminal thinker was one of the foremost spokesmen for such historic Adventist positions as the humanity of Jesus, the character perfection required in the last generation, the full-orbed concept of righteousness by faith that includes justification and

sanctification, and the central need for a correction and proper fulfillment of the good work begun in the Protestant Reformation.

M. L. Andreasen's positions, such as righteousness by faith, the humanity of Jesus, the character preparation that God will wait for in the last generation are truly basic, historic Adventist positions—thoroughly in harmony with Ellen White and Biblical principles. Yet Andreasen is always referred to in a pejorative sense (72, 76, 88, 95, 109).

Paxton reveals his Calvinistic blinders when he accuses Adventists of semi-Pelagian, Tridentine theology from the standpoint of his concept of the freedom or sovereignty of God (77). Such a presupposition gives no room for the enormous amount of freedom that God has given man in the plan of salvation; it redefines the Biblical meaning of grace and faith and further distorts what the Bible expects out of the converted person.

Furthermore, it leads Paxton to misunderstand Adventist positions on faith (the human cooperation with the indwelling Spirit whereby the sinner "comes to himself," accepts pardon, claims the promised power and eventually reflects the fruits of the Spirit or Christlikeness) and grace (that work of the Holy Spirit, among other gracious provisions of God, that strengthens the "new creation," not subjugates him).

When Paxton says, "this ontological appropriation of the merits of Christ is at the expense of the believer's humanhood," he reveals his philosophical presuppositions and a blindness to the New Testament good news wrapped up in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit (78-79).

Paxton will find a very large group of thoughtful Adventists who would not agree with his conclusion that there were Christological and soteriological gains in the 1950s (83), or that *Questions on Doctrine* represented a "distinct superiority" over earlier Adventist literature (89-90). Without question, *Questions on Doctrine* has provided the world with excellent statements of certain aspects of Adventist thought and we are all indebted to it, but there are some areas that come short of the accolade he gives.

The *Review and Herald* of the 1970s is categorically not an echo of Brinsmead thinking of the 1960s (127, 153). Although there may be similarities, the strange turns and resolutions that Brinsmead took because of his misunderstanding of the nature of man are nowhere reflected in the positions of the *Review and Herald* editors.

The *Review and Herald* does not downgrade justification because it may give, at times, more column inches to sanctification than to justification—anymore than Paul does when he devotes far more verses and chapters to sanctification than to justification. The same comparison would apply to Ellen White. If one is speaking to nonbelievers, obviously justification would be given more emphasis. When speaking to believers who should be at peace with the continuing assurances of justification, the strong exhortation to grow in grace is appropriate (138).

Opting for Luther and Calvin almost exclusively, rather than including Wesley and many others, Paxton rejects the thought that sin can be overcome (48-49). Possibly this misunderstanding rests on another misunderstanding—his doctrine of the nature of man. Because of these two doctrinal presuppositions, Paxton quarrels with such historic Adventist concepts as the human nature of Jesus, sanctification and why the Advent is delayed.

Paxton misreads Hans LaRondelle (135). Dr. LaRondelle and this reviewer could not be closer in their emphasis on the possibility that sin can be overcome, here and now, by the grace of God. More than this possibility, we have been emphasizing for years that such an experience will happen to many the world over in the last generation. LaRondelle may not always stress everything he believes when he writes an article, or delivers his masterful sermons, anymore than anyone else does. But to suggest that he lies in the theological camp of (the later) Robert Brinsmead is inaccurate.

Although from Paxton's viewpoint and presuppositions it may seem so, the present situation in contemporary Adventism is not analogous to the Protestant Reformation versus Roman Catholic antithesis (147-151).

It is more correct to say that it is a conflict of whether we should stay with Luther and Calvin or follow the progressive clarification of New Testament truth as made clearer by Wesley and others. If following in the steps of the Reformers means to wade in the dammed-up stream of the sixteenth century, we would be doing violence to the best in Luther and Calvin, never mind to the intent of Paul and the purposes of God.

Paxton cannot be blind to the Reformation's particular place in the stream of restoring New Testament truth, to its internal conflicts, to its inconsistencies, to its strained and often unbalanced definitions of key Biblical words. He recognizes, for example, that the Reformers had little eschatological perspective and urgency (147). But it seems to me that if the Reformers had had time (and if they had not been fighting a battle on so many fronts at once) they would have followed through as Wesley did, and as Adventists have done, and discovered the purpose of the gospel seed, what the harvest represents, and what part God's people, who "keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus," play in the finishing up of the great controversy with evil.

In fact, it is unacceptable to say that traditional Adventist thinking does not stand in the "Reformation stream" (148). We have for over a century emphasized and revered the twin principles of the Reformation: the sole authority of the Bible and salvation through faith in Christ alone. Our theology is grounded completely and without embarrassment on these twin pillars of the Reformation.

The "life-and-death struggle" that Paxton perceives may be more wishful thinking than reality (152). Hearty study and self-examination are not the worst things that could happen to anybody or to a whole church. If heresies arise, hoary issues appearing as new light, a healthy church grows stronger in restating basic Biblical truths.

It is sheer fantasy to find a correlation between 1888 and today by noting that the editor of the *Review* (1888) fought young men with clear light on justification by faith and the editor of the *Review* (1970s) also is in conflict with younger men who purport to have clearer light on justification by faith. This is the language of the debater, not that of the scholar.

Perhaps this reviewer's greatest concern is that Paxton (155) does not seem to understand the relation of Jesus to the Law, why Jesus came, the function of the Holy Spirit ("in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit"—Rom. 8:4), how the believer can be kept from sinning and thus an obedient child of God by the same grace that kept Jesus from sinning. To be enabled by the Holy Spirit to overcome sin is not to fall into the trap of legalism or Romanism!

Although the reviewer cannot expect Paxton to appreciate Ellen White as he does, Paxton should be more accurate when he quotes those who consider her to be a special messenger for a special purpose in the unfolding plans of God. Can Paxton find anywhere among Adventist writers, especially among those he quotes in his book, any comment that would faintly suggest a basis for the following statement: "It is a sad sign of a people who take another human being—however gifted and used of God—and place her above the Bible and herself" (155)? Nowhere, to this reviewer's knowledge, has an Adventist placed Ellen White either above the Bible as a higher authority or in conflict with the Bible as a wiser authority.

Let me conclude with a few questions on which it is to be hoped that further clarification from Paxton will be forthcoming:

Why does Paxton imply strongly that historical Adventism does not regard the basis for justification as a finished work, when surely it does (42)?

Why does Paxton use the debater's either/or technique? For example: a) anyone who believes sins may be overcome by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit is a perfectionist; b) anyone who believes that Christ within, through the Holy Spirit, may cleanse the soul from sin tends toward pantheism; c) anyone who believes that Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, performs a work of righteous-

ness in the believer is rooted in Tridentine theology?

Does Paxton really believe that Luther and Calvin needed no correction in their soteriology, that Wesley, or even Ellen White, have nothing to teach us?

Has Paxton really read the Annual Council Appeals of 1973 and 1974? If so, would he conclude that such clear, dynamic statements are hangovers from the adolescent days of immature Adventism? These Appeals are perhaps the clearest presentations regarding the Adventist denomination's present relationship to the 1888 syndrome that have appeared anywhere for decades. The two Appeals touch so many of the concerns that Paxton raises that it seems they should have been represented by more than a passing comment (33) in a book that covers almost all the rest of the waterfront.

III. The Truth of Paxton's Thesis

by Desmond Ford

In *The Shaking of Adventism,* Anglican clergyman Geoffrey J. Paxton sets forth the thesis that Seventh-day Adventism's claim to complete the Reformation (by proclamation of its doctrinal heart in an improved framework) falls miserably short of the facts. He argues that, apart from Ellen White, Adventism had almost nothing to say on the gospel of grace prior to 1888 and that from 1888 until the present "acceptance in the final judgment" has been said to be "on the basis of the inward grace of sanctification," that justification has been considered as significant chiefly for the initial pardon of the believer, and that "righteousness by faith has meant *both* justification and sanctification, but mainly sanctification."[1] Paxton also argues that, while in the 1960s the perfectionism of Robert Brinsmead roused the opposition of many anti-perfectionism writers in the *Review and Herald* and elsewhere, in the 1970s, when Brinsmead has reversed his theological emphasis, a spate of perfectionistic articles have been appearing, especially in the *Review*.[2] Finally, Paxton says that, despite their claim to base their doctrines on the Bible only, Adventists often form their conclusions on the basis of the writings of Ellen G. White interpreted according to prevailing prejudices.[3]

Desmond Ford, former chairman of the theology department, Avondale College, Australia, teaches theology at Pacific Union College.

Here is a distinctively new approach by a critic of Adventism. There is no contention about the scapegoat, the investigative judgment, the seventh-day sabbath or the nature of man. Instead, our traditional opposition to Rome is construed as claiming fidelity to the chief doctrinal motif of the Reformation and we are examined accordingly. In his debate with Cardinal Sadoleto, John Calvin affirmed that justification alone constituted the righteousness of faith, and that it should ever be distinguished but never separated from sanctification.[4] Paxton charges Adventists again and again with having lost the Gospel as taught by the Reformers and asserts that precisely our inclusion of sanctification within the article of righteousness by faith demonstrates this loss.

Do we have here the lopsided work of one who because he does not dwell among us cannot represent us aright? Or is it a case of the onlooker seeing most of the game? Let us consider some of the objections critics put forth against the book.

Probably the chief one is the suspicion that it is a thinly disguised apologetic for Robert Brinsmead, that troubler of Adventism in the sixties; he is certainly the most prominent figure of the book. Second, the thought stirs that it may not be entirely true that Adventist pastors were all perfectionists until the sixties (not that Paxton says precisely that, but to many readers it is implied). A third question, more vital theologically, is whether Paxton is promoting justification to the exclusion or

ness in the believer is rooted in Tridentine theology?

Does Paxton really believe that Luther and Calvin needed no correction in their soteriology, that Wesley, or even Ellen White, have nothing to teach us?

Has Paxton really read the Annual Council Appeals of 1973 and 1974? If so, would he conclude that such clear, dynamic statements are hangovers from the adolescent days of immature Adventism? These Appeals are perhaps the clearest presentations regarding the Adventist denomination's present relationship to the 1888 syndrome that have appeared anywhere for decades. The two Appeals touch so many of the concerns that Paxton raises that it seems they should have been represented by more than a passing comment (33) in a book that covers almost all the rest of the waterfront.

III. The Truth of Paxton's Thesis

by Desmond Ford

In *The Shaking of Adventism,* Anglican clergyman Geoffrey J. Paxton sets forth the thesis that Seventh-day Adventism's claim to complete the Reformation (by proclamation of its doctrinal heart in an improved framework) falls miserably short of the facts. He argues that, apart from Ellen White, Adventism had almost nothing to say on the gospel of grace prior to 1888 and that from 1888 until the present "acceptance in the final judgment" has been said to be "on the basis of the inward grace of sanctification," that justification has been considered as significant chiefly for the initial pardon of the believer, and that "righteousness by faith has meant *both* justification and sanctification, but mainly sanctification."[1] Paxton also argues that, while in the 1960s the perfectionism of Robert Brinsmead roused the opposition of many anti-perfectionism writers in the *Review and Herald* and elsewhere, in the 1970s, when Brinsmead has reversed his theological emphasis, a spate of perfectionistic articles have been appearing, especially in the *Review*.[2] Finally, Paxton says that, despite their claim to base their doctrines on the Bible only, Adventists often form their conclusions on the basis of the writings of Ellen G. White interpreted according to prevailing prejudices.[3]

Desmond Ford, former chairman of the theology department, Avondale College, Australia, teaches theology at Pacific Union College.

Here is a distinctively new approach by a critic of Adventism. There is no contention about the scapegoat, the investigative judgment, the seventh-day sabbath or the nature of man. Instead, our traditional opposition to Rome is construed as claiming fidelity to the chief doctrinal motif of the Reformation and we are examined accordingly. In his debate with Cardinal Sadoleto, John Calvin affirmed that justification alone constituted the righteousness of faith, and that it should ever be distinguished but never separated from sanctification.[4] Paxton charges Adventists again and again with having lost the Gospel as taught by the Reformers and asserts that precisely our inclusion of sanctification within the article of righteousness by faith demonstrates this loss.

Do we have here the lopsided work of one who because he does not dwell among us cannot represent us aright? Or is it a case of the onlooker seeing most of the game? Let us consider some of the objections critics put forth against the book.

Probably the chief one is the suspicion that it is a thinly disguised apologetic for Robert Brinsmead, that troubler of Adventism in the sixties; he is certainly the most prominent figure of the book. Second, the thought stirs that it may not be entirely true that Adventist pastors were all perfectionists until the sixties (not that Paxton says precisely that, but to many readers it is implied). A third question, more vital theologically, is whether Paxton is promoting justification to the exclusion or

even denigration of sanctification. A fourth question has to do with whether Paxton has adequately represented Martin Luther's understanding of justification. Finally, some object to his treatment of certain historical details — particularly regarding the situation in the Australasian division. What shall we say regarding these objections?

With regard to Brinsmead's influence on the author, we should keep in mind that it was primarily through Brinsmead that he became acquainted with Adventism. Both men shared an interest in the criticism of charismatic revivalists, and this led to fellowship between them. We should also keep in mind that Paxton's interest in Adventism does not seem to be a merely superficial avocation. Indeed, he was principal of an Anglican Bible school in Brisbane, Queensland, and lost his job because of his refusal to lay aside his interest in the Adventist "cult."

I have personally witnessed Paxton's physical metamorphosis — between the two occasions when he called at Avondale College he appeared to have dropped at least 40 pounds and ten years — and must confess that it seems clear that he has considered very seriously at least some aspects of the Adventist message, even its door-opener — health reform. That this interest is certainly deeper still has been shown in closely reasoned discussions on doctrinal matters. His inquiries at Avondale College as to Adventism's understanding of the doctrine of the judgment, for example, seemed entirely serious.

But is this book a mere apologetic for Brinsmead? I confess to being a little troubled that the author did not underline the fact that for years Robert Brinsmead taught a theology plainly at odds with that of the Reformation. Some of us remember *God's Eternal Purpose,* which in the 1950s set forth the ideal that the saints should become as perfect in the flesh as Christ was, and that they like Him should tread underfoot all sinful tendencies until they had achieved perfect righteousness.[5] Such error in Brinsmead's past should, I think, have been clearly indicated. Still, most of us would be reluctant to be judged largely on the basis of what we have failed to say. And besides, it should be said that Paxton by no means attempts to shield Robert Brinsmead from guilt for his part in Adventism's cultic mentality, which has sought truth primarily from the writings of the pioneers (and particularly Waggoner and Jones) and relegated the Bible and the illumination of the Spirit through the centuries to the status of poor secondary sources. But the truth is that, in any case, we should not dodge the force of Paxton's argument concerning righteousness by faith by brushing his book aside as Brinsmead propaganda. Mr. Paxton, let it be remembered, is not one of Robert Brinsmead's sabbathkeeping followers, but an Anglican still.

Another reason we must not dismiss *The Shaking of Adventism* on the grounds of Robert Brinsmead's prominence is the undeniable fact that he *has* had, particularly with respect to righteousness by faith, considerable doctrinal influence on the Adventism of the past two decades. But for him we may never have had some of the best writing of Edward Heppenstall and scores of lesser figures influenced by him. No one can deny, moreover, that the literary guardian of Adventist orthodoxy, the *Review,* has had its eye on Brinsmead theology for nearly 20 years; and entire books, such as *Redeeming Grace* by Harry Lowe (the sixties) and *Perfection: The Impossible Possibility* (the seventies) have had Brinsmead theology in focus. One might well ask: inasmuch as Paxton's book concerns the relationship between Seventh-day Adventists and the crucial doctrine of the Reformation, righteousness by faith, how could Brinsmead not have been prominent?

The second objection — to the seeming implication that all Seventh-day Adventist pastors were perfectionists before the sixties — requries the statement that many of us from experience can answer "No." But if the question were worded, "Has the official doctrinal stance of Adventism veered towards perfectionism?" the answer is certainly "Yes," and while Paxton has not been exhaustive, I believe he has substantiated his case at this point. Fortunately, there have always been individual Adventist pastors who, like Ellen White herself, have read on this topic outside the realms of the Pacific

Press, the Southern Publishing Association and the Review and Herald Publishing Association, and this has been their salvation and likewise for their flocks. All capable of reading Ellen White without the prejudices of the majority have perceived her dual emphasis on the infinite ideal of holiness and man's abysmal depravity, making him ever dependent on the forgiving grace of Christ.[6]

The chief criticism theologically against *The Shaking of Adventism* — we come now to the third objection listed earlier — concerns

"We should not dodge the force of Paxton's argument concerning righteousness by faith by brushing his book aside as Brinsmead propaganda."

Paxton's "silence" on sanctification. I submit that he is not actually silent, though sanctification is not prominent in the book. On page 45 he writes:

> The Reformers acknowledged that faith in the righteousness of Christ in heaven is never present *without* regeneration and renewal, and that good works follow as a consequence of faith. But the righteousness of faith is not, in whole or in part, that renewal which is present *with* faith. Neither is it that renewal which *follows* faith. The righteousness of faith is never to be confused with sanctification. It is not sanctification, nor does it include sanctification.
>
> This clear distinction between the righteousness of faith and sanctification was the massive breakthrough made by Martin Luther. The medieval church had mingled the two types of righteousness. But when this synthesis was rent asunder in the mind of Luther, the Protestant Reformation was born. Luther called the righteousness of faith (i.e., the righteousness of Christ) a *passive* righteousness because we have it *while we do nothing for it*. He called the other righteousness (i.e., that which is the result of faith) an *active* righteousness because it is the diligent good works of the believer performed through the operation of the Holy Spirit. The passive righteousness is *perfect*, for it is Christ's righteousness; the active righteousness is *imperfect*, for it is the work of sinful men. The former righteousness is by faith alone; the latter righteousness is by good works engendered by faith. The former is *justification;* the latter is *sanctification.*

This quotation makes it clear why Paxton does not stress sanctification. To him righteousness by faith is, by definition, justification by faith, not sanctification by faith. And it should be pointed out here that every preacher of the New Testament gospel has had to meet the same charge as Geoffrey Paxton. It began in the days of Christ and Paul. The Master was accused of "receiving sinners, and eating with them" — which was the glory of His message and the heart of justification. Paul likewise was charged with saying "let us sin then that grace may abound" and making void the law through faith. In truth, we could say that if the charge of making void the law and of downgrading sanctification does not arise, it is probably because the free grace of Christ's gospel is not being faithfully proclaimed.

Those who contend that Paxton is guilty of separating justification from sanctification and ignoring their organic and dynamic connection should be reminded that to make distinctions is not to affirm severance. Paxton himself says:

> As the theology of those who have broken the synthesis makes clear, this does not mean a *separation* of justification and sanctification. Rather, the "breaking" means (1) the clear *distinction* between justification and sanctification and (2) the *primacy* of justification.[7]

All are agreed that Christ had two natures, divine and human, and that it is impossible to separate the two but nevertheless vital to distinguish between them. Similarly, all the orthodox believe in a distinction between the members of the Trinity but not separation; the three Persons do not exist alongside each other but in and through and unto each other. Again, law and gospel in Scripture are dis-

tinct but not separate, as therefore are also faith and works.[8] So with respect to many doctrines, we make logical distinctions without affirming separation.

Unless we make the distinction between justification and sanctification that Paxton makes — a distinction I believe all the Reformers made — how can we give full glory to God, or offer assurance to human beings? The plain fact is that Christ's objective work for us on the cross is perfect and complete whereas the work of the Spirit to make us righteous is neither perfect nor complete — not because the Spirit is imperfect but because of the polluted tabernacle wherein He operates, and because "sanctification is the work of a lifetime."[9]

To look to anything within sinful man as a condition of acceptance with God detracts from the wonder of God's sheer grace and also results in placing the believer under the tyranny of law as the method of salvation, whereas the New Testament is clear that law is to be rejected as a means of justification but cherished as a standard for sanctification. To speak of dynamic union and organic connection between justification and sanctification is entirely correct, but unless the distinction is as clearly emphasized, the gospel is dissolved and we land back into the doctrinal bosom of Trent. Calvin's whole contention against Osiander was that, by linking justification with the indwelling Christ, he actually destroyed it. I suggest, moreover, that no one can read Luther's sermon on "The Twofold Righteousness" or his 1531 Lectures on Galatians, or Calvin's chapters on justification in the *Institutes* without seeing that, like Paul, the Reformers did distinguish between justification and sanctification but did not separate them. The case is the same with Paxton. Neither should it be said that Paxton looks upon faith as something originated by man and detached from the operation of the Spirit. He has cited the dictum of Luther that "no one can give himself faith, and no more can he take away his own unbelief."[10]

The Roman Catholic argument against Luther and Calvin was that they believed grace to save man without changing him. This, of course, was sheer misunderstanding or misrepresentation. When the identical argument is repeated against those who, like Paxton, stress the distinctness and primacy of justification, it remains as invalid today as in the days of the Reformation.

The fourth objection to Paxton's book comes from persons who try to avoid the thrust of Paxton's charges by citing that phase of Lutheran scholarship which, in harmony with the theology of Trent, affirms Luther's use of "justify" to include a making righteous inherently, as well as a declaring righteous. These scholars rely chiefly upon early statements of Luther. I think recent scholarship is more accurate in its support for Luther's own claim to have arrived at the true understanding of justification around 1519. In *What Luther Says,* Plass declares:

> At first the term "to justify" (*iustificare*) appears in Luther's writings in a broader meaning than the Pauline sense of simply *pronouncing* righteous. It includes the *making* personally righteous. This is the Augustinian (and essentially Catholic) view of justification. If Luther, even after he had come to recognize the *sola fide,* for a while occasionally uses the term in such a sense, this is not surprising. He then speaks of justification as a growth. But later this use of the term disappears, and he tells us that justification takes place "at once, and does not come piecemeal," and, as J. Neve points out, his "*propter Christum* always means the sinner's justification solely by virtue of Christ's perfect obedience to God" (*History of Christian Thought* I, 233).

This position explains the great contrast between Luther's commentaries on Romans (1515) and Galatians (1535). The former treats Romans 1:17 with thrift, bestowing only 18 lines upon the crucial words, *iustitia Dei revelatur,* and half of these are padded with Augustine and Aristotle, authors with

"The Reformers did distinguish between justification and sanctification but did not separate them. The case is the same with Paxton."

whom Luther dispensed in later times: "When the door was opened for me in Paul, so that I understood what justification by faith is, it was all over with Augustine."[12]

No one really understands the mature Luther's exegesis of righteousness by faith until he has studied the Reformer's favorite work — his commentary on Galatians. Here the Protestant position on justification is crystal clear:

> Christian righteousness, therefore, as I have said, is the imputation of God for righteousness or unto righteousness, because of our faith in Christ, or for Christ's sake. When the popish schoolmen hear this strange and wonderful definition, which is unknown to reason, they laugh at it. For they imagine that righteousness is a certain quality poured into the soul, and afterwards spread into all the parts of man. They cannot put away the imaginations of reason, which teacheth that a right judgment, and a good will, or a good intent is true righteousness. This unspeakable gift therefore excelleth all reason, that God doth account and acknowledge him for righteous without any works, which embraceth his Son by faith alone, who was sent into the world, was born, suffered, and was crucified etc. for us.
>
> This matter, as touching the words, is easy (to wit, that righteousness is not essentially in us, as the Papists reason out of Aristotle, but without us in the grace of God only and in his imputation . . .).[13]

It is true that the later Luther, like Scripture, sometimes uses "make righteous" for justification but usually in the sense of granting status, not as the equivalent of regeneration or sanctification. For example, almost at the close of his comments on Galatians 4:5 he speaks of "Christ alone, who first maketh us righteous by the knowledge of himself in his holy gospel, and afterwards he createth a new heart in us. . . ." These comments cohere perfectly with the Formula of Concord prepared only a few years after Luther's death, and also with the classical statement of justification as found in Melanchthon's student Martin Chemnitz in his *Examination of the Council of Trent.* Scholars who document Luther's development in this way include the Seventh-day Adventist William Landeen, as well as Uuras Saarnivaara, F. Edward Cranz, Ernst Bizer, Kurt Aland, John Dillenberger, Lowell C. Green.

Now it is a fact, of course, that even some Protestants have used the term justification (and at times the term regeneration) in a comprehensive sense for salvation, and this usage explains the wording in some early creedal statements of the Reformation which appear ambiguous. But what we must remember is that this comprehensive usage was never intended nor understood to deny the distinction between righteousness imputed and righteousness imparted.

In connection with these remarks concerning the Reformation, I may insert three related objections that have been made against Paxton's book. One is the denial that Adventists claim to be "the heirs of the Reformation." The answer to this is that Ellen White and prominent leaders of this movement could not be numbered among advocates of such a denial.[14] Still others say we are heirs of the Anabaptists rather than the magisterial reformers in the sense that we believe in separation of church and state, noncombatancy in war, etc. This has a goodly measure of truth in it as regards what it affirms but not in what it denies. When Ellen White declares justification by faith to be "the third angel's message in verity," "the foundation of Christianity," the "one subject to swallow up every other," the "one interest to prevail," it is obvious that she has in mind the cardinal tenet of Luther and Calvin rather than subsidiary truths such as separation of church and state, and matters of practical piety such as participation in war, etc. There is just no way of dodging the impact of the quotations on pages 25ff. of *The Shaking of Adventism.*

Again, some critics ask: "But is not the New Testament rather than the creeds of the Reformers the test of truth?" And there can be only one answer to that. However, Mr. Paxton also would say "Yes" with equal emphasis, for the Reformation motto concerning the need for continual Reformation is not news to him. But I suspect he would respond

further with the plea that new truth does not nullify old truth, and that justification by faith is nothing other than that gospel once for all time given to the saints (Jude 3) and not, therefore, open to change and revision in its essence.

The last of the five main objections mentioned at the beginning involves Paxton's treatment of certain historical details. It would be a false reticence here to ignore his comments regarding the Fords and the Australasian division. He is wrong in saying (128) that Gillian Ford's little book *The Soteriological Implications of the Human Nature of Christ* precipitated the Palmdale conference. It may have looked that way from outside the chain of events but, in fact, Palmdale was contemplated by leaders of the Australasian and North American divisions before the storm over Gillian Ford's manuscript.

Paxton is right in indicating that the theology department of Avondale College supported the theology present in *Soteriological Implications*. A statement to that effect appears in the preface of the first edition. But he is wrong in implying (as it seems) that the present reviewer rather than his wife was responsible for *Soteriological Implications* (139). Gillian Ford wrote the manuscript in response to questions from a young marrieds Sabbath School class at Avondale Memorial church.

Also, on p. 128, Paxton affirms that the Avondale meeting of church leaders on February 3-4, 1976, to hear charges against me by a group of chiefly retired ministers had for its focus "Ford's understanding of righteousness by faith." It is true that one participant, F. A. Basham, argued that this was the central issue, but others such as J. W. Kent, leader of the group of retired ministers, disagreed. The chief concern of Kent and his associates was that I was not saying everything in the same way as our earlier books and therefore should be viewed as heretical. The Biblical Research Institute of the division rejected these charges, and cleared both me and Avondale College.[15]

Paxton is correct (136) in saying that this writer has acknowledged his use in earlier years of the phrase righteousness by faith homiletically rather than exegetically — that is, as including both justification and sanctification. In the classroom, key passages in Romans on righteousness by faith had been interpreted as applying forensically to justification, but frequently the typical Adventist all-encompassing definition was used in preaching. In the book *Unlocking God's Treasury* written in 1962 (published first in Australia in 1964) I set forth righteousness by faith as the "declaring righteous" of justification. And throughout the years of controversy with Robert Brinsmead, my position, often expressed verbally as well as in printed materials, was that the believer has acceptance only on the grounds of Christ's imputed righteousness because no human sanctification can meet the demands of the law.[16] In fact, the central emphases of the theology of Avondale College have not changed since 1961, the years when I have been chairman of its theology department; Paxton rightly affirms, however, that during the recent controversy, some issues have been more sharply defined.

"Paxton's critics ignore his main thesis, which simply stated is: Righteousness by faith according to Scripture and the exegetes of the Protestant Reformation signifies justification only."

Having looked at these numerous objections, let me say that I think the great majority of Paxton's critics ignore his main thesis, which simply stated is: Righteousness by faith according to Scripture and the exegetes of the Protestant Reformation signifies justification only — the gracious conferral of a righteous status on the grounds of Christ's merits alone. It does not include sanctification inasmuch as this work is something done within man by the Holy Spirit and being in this life always incomplete can never fulfill perfectly the requirements of the law. To include sanctification within the meaning of righteousness by faith is to confuse the

unfinished sanctifying work of the Spirit with the finished redeeming work of the Son and can only lead to lack of Christian assurance and consequent crippling of Christian witness.

What, then, should we say about this main thesis of *The Shaking of Adventism*? I suggest that we should confess its truth, and in so confessing smash the doctrinal and experiential barriers that cripple the progress of our work. We must remember, to begin, that Paul is the theologian of the New Testament. Only he sets forth an analysis of the plan of salvation, and the phrase under discussion is found solely in those books of Scripture which bear his name. Only in the book of Romans does he systematically present righteousness by faith (specifically 3:21-5:21), though, obviously, the preceding and following chapters are related to this central discussion. What I wish to emphasize is that it is here we must find the basic nature of righteousness by faith. If what we believe is not here, we need to think again.

All exegetes I know of, Jewish, Catholic, Protestant, agree that the theme of this section is justification. It is not about that gradual growth in holiness theologians call sanctification, which is discussed in chapters 6-8 (presentation) and chapters 12-15 (application). The theme of the section is clearly stated in 3:21-28, where the key sentence declares that "a man is justified by faith apart from works of law" (v. 28). The faith mentioned is faith in what Christ has done as our atoning sacrifice (v. 24, 25). The result of this faith is declared to be for the believer a status of righteousness "apart from law" as a result of God's gracious gift. This status automatically involves the forgiveness of all our sins and becomes ours, though we who believe are yet "ungodly" (4:5). We are for Christ's sake acquitted, or "declared righteous."

It should not be overlooked that this section is introduced by the words: "Now the righteousness of God has been manifested." Moreover, the following verses repeat the theme "... the righteousness of God through faith . . . to show God's righteousness . . . he justifies him who has faith . . . a man is justified by faith . . . he will justify the circumcized. . . and the uncircumcized through their faith." There can be no denying that Romans 3:21-28 is an exposition of righteousness by faith and, furthermore, that it is here set forth as justification. Sanctification is not included. Thus, Romans 3:21-28 shows that righteousness by faith has to do not with holy works prompted by the regenerating Spirit but with a *new standing before God.* Inasmuch as only a *perfect* righteousness can give us such a standing, we see the impossibility of introducing sanctification as a means towards our accpetance or, in other words, as a part of righteousness by faith. One hundred percent righteousness is found only in Christ. It has to be His gift, it can never be our attainment in this life, for "sanctification is the work of a lifetime."

Romans 3:21-28 should never be divorced from its immediate context. Chapter 4 illustrates exactly what Paul has said so crisply in the closing section of chapter 3. The theme in chapter 4 is justification. And here again, a close inspection will reveal that righteousness by faith is seen as justification and justification only. In chapter 5, Paul discusses not character, primarily, but relationships. He says that all men are lost because of their relationship to the first Adam, but similarly all men have been judicially redeemed by the last Adam, and a right relationship to him confirms "acquittal," a being constituted, or reckoned, as "righteous." All this is declared repeatedly to be the result of grace, in contrast to any relationship based on law. Sanctification *is* referred to in this chapter (vs. 3, 4) and it is a fine opportunity for Paul to apply the phrase we are studying to it if it truly fit. But instead, we find sanctification portrayed as the *fruit* of the righteousness by faith described in the preceding passage of 3:21-5:2 (see particularly 5:9, 10).

The full impact of Paul's discussion will only be felt as we remember that the term "justification" is not linguistically unrelated to "righteousness," but rather synonymous. The significance of "justify" is "to declare righteous." Thus, to be "declared righteous" by faith is identical in meaning with the expression "righteousness by faith."[17] Indeed, in Romans 3:25f., the words "righteous-

ness," "just" and "justifier of" — noun, adjective and participle — all spring from the same Greek root.[18]

Thus, justification by faith and righteousness by faith are technically synonymous terms in Paul's writings (which in no wise detracts, of course, from the necessity for sanctification). And there the case could be legitimately rested. Paxton's contention to this effect is not novel. It is but a summary of the position of Protestant orthodoxy for four centuries.[19]

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Geoffrey J. Paxton, *The Shaking of Adventism* (Wilmington: Zenith Publishers, Inc., 1977), pp. 72, 73, 77.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 105-145.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 155-156.

4. "Is this a knotty and useless question? Wherever the knowledge of it is taken away, the glory of Christ is extinguished, religion abolished, the church destroyed, and the hope of salvation utterly overthrown.

"As all mankind are, in the sight of God, lost sinners, we hold that Christ is their only righteousness, since by His obedience, He has wiped off our transgressions; by His sacrifice, appeased the divine anger; by His blood, washed away our sins; by His cross, borne our curse; and by His death, made satisfaction for us. We maintain that in this way man is reconciled in Christ to God the Father, by no merit of his own, by no value of works, but by gratuitous mercy. When we embrace Christ by faith, and come, as it were, into communion with Him, this we term, after the manner of Scripture, *the righteousness of faith* [Calvin's emphasis].

"It is obvious that gratuitous righteousness is necessarily connected with regeneration. Therefore, if you would duly understand how inseparable faith and works are, look to Christ, who, as the Apostle teaches (1 Cor. 1:30), has been given to us for justification and for sanctification. Wherever, therefore, that righteousness of faith, which we maintain to be gratuitous, is, there too Christ is, and where Christ is, there too is the Spirit of holiness, who regenerates the soul to newness of life."

5. The doctrine of the nature of man is basic to a correct understanding of righteousness by faith. There is no separating anthropology from soteriology. To be wrong in the first is inevitably to be wrong in the second. Similarly, Christology and soteriology can only be rightly related where there is a clear perception of the abysmal gap between the spiritual nature of Christ at birth and ours.

Scripture says of Christ that He was "that holy thing," "holy, harmless, undefiled," "separate from sinners," "who knew no sin," "in him there is no sin," "the holy one of God." See, for example, such passages as Luke 1:35; John 3:34; Heb. 7:26; II Cor. 5:21; I John 3:5, 7; John 14:30; Heb. 4:15; Heb. 9:14; I Peter 1:19; John 7:18; Mark 1:24; Acts 3:14; I Peter 3:18; Heb. 10:5; Rom. 8:3. In contrast to Christ, all other men are seen as depraved and ruined in nature from conception. See Eph. 2:1-3; Ps. 51:5; 58:3; Rom. 7:14-24; Isa. 48:8; Ps. 14:1-3. Christ was *affected* by sin (lessened capacity of organism through hereditary deterioration) but not *infected*. He had no inclinations towards evil. Weaknesses and liabilities — yes, evil propensities — no. To attribute to Christ "sinful" nature, i.e., a nature full of sin, is to affirm He was no Saviour but needed one. The reformers saw all of this very clearly, indeed.

Therefore, Paxton's presentation is not entirely adequate because to omit Robert Brinsmead's erroneous base originally in Christology and anthrolpology, and to fail to stress Adventism's continual tendency to err in this same area is to fail to explain the errors in the respective theological superstructures — both Brinsmead's original eschatology, and Adventism's current soteriology.

6. "We are struggling and falling, failing in speech and action to represent Christ, falling and rising again, despairing and hoping," Ellen G. White, *Testimonies,* volume 9 (Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), p. 222.

"Repentance is a daily continuous exercise, and must be so until mortality is swallowed up in immortality. Repentance and humiliation, humiliation and sorrow of soul must be our daily meat and drink, till we cease to carry with us so many imperfections and failures." Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Aug. 19, 1971.

". . . when *the servant of God* is permitted to behold the glory of the God of heaven, as he is unveiled to humanity, and realizes to a slight degree the purity of the Holy One of Israel, he will make startling confessions of *the pollution of his soul,* rather than proud boasts of his holiness. . . .

"We may always be startled and indignant when we hear a poor, fallen, mortal exclaiming, 'I am holy; I am sinless!' Not one soul to whom God has granted the wonderful view of his greatness and majesty, has ever uttered one word like this. On the contrary, they have felt like sinking down in the deepest humiliation of soul, as they have viewed the purity of God, and contrasted with it their own imperfections of life and character. One ray of the glory of God, one gleam of the purity of Christ, penetrating the soul, makes *every spot of defilement painfully distinct, and lays bare the deformity and defects of the human character.* How can any one who is brought before the holy standard of God's law, which makes apparent the evil motives, the unhallowed desires, the infidelity of the heart, the impurity of the lips, and that lays bare the life, — make any boast of holiness? His acts of disloyalty in making void the law of God are exposed to his sight, and his spirit is stricken and afflicted under the searching influence of the Spirit of God. He loathes himself, as he views the greatness, the majesty, the pure and spotless character of Jesus Christ.

"When the Spirit of Christ stirs the heart with its marvellous awakening power, there is a sense of deficiency in the soul that leads to contrition of mind, and humiliation of self, rather than to proud boasting of what has been acquired." Ellen G. White, *Review and*

Herald, Oct. 16, 1888 (Emphasis ours).

7. Paxton, p. 137.

8. Could anyone be clearer than Paul on such distinctions? See Rom. 3:27, 28; 4:2-16; 11:6; Gal. 2:16. But the same Paul does not separate the Gospel from the law, or faith from works. See Rom. 3:31; Gal. 5:6.

9. Ellen White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assoc., 1958), I, 344 is the classic here.

10. Paxton, p. 43.

11. Ewald M. Plass, comp., *What Luther Says* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), II, 701.

12. Martin Luther, *Luther's Works* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), Vol. 54, *Table Talk*.

13. Martin Luther, *A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians,* tran. Philip S. Watson (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1953), p. 227.

14. "At Wittenberg a light was kindled whose rays should extend to the uttermost parts of the earth, and which was to increase in brightness to the close of time." Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1911), p. 126.

"In his epistle to the Romans, Paul set forth the great principles of the gospel. . . . With great clearness and power the apostle presented the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ . . . . Through all the ages the great truth of justification by faith has stood as a mighty beacon to guide repentant sinners into the way of life. It was this light that scattered the darkness which enveloped Luther's mind, and revealed to him the power of the blood of Christ to cleanse from sin. The same light has guided thousands of sin-burdened souls to the true Source of pardon and peace. For the epistle to the church at Rome, every Christian has reason to thank God." Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1911), pp. 373-374. See also Paxton, p. 18 ff.

15. Minutes of the Biblical Research Institute, Wahroonga, March 23, 1976:

WHEREAS: The Biblical Research Institute has on two occasions, February 3, 1976, at Avondale College, and February 4, 1976, at the office of the Australasian Division, heard the plea of a number of senior ministers who have expressed their concern about the teaching of Theology at Avondale College, particularly in the area of the Sanctuary, the Age of the Earth, and Inspiration, it now desires to present its findings to the administration of the Australasian Division as follows: —

(1) (a) That the Theology Department of Avondale College is committed to generally accepted Seventh-day Adventist doctrinal positions as set forth in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, and

(b) That Dr. Desmond Ford, using the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy and representative Adventist authors, has satisfied the Biblical Research Institute as to the soundness of his doctrinal stance.

16. See Paxton, pp. 113 n; 116 f.

17. See Gal. 2:21 RSV and footnote; Rom. 10:4 RSV; Rom. 1:17 RSV; 3:25 RSV; and compare each with the KJV rendering. See also the Jerusalem Bible, Rom. 4:5; and compare the KJV. The NEB translation of "righteousness" as "acquittal" in II Cor. 3:9 is significant and note that the word translated "justification" in Rom. 5:16 is rendered "righteousness" in Rom. 2:26; 5:18; 8:4; and Rev. 19:8. Compare also Rom. 5:17, 18, 19 in the KJV, RSV and the original. Translators both in English and other languages use the words "justification" and "righteousness" as synonyms.

18. A. J. Mattill, Jr., "Translation of Words with the Stem *DIK* - in Romans," *Andrews University Seminary Studies,* 9 (1971), 91.

19. See, for example, chapter four of *Paul* by Herman Ridderbos for a synthesis of up-to-date scholarship on this matter. In official Adventist circles, Raoul Dederen seems to make the identical distinctions between justification and sanctification as does *The Shaking of Adventism.* See "What Does God's Grace Do?" *Ministry*, March, 1978, pp. 4-7.

IV. Paxton and the Reformers

by Hans LaRondelle

Paxton's book is the first non-Adventist attempt to focus seriously on the doctrinal heart of Adventism, on our understanding of the everlasting gospel. He observes with great sympathy what he calls a "shaking" within our church that is related to our understanding of "righteousness by faith," and even considers this crisis to be a "sign of grace." His analysis is divided into three parts, one on Adventism and the Reformation, the second on Adventism before 1950, and the third — the book's main part — on Adventism after 1960. It is his purpose to let the historical facts speak for themselves (11). My remarks here will deal only with Paxton's assessment of Adventism and the Reformation.

Paxton acknowledges frankly: "Seventh-

Hans LaRondelle took his Th.D. at the Free Reformed University of Amsterdam. He teaches at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary.

Herald, Oct. 16, 1888 (Emphasis ours).

7. Paxton, p. 137.

8. Could anyone be clearer than Paul on such distinctions? See Rom. 3:27, 28; 4:2-16; 11:6; Gal. 2:16. But the same Paul does not separate the Gospel from the law, or faith from works. See Rom. 3:31; Gal. 5:6.

9. Ellen White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assoc., 1958), I, 344 is the classic here.

10. Paxton, p. 43.

11. Ewald M. Plass, comp., *What Luther Says* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), II, 701.

12. Martin Luther, *Luther's Works* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), Vol. 54, *Table Talk*.

13. Martin Luther, *A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians,* tran. Philip S. Watson (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1953), p. 227.

14. "At Wittenberg a light was kindled whose rays should extend to the uttermost parts of the earth, and which was to increase in brightness to the close of time." Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1911), p. 126.

"In his epistle to the Romans, Paul set forth the great principles of the gospel. . . . With great clearness and power the apostle presented the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ . . . . Through all the ages the great truth of justification by faith has stood as a mighty beacon to guide repentant sinners into the way of life. It was this light that scattered the darkness which enveloped Luther's mind, and revealed to him the power of the blood of Christ to cleanse from sin. The same light has guided thousands of sin-burdened souls to the true Source of pardon and peace. For the epistle to the church at Rome, every Christian has reason to thank God." Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1911), pp. 373-374. See also Paxton, p. 18 ff.

15. Minutes of the Biblical Research Institute, Wahroonga, March 23, 1976:

WHEREAS: The Biblical Research Institute has on two occasions, February 3, 1976, at Avondale College, and February 4, 1976, at the office of the Australasian Division, heard the plea of a number of senior ministers who have expressed their concern about the teaching of Theology at Avondale College, particularly in the area of the Sanctuary, the Age of the Earth, and Inspiration, it now desires to present its findings to the administration of the Australasian Division as follows: —

(1) (a) That the Theology Department of Avondale College is committed to generally accepted Seventh-day Adventist doctrinal positions as set forth in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, and

(b) That Dr. Desmond Ford, using the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy and representative Adventist authors, has satisfied the Biblical Research Institute as to the soundness of his doctrinal stance.

16. See Paxton, pp. 113 n; 116 f.

17. See Gal. 2:21 RSV and footnote; Rom. 10:4 RSV; Rom. 1:17 RSV; 3:25 RSV; and compare each with the KJV rendering. See also the Jerusalem Bible, Rom. 4:5; and compare the KJV. The NEB translation of "righteousness" as "acquittal" in II Cor. 3:9 is significant and note that the word translated "justification" in Rom. 5:16 is rendered "righteousness" in Rom. 2:26; 5:18; 8:4; and Rev. 19:8. Compare also Rom. 5:17, 18, 19 in the KJV, RSV and the original. Translators both in English and other languages use the words "justification" and "righteousness" as synonyms.

18. A. J. Mattill, Jr., "Translation of Words with the Stem *DIK* - in Romans," *Andrews University Seminary Studies,* 9 (1971), 91.

19. See, for example, chapter four of *Paul* by Herman Ridderbos for a synthesis of up-to-date scholarship on this matter. In official Adventist circles, Raoul Dederen seems to make the identical distinctions between justification and sanctification as does *The Shaking of Adventism.* See "What Does God's Grace Do?" *Ministry*, March, 1978, pp. 4-7.

IV. Paxton and the Reformers

by Hans LaRondelle

Paxton's book is the first non-Adventist attempt to focus seriously on the doctrinal heart of Adventism, on our understanding of the everlasting gospel. He observes with great sympathy what he calls a "shaking" within our church that is related to our understanding of "righteousness by faith," and even considers this crisis to be a "sign of grace." His analysis is divided into three parts, one on Adventism and the Reformation, the second on Adventism before 1950, and the third — the book's main part — on Adventism after 1960. It is his purpose to let the historical facts speak for themselves (11). My remarks here will deal only with Paxton's assessment of Adventism and the Reformation.

Paxton acknowledges frankly: "Seventh-

Hans LaRondelle took his Th.D. at the Free Reformed University of Amsterdam. He teaches at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary.

day Adventists believe in salvation by grace through faith alone as fervently as do most evangelicals. They believe in sanctification by the indwelling Holy Spirit and in the soon return of Jesus Christ in great power and glory" (17). Paxton examines what Adventists consider to be their real mission on earth, and concludes that it is their stupendous claim "to carry forward the message of the Reformation in such a way as no other Christian or Church body is able to do" (18).

Deeply impressed by his discovery of this "astounding" claim and conviction, Paxton apologizes on behalf of evangelicalism for the "terrible oversight" (24) of having failed in the past to see this.

Adventists can only appreciate such sympathetic courtesy, while at the same time asking the author, an Anglican, whether he is fully correct in concluding that the Adventist church feels called to maintain "the gospel of the Reformers" (28), or that she has been "struggling with her relationship to the gospel of the Reformation" (29), or that she wants to carry forward "the torch of the everlasting gospel of the Reformation" (19).

"The real question is not whether the church preaches the Reformers' gospel, but whether it preaches the apostolic gospel. . . ."

Within Adventism such statements sound strange because they identify completely the gospel of God in sacred Scripture with the gospel of the sixteenth century reformers (cf. also 148, 149). Such an absolute identification is found neither in Ellen White's writings nor in any of the other Adventist writers Paxton quotes in chapter 1. All these authors fall back on Holy Scripture as the norm of the gospel and not on the Reformers' understanding of the gospel. The question arises, of course: Why then do Adventist books claim that Seventh-day Adventists stand in the line of true succession of the Protestant Reformation and feel called to complete it? (see 22).

Adventists do not make Luther and Calvin their norm or the Protestant creeds their guideline in finding and establishing Bible truth. They do, however, recognize all true reformers as instruments of God to lead men back to the Bible as the supreme authority (*Sola Scriptura*) and to Christ as our sole Substitute and Surety before God. But this does not mean that Adventists accept the reformation gospel as the canon for their understanding of the apostolic gospel. Only the original apostles possessed the gospel in its fullness and recorded it as the norm "for all future ages."[1]

Ellen White wrote concerning the Protestant reformers: "We should seek to imitate their virtues, but we should not make them our criterion."[2] To her, the real Adventist mission was to give "evidence of *apostolic succession*" by following both the character and the teachings of the apostles.[3]

The apostolic gospel is the only testing truth for Seventh-day Adventists. To measure Adventism by the "Reformation gospel" or the reformatory creeds has never been a primary concern for the church. Many, indeed, would regard such an agitation as a false "shaking," appealing to such counsel as Ellen White's remark that "God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines, and the basis of all reforms. . . ."[4]

The study of the Reformers' concept of the gospel is certainly helpful and important to Adventists. But the real question is not whether the church preaches the Reformers' gospel, but whether it preaches the apostolic gospel, which is the everlasting gospel (Rev. 14.6).

In chapter 2 (35-49), Paxton deals with "The Heart of the Reformation," which he sees as limited to the doctrine of "justification by faith alone." He summarizes the Reformers' concept of justification as having two sides: one negative and the other positive. The negative side consists of "the acquittal of the believing sinner on the grounds of the dying of Jesus Christ," or simply, forgiveness (39). The positive side, Paxton explains, is the justification by which "God credits

Jesus' perfect fulfillment of the law to the believer" (40), which means "to be *pronounced* righteous" (38). For Paxton, the whole conflict between the Reformation and Rome is concentrated on this last aspect. He states: "Whereas Rome taught that justification means to *make* the believer just by work of inner renewal in his heart, the Reformers taught that justification is the *declaration* by God that the believer is just on the grounds of the righteousness of Christ alone, which is outside the believer" (39).

Paxton writes chapter 2 from a clearly polemical angle with regard to both Rome and Adventism. This has led him, however, to deal with justification in *isolation from* sanctification, from fear of confusing the two. He writes, "the righteousness of faith is never to be confused with sanctification. It is not sanctification, nor does it include sanctification. This clear distinction between righteousness of faith and sanctification was the massive breakthrough made by Martin Luther" (45).

He goes so far as to distinguish sharply the work of Christ *from* that of the Holy Spirit, the Christ outside us *from* the Christ inside us, and grace *from* the indwelling Christ, in the teachings of Luther and Calvin. He even concludes; "To make this shift from the God-man to the indwelling Christ is to abandon the Reformation doctrine of justification rather than to honor and perpetuate it" (42). Because of this overriding preoccupation with the distinctions between justification and sanctification, Paxton unfortunately has restricted his focus with regard to the Reformers exclusively to the forensic or purely legal aspect of justification.

This restricted focus on the judicial act of justification, however, was constantly avoided by Luther and Calvin in their writings, for good reasons. They did not want to give the impression that they viewed sanctification as irrelevant or not organically connected with justification.

Paxton, however, is quick to label selected statements in Adventist writings or sermons which do not clearly pass the screen of his concept of forensic justification as "the Roman Catholic approach" (147).

Such a judgment calls for a closer look at the historic decree on justification at the Council of Trent (see below). Possibly the most important statement of Paxton's whole book is this: "The crux of the problem in modern Adventism lies in understanding *the relation of justification and sanctification.* It was their proper relationship which stood at the heart of the Reformation" (148). If this is true, one may well wonder why Paxton permitted himself to exclude completely any treatment of the *relationship* of justification and sanctification in the Reformation in chapter 2 of his book? How can he fail to deal with such a vital relationship which by his own admission "stood at the heart of the Reformation?" Even more disappointing is the fact that the book contains no chapter or section on the *Biblical* relationship of justification and sanctification. To the infallible norm of *Sola Scriptura,* both the Reformers and Adventists have professed to be willing to submit themselves and to stand corrected.

If that *Biblical relationship* is the "crux of the problem" both for the Reformers and for Adventism, then has not Paxton failed by default to place before us the real dilemma?

Paxton sees the whole conflict between Rome and Reformation concentrated on a radically different interpretation of justification. Rome would say that justification meant to *make* the believer just in his heart; the Reformation saw justification simply as *declaring* him just by imputation only (39). Paxton gives the impression by this contrast, that the Reformers knew of no working of the Holy Spirit in God's act of justification by faith alone, and that they rejected in principle every kind of *making* the believer just as a part of justification.

The first question is, did Rome at the Council of Trent actually state that justification meant only the process of *making* the believer just and did Rome reject the principle of a *forensic* justification? Such a formulation does not explain fully the Roman Catholic position on justification.

First of all, Calvin rejected the Roman Catholic *confusion* of justification and sanctification because Trent took both as if they were one and the same. On the other

hand, Calvin maintained that both gifts of God's grace "are constantly conjoined and cohere," just as in the sun the light and the heat are always inseparably joined together. Calvin's criticism of Trent's decree on justification was carefully balanced:

> For example: The light of the sun, though never unaccompanied with heat, is not to be considered heat. Where is the man so undiscerning as not to distinguish the one from the other? We acknowledge, then, that as soon as any one is justified, renewal also necessarily follows: and there is no dispute as to whether or not Christ sanctifies all whom He justifies. It were to rend the gospel, and divide Christ himself, to attempt to separate the righteousness which we obtain by faith from repentance.[5]

As seen here, Calvin did not want to consider justification as a gift *by itself* but only *in relationship* to sanctification. To consider justification a grace apart from the regeneration of the heart meant to Calvin "to rend the gospel and divide Christ himself." In other words, for him the Biblical *distinction* between justification and sanctification never became a *separation* of the two. All those Protestant books which deal exclusively with justification are not, therefore, in the true line of the Reformers. And they certainly are not in line with the Apostle Paul's letters to the Romans (5:1-5) and to the Galatians (2:16-20).

The distinction between justification and sanctification was blurred, however, at Trent so that the two became one and the same. By this fusion, Trent actually taught only a *partial* justification. It spoke of a gradual process of nonimputation of sins and of infused grace, thus denying the *total* character of divine imputation of Christ's righteousness, of acquittal, of grace, of acceptance, and of the assurance of salvation (Chapter IX of Decree).[6] The real concern of the Reformation was not the idea of the gradual making just of the believer but the emphatic denial that Christ alone is our righteousness and the consequent loss of the certainty of salvation through "the figment of partial justification."[7]

The second reason why Calvin rejected the Tridentine decree of justification was that it stated that justification was dispensed exclusively through the instrumental cause of the *sacraments* of baptism and penance (Ch. VII). Indeed, Calvin said that "the whole dispute is as to the Cause of Justification."[8]

If justification is basically a sacramental process, then it is no longer exclusively by faith in Christ. In the sacramental infusion of grace, the believer is not united with Christ and His salvation; instead, only stimulating grace-power is poured into the soul, without essentially affecting the soul's neutral freewill. The cooperation of the freewill with the supernatural, new inclination of his heart is then considered *meritorious* before God and will cause God to bestow an *increased* justification grace in his heart. The goal of this complicated justification process was, according to Trent: "truly to merit the obtaining of eternal life in due time" (Ch. XVI).

"Faith" was regarded, accordingly, merely as the beginning of the justification process (Ch. VIII), as the preparatory act consisting of an intellectual assent only (Ch. VI), as the so-called "unformed faith." The infusion of sacramental grace (or love) would then give real substance to faith by the gift of an inherent righteousness or love. Thus faith would become a "formed faith." Calvin vehemently rejected this "worse than worthless distinction," because such stages of "faith" never resulted in uniting the heart with Christ and His salvation.

To summarize, in rejecting the whole structure of the justification doctrine of Trent, the Reformation was opposing a position determined by the unbreakable unity of the following five constitutive elements:

1) The *sacramental* character of the whole justification process;

"When Paxton goes so far as to conclude that within contemporary Adventism there has emerged a 'full-grown, distinct' Roman Catholic theology, he certainly draws an unwarranted conclusion."

2) The insistence on *inherent* righteousness owned by the soul;
3) The *meritorious* character of man's natural freewill;
4) The *rejection of the total imputation of Christ's righteousness;*
5) The *denial* of the personal certainty of salvation.[9]

These together constitute the spectrum of the basic motifs of the Roman Catholic doctrine of justification which the Reformers were opposing.

When Paxton goes so far as to conclude that within contemporary Adventism there has emerged a "full-grown, distinct" Roman Catholic theology (147), he certainly draws an unwarranted conclusion. Such a radical judgment ignores the inextricable bond of the constitutive elements of the Tridentine justification doctrine. It also overlooks the basic difference between the inherent righteousness of Roman Catholicism and the indwelling Christ of Adventism.

Paxton presents the teaching of Luther and Calvin on justification as a purely extrinsic, forensic act of God outside of man, exclusively as "the *declaration* by God that the believer is just on the grounds of the righteousness of Christ alone, which is outside the believer" (39). "Justification means *to be pronounced* righteous"(38), nothing more. It is, in other words, a purely *verbal* justification in which no regeneration occurs in the believer, because the Holy Spirit's work is a different act of God (renewal, or sanctification), which occurs logically only *after* the act of justification, not as a part of it. As Paxton says, "justifying righteousness is to be found only in the one unique God-man . . . . For the reformers, Christ alone meant Jesus Christ the *God-man*, and *not Christ's indwelling the believer by the Holy Spirit* . . . . To make this shift from the God-man to the indwelling Christ is to abandon the Reformation doctrine of justification rather than to honor and perpetuate it" (42, emphasis his).

Paxton's concept of justification as a purely theoretical imputation, as a merely verbal pronouncement or abstract crediting of Jesus' law fulfillment to the account of the believer, is more akin to the traditional interpretation of Luther by *later* orthodox theology and to the Roman Catholic misinterpretation of Luther than it is to Luther's own exegesis of Biblical justification.

Luther never wrote a systematic treatise on justification. So it is perhaps not surprising that the eclectic selection of isolated statements from the full Luther can lead to different schools of Luther interpretation. For example, over against Theodosius Harnack, who interpreted Luther in strictly forensic-imputation terms, Karl Holl maintained that Luther *based* justification on man's spiritual renewal and sanctification and that God's justification was only an anticipatory judgment in view of the time when man's whole life and character would actually *be* just. In the final judgment, God would pronounce the believer just not by the fiction of an "as if," but by the realistic judgment that man finally had become just. In other words, according to Holl, Luther's justification is based on a real *making* righteous of the believer.[10] Similarly, R. Seeberg argued that for Luther the subjective regeneration and sanctification experience was the *basis* for personal certainty of salvation.

In reaction, Paul Althaus has sharply criticized both Seeberg and Holl for ignoring the decisive aspect of imputation in Luther's doctrine justification (see below). Regin Prenter has further criticized Holl and Seeberg for their misinterpretation even of Luther's sanctification by identifying the indwelling Christ with an inherent righteousness in the believer.[11]

Seeberg and Holl had appealed mainly to the writings of the early Luther (until around 1520), when he did not yet clearly distinguish between imputation and impartation of Christ's righteousness and still merged the two. For example, in his sermon "Two Kinds of Righteousness," of 1519, Luther says that Christ's "infinite righteousness" becomes ours by faith or "rather, he himself becomes ours."

> This righteousness is primary; it is the basis, the cause, the source of all our own actual righteousness. For this is righteousness given in place of the original righteousness lost in Adam. . . Therefore this

> alien righteousness, instilled in us without our works by grace alone. . . is set opposite original sin, likewise alien, which we acquire without our works by birth alone. Christ daily drives out the old Adam more and more . . . For alien righteousness is not instilled all at once, but it begins, makes progress, and is finally perfected at the end through death. The second kind of righteousness is our proper righteousness, not because we alone work it, but because we work with that first and alien righteousness.[12]

In 1519, Luther evidently does not yet describe Christ's alien righteousness as a forensic imputation, but rather as a progressive impartation, although "instilled in us without our works by grace alone." It should be remembered that Luther is not an abstract systematizer or logician but a preacher who is expressing his own dramatic experience of redemption. He immediately compares the two kinds of righteousness with the consummated marriage relation of the bridegroom (Christ) and the bride (the soul) who receive each other's possessions.[13] In other words, in 1519 Luther *blends* saving alien righteousness with the indwelling Christ, and that not before but *after his tower experience* of saving righteousness by faith alone. Paxton is therefore in conflict with this primary source when he states: "To make this shift from the God-man to the indwelling Christ is to abandon the Reformation doctrine of justification rather than to honor and perpetuate it" (42). In saying this, Paxton condemns Luther's own earlier tower experience! He overlooks here the basic distinction between Trent's doctrine of an inherent righteousness received through the church sacraments, and Luther's experience of the indwelling Christ through the Holy Spirit received by faith alone.

Luther's discovery of the gospel in his tower experience was not the intellectual concept of the forensic imputation of Christ's righteousness outside of man. This is the fundamental fallacy of Paxton's whole argument and prepares the ground for his reductional interpretation of Luther's later developed doctrine of forensic imputation.

Remarkably, Paxton appeals to this very sermon of Luther to prove that Luther clearly distinguished between imputed righteousness (as a "*passive*" righteousness) and the believer's imperfect "*active*" righteousness; that is, between justification and sanctification (45). The above quotation of Luther's sermon shows, however, that Luther described the alien, justifying righteousness of Christ as a progressively *imparted* righteousness, even after his tower experience.

Paxton's appeal to Luther's 1519 sermon on "Two Kinds of Righteousness" is all the more curious in light of his claim that Luther in his "Lectures on Romans" of 1515-16 was still a "young evangelical Catholic rather than the Protestant Reformer" (37, note 12). Paxton places Luther's "tower experience" in the fall of 1518 when he received "his great insight into the gospel of justification by faith alone." Many Luther specialists, however, reject 1518, and argue for 1514 (W. Pauck, G. Rupp, etc.). Yet, even on Paxton's basis (1518), Luther's sermon of early 1519 can no longer be classified as being "evangelical Catholic," but as an expression of Luther's "great insight into the gospel of justification by faith alone." We must honestly face the historical fact that Luther as the Protestant Reformer in 1519 still preached that Christ's alien and perfect righteousness was the gracious indwelling Christ in the believer's heart. Luther evidently did not yet make a clear distinction between imputed and imparted righteousness in 1519. Yet, Paxton declares without any foundation that it was in 1518 that this synthesis was rent asunder in the mind of Luther and that the Protestant Reformation was born (45).

This last statement is moreover in direct conflict with Luther's own account, as given in 1545, of his breakthrough to salvation in his tower experience.[14] Here Luther recounts that Romans 1:17 became the open gate to heaven and paradise itself, when "I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith. And this is the meaning: the righteousness of God is revealed by the gospel, namely, the passive righteousness with which a merciful God justifies us by

faith." Luther explains there that he had always taken the "righteousness of God" to mean God's attribute of justice by "which He is righteous and punishes the unrighteous sinner. Suddenly, the light of a *new* concept of God's righteousness took hold of his guilt-ridden conscience when he saw from the context that God's righteousness meant God's *own* saving action, God's righteousness as *His gift* to us. The rational distinction between imputation and impartation had absolutely nothing to do with the breakthrough in Luther's glorious tower experience. This is confirmed by Luther's further words in his account: "I also found in other terms an analogy, as the work of God, that is, what God does *in us,* the power of God, with which he *makes us* strong, the wisdom of God, with which he *makes us* wise . . . ."[15]

"The fundamental fallacy of Paxton's whole argument . . . prepares the ground for his reductional interpretation of Luther's later developed doctrine of forensic imputation."

Paxton, however, projects Luther's later theological development back into his original discovery of the gospel. For Luther, the saving discovery of the gospel was not a discovery of the difference between imputed and imparted righteousness, but the concept — new to Luther — that God's righteousness revealed in the gospel is not God's "active" *punishing* righteousness but his "passive" *justifying* righteousness "by which the righteous lives by a gift of God." It was this change of concept and not the distinction between two gifts of God (as Paxton suggests) that generated Luther's salvation experience and made him in principle the Reformer of the church. Luther's dramatic change can only be fully understood against the historical background of late medieval theology with its sacramentalism and uncertainty of salvation. Here was the real dilemma! After his dramatic discovery, Luther read Augustine's *The Spirit and the Letter* and was surprised, he says, because "I found that he, too, interpreted God's righteousness in a similar way, as the righteousness with which God clothes us when he justified us."[16] Luther gradually realized more fully that Augustine did not teach clearly the imputed aspect of the righteousness of Christ, but this realization was not the real point for Luther in his first years as the reformer. Above all, Luther was happily surprised that Augustine also taught salvation by the free grace of God. As Luther says about Augustine: "it nevertheless was pleasing that God's righteousness with which we are justified was taught."[17] Exactly how God justified us by His own righteousness as a gift, Luther did not yet realize or understand in his tower experience. He only knew that it was God's *gift of making us righteous by His righteousness*, through faith alone, without the sacraments.

Philip Schaff insightfully characterizes Luther's discovery of righteousness by faith when he says that "he experienced this truth in his heart long before he understood it in all its bearings."[18]

Soon after his tower experience, Luther came to a clearer understanding of what "righteousness by faith" signified in the New Testament. It was actually in his famous Wartburg writing of 1521, *Against Latomus*, that Luther for the first time, but as clearly as anywhere in his later writings, makes, on the basis of Romans 5:15, a sharp distinction between "two goods of the gospel," that is, between *the grace of God outside us* and *the righteousness of God within us* (as the gift in grace). These two blessings match the twin evils of sin which burden the sinner down: the wrath of God and the corruption of human nature, or, stated differently, guilt and inward evil. Just as the law of God reveals a twofold evil, one inward and the other outward, so "we therefore have two goods of the gospel against the two evils of the law: the gift on account of sin, and grace on account of wrath."[19]

The grace of God outside us is of a total nature just as the wrath of God outside us is of a total character. As God's wrath (and condemnation) concerned the whole man, so

God's grace or favor accepts the whole person. Luther then writes:

> A righteous and faithful man doubtless has both grace and the gift. Grace makes him wholly pleasing so that his person is wholly accepted, and there is no place for wrath in him any more, but the gift heals from sin and from all his corruption of body and soul. . . . Everything is forgiven through grace, but as yet not everything is healed through the gift. The gift has been infused, the leaven has been added to the mixture. It works so as to purge away the sin for which a person has already been forgiven, and to drive out the evil guest for whose expulsion permission has been given."[20]

F. E. Cranz makes this important observation about Luther's new distinction between grace and gift: "The separation of 1521 reflects *a new distinction* between man's total justification or condemnation on the one hand, and on the other, the gradual sanctification of the Christian."[21]

Since his tower experience (between 1514-18), Luther had basically accepted the *Augustinian* position that the believer who received Christ's righteousness (as a gift) was only *partly* just and *partly* a sinner. Complete justification was therefore only in the future. But after 1521, as a result of further Bible studies, Luther took the new position that the Christian was *totally* justified in Christ and *totally* a sinner outside of Christ, as far as the "flesh" or inherent sinful nature was concerned. It is with respect to sanctification, however, that Luther characterizes the Christian as still partly just and partly a sinner. This was Luther's new doctrine of justification, which he worked out more fully in his *Kirchenpostille* of 1522.

Luther now starts from the *complete* justification of the Christian, already accomplished in Christ, and considers sanctification as a consequence of the already complete justification in Christ. He says in his *Kirchenpostille* that Christ is *both* our gift and our example, but only in this order. "The main part and foundation of the Gospel is that before you take Christ as example, you accept and recognize Him as a gift and present, which is given to you by God and which is your own."[22] Luther calls our taking Christ as our model to imitate in our life and works "the least part of the Gospel," because our works do not *make* us Christians. Faith corresponds only to Christ as a Gift, while works correspond only to Christ as a Model.

When in the 1530s Luther once more writes on justification, he only revises his conceptions of 1521 into sharper formulations and explicit contrasts (of law and gospel; political justice and theological justice). In Luther's most controversial formula, he calls the redeemed Christian *simul iustus et peccator* (simultaneously just and a sinner). Judged from two different viewpoints, man is totally righteous in Christ, by imputation; yet totally sinful in himself, that is, in his "flesh" outside of Christ. Cranz summarizes it this way: "Luther's cardinal distinction is between our total justification in Christ and our partial justification through the Holy Spirit in the world."[23]

"Paxton is in direct conflict both with modern Luther research and with the sources themselves when he suggests that Luther had no indwelling Christ in his justification message."

The first Luther calls imputed or reputed righteousness, the second formal or purifying righteousness. Thus the Christian lives at the same time in two realms, but logically speaking "total justification in Christ is always primary and antecedent; partial sanctification in the world is always secondary and consequent."[24]

Before 1521, Luther had used the terms "imputation," "reputation" and "reckoning" to explain the righteousness of God by which He gradually *makes* us just. Following 1530, Luther applied the terms "imputation," "reckoning" and "reputation" to the realm of our *total* acceptance and total justification because of Christ's infinite righteousness. Cranz then draws the significant conclusion that neither before nor after 1530 did Luther "reduce" imputation or reputation

"to a mere divine decision which has no real effect on the Christian himself."[25]

Paxton takes as his norm for judging Adventism the idea that after 1530 Luther's justification was simply a divine decision or pronouncement and no longer included regeneration or the Spirit's renewal; in other words, that justification was no longer an *effective* justification as Luther believed earlier. Yet, both Paul Althaus[26] and Otto H. Pesch[27] strongly reject on the basis of the sources themselves, this correlation of an effective justification to Luther's early theology and a purely verbal justification to Luther's later theology. This dilemma may be solved if we see that, for Luther, justifying or saving faith was not faith in Christ's merits in the abstract (apart from the Person of Christ) or faith in the *doctrine* of imputed righteousness, but was the actual embracing of Christ Himself, the living Savior. Luther never gets tired of stressing that:

> true faith takes hold of Christ in such a way that Christ is the object of faith, or rather not the object but, so to speak, *the One who is present in the faith itself* . . . Therefore faith justifies because it takes hold of and possesses this treasure, the present Christ. . . Therefore the Christ who is grasped by faith *and who lives in the heart* is the true Christian righteousness, on account of which God counts us righteous and grants us eternal life. . . Faith takes hold of Christ and has Him present, enclosing Him as the ring encloses the gem. And whoever is found having this faith in the Christ who is grasped in the heart, him God accounts as righteous.[28]

Already in 1522, Luther wrote in the introduction to his *Commentary on Romans* that true faith is not a human opinion, nor is it an

> idea that never reaches the depths of the heart, and so nothing comes of it and no betterment follows it. Faith, however, is a divine work in us. It changes us and makes us to be born anew of God (John 1); it kills the Old Adam and makes altogether different men, in heart and spirit and mind and power, and it brings with it the Holy Ghost. Oh, it is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith.[29]

This goes back to Luther's revolutionary discovery of the religious nature of faith; it is generated by Christ Himself and not by the sacraments or by man's rational will. Paxton is in direct conflict both with modern Luther research and with the sources themselves when he suggests that Luther had no indwelling Christ in his justification message. For Luther, genuine faith in Christ meant *both at the same time*: faith in the God-man in heaven and the reception of the indwelling Christ in the heart. Luther believed in one and the same Christ, not two Christs, one after the other, and not in two gifts, first justification and then sanctification. As also Walther von Loewenich observes in his insightful book, *Von Augustin zu Luther*: "The Christ *extra nos* [outside of us] is always at the same time the Christ *in nobis* [inside of us]. Luther is not an abstract logician, but a realist of the faith experience. The relationship of justification and sanctification is therefore basically no problem."[30]

One and the same faith in Christ receives both the imputed righteousness and the Holy Spirit in the heart. Both are promised on the same condition by the apostle Paul. *Justification* is by faith without works of law (Rom. 3:28), and also the *Holy Spirit* is by faith without works of law (Gal. 3:2, 5). In Romans 5:1, 5, Paul indicates that the two gifts are inseparably joined together so that the one cannot come without the other.

Althaus notices this effective justification throughout Luther's work.[31] A few examples of the "mature" Luther may substantiate his dynamic view of justification. In his *Theses Concerning Faith and Law* of 1535, Luther defended this thesis (No. 65): "Justification is in reality a kind of rebirth in newness, as John says: Who believe in His name and were born of God (John 1:12-13; I John 5:1)."[32] This statement of Luther in 1535 shows clearly that Paxton operates with a onesided concept of the mature Luther.

In the *Smalcald Articles* (1537), Luther in the article "How Man Is Justified Before God" states:

> "I do not know how I can change what I have heretofore constantly taught on this

subject, namely, that by faith (as St. Peter says, Acts 15:9) we get a new and clean heart and that God will and does account us altogether righteous and holy for the sake of Christ, our mediator . . . Good works follow such faith, renewal, and forgiveness."[33]

Evidently, the mature Luther is not concerned about eliminating the renewal of the heart from this article on justification. What Luther is concerned about is that the new relationship of the justified believer with God is *legally* a perfect standing before God not because of man's works or merit but solely because of God's own work, the righteousness of Christ, as a free gift. In his *Disputation Concerning Justification* of the year 1536, Luther again does not always restrict justification to a mere verbal legal pronouncement nor keep the logical order of imputation and renewal. Here are Theses 22 and 35:

22. He [God] sustains and supports them on account of the first fruit of his creation in us, and he thereupon decrees that they are righteous and sons of the kingdom.
35. The start of a new creature accompanies this faith and the battle against the sin of the flesh, which this same faith in Christ both pardons and conquers.[34]

I therefore agree with Martin Greschat's conclusion concerning Luther's position: "Justification and actual renewal constitute a unity, in which both — in spite of the strictly maintained logical priority of the justification of the godless — nonetheless influence each other mutually."[35] This is an *organic* unity of justification and renewal, because the *living* Christ and His creative word are at the center. It is interesting to notice that Melanchthon also in his *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* of the year 1531, still taught the full Biblical justification message that was Luther's:

> And "to be justified" means to make unrighteous men righteous or to regenerate them, as well as to be pronounced or accounted righteous. For Scripture speaks both ways. Therefore we are justified by faith alone, justification being understood as making an unrighteous man righteous or effecting his regeneration.[36]

Here Melanchthon and the "mature" Luther appear as perfectly one in teaching an *effective* justification. The modern Luther scholars F. Loofs and E. Schlink have demonstrated that this dynamic view of justification in the *Apology* is no longer maintained in *Formula of Concord* of 1580 (long after Luther's death in 1546), where finally the Holy Spirit's creative transformation is completely eliminated from justification.[37] Yet, Paxton depends heavily on this post-Lutheran *Formula* and theology for his position on Luther's own theology (see 45-46). But the *later* development of Lutheran orthodoxy with its compartmentalizing of justification no longer represents the living Luther or even the earlier Lutheran Confessions, so that "to the present day large Lutheran bodies refuse to acknowledge it [the Formula of Concord] as such"[38] (Schlink, p. xxvi). It is significant that even the greatest Luther scholars today admit that "the living wholeness of Luther's conception" was lost within Lutheran Protestantism because of such a compartmentalizing of justification. The official report of the Commission on Theology of the Lutheran World Federation, published in 1965, states:

> In later Lutheranism there is an unmistakable tendency to make the doctrine of justification into a special doctrine. With the good intention of keeping the doctrine of justification pure, only its forensic aspect is stressed; and the fact is disregarded that with justification it is a question of a personal and total act. Justification is the restoration of that relationship between God and man which God wanted in the beginning.[39]

My objection to Paxton's rationalistic justification dogma is not that it is not true in what it affirms or even that it becomes the central focus of theology, but rather that justification is *reduced* to one act of God among others. This *limited* scope is the reason why justification is not regarded in its full and dynamic power, as Luther himself preached it.

Jesus, Himself, gave a beautiful illustration

of the creative reality of justification in His parable of the prodigal son's homecoming. The father expresses his forgiveness by personally embracing and kissing his repentant son and by restoring him fully to sonship and fellowship in the father's home (Luke 15:20-24). This is Jesus' picture of the dynamic reality of forgiveness by the heavenly Father. It is not solely a verbal, theoretical declaration by the Father. It is the creative word of the Creator God. Therefore, in His judicial declaration, there occurs the miracle of reconciliation and restoration of fellowship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Thus righteousness by faith is the power of salvation for all who believe in Christ (Rom. 1:16).

"Paxton creates the false dilemma of *either* an imputed *or* an imparted righteousness . . . *either* a Christ outside us *or* a Christ in us."

Like others before him, Paxton creates the false dilemma of *either* an imputed *or* an imparted righteousness, *either* God's forensic declaration that we are righteous *or* God's making us righteous, *either* a Christ outside us *or* a Christ in us, etc. Luther's reformation gospel, however, held together what his interpreters have frequently put asunder.[40] To represent the authentic Luther and his gospel, one must not stress the doctrine of justification as a legal abstraction, but above all, lift up the living Christ and the living Word as the power of salvation.

We saw earlier that Calvin, in his criticism of Trent, stressed how justification and sanctification each have their different functions *within* the one gospel. Both Calvin and Luther rejected the Roman *confusion* of making the two gifts of God's grace into one, so that judicial justification was completely swallowed up in the process of sacramental "justification." In view of Paxton's extreme interpretation of Calvin, it is necessary to take a closer look at the nature of the connection of justification and sanctification in Calvin's thought. To Calvin, these were not two compartmentalized gifts, two separate acts of God, the one following in a chronological order after the other. Such an idea would only be the view of a *synthesis* which has no living principle as a connection.

Calvin's greatest contribution is commonly believed to be his doctrine of the Holy Spirit. For him, the Holy Spirit is the sole effective bond between Christ and the believer. It is the "principal work" of the Holy Spirit to *create* in the heart of man *faith* that accepts Christ and unites the soul with Christ through regeneration of the heart into a new creation.[41] By thus partaking of Christ, we receive "a double grace": a gracious Father (rather than a Judge) and a sanctified life by Christ's Spirit. Justification and sanctification together constitute a "twofold cleansing," or a twofold washing.[42] In his commentary on Gal. 2:20, Calvin even states:

> Christ lives in us in two ways. The one life consists in governing us by His Spirit and directing all our actions; the other in making us partakers of His righteousness, so that, while we can do nothing of ourselves, we are accepted in the sight of God. The first relates to regeneration, the second to justification by free grace.

Although in his polemic against the confusion of Osiander, Calvin sharply differentiates between justification and the new creation, Calvin's on-going thrust is that both are merely *aspects* of one twofold grace.[43] Just as the light of the sun cannot be separated from its heat, so it is impossible to compartmentalize justification and sanctification.

Ronald S. Wallace concludes, therefore, correctly:

> They are distinct, but they can be separated the one from the other only in thought, but never in experience. They are to be seen in their indivisible unity with each other in the person of Christ in relation to whom no one could possibly experience one without the other. To try to separate the one from the other would be like trying to tear Christ in pieces.[44]

A beautiful example is Calvin's interpretation of the wedding garment offered by the King in Christ's parable of the wedding feast (Matt. 22:11). This garment, said Calvin, signified not exclusively the righteousness of faith, but also the renewed, sanctified life, because faith and works cannot be separated.[45]

While Luther directed his *sola fide* doctrine mainly against the work righteousness of Rome, Calvin's specific concern is the position of the Lutheran Quietists who think "that everything is settled with justification."[46] Calvin, therefore, stresses in particular that the Holy Spirit brings our soul into mystical union with Christ, with the total Christ (I Cor 1:30). Thus for Calvin, both union with Christ and justification refer to the same act of God. And this union also brings our sanctification. Calvin stresses, therefore, the thought that we receive the riches of justification and not simply through Christ but *"in"* Christ (I Cor. 1:5).[47]

"For Calvin, both union with Christ and justification refer to the same act of God. And this union also brings our sanctification."

Tjarko Stadtland, in his perceptive book *Rechtfertigung und Heiligung bei Calvin* (1972), draws the conclusion: "Calvin wants to transcend Melanchthon's juxtaposition [of justification and sanctification] by grasping both in an organic connection."[48] Stadtland maintains that the heart of Calvin's reformation gospel is not the justification doctrine by itself, but the spiritual union of the soul with the living Christ through the Holy Spirit. From this union flow both gifts of grace: justification and sanctification.

We have found that the heart of the reformation gospel is a living heart indeed. The authentic Luther and Calvin did not restrict the gospel to a purely forensic justification doctrine. Such a restriction came only later, in the Lutheran *Formula of Concord* (1580), long after both Reformers had died. It seems to be construed to stand in an absolute and deliberate contrast to the Decree on Justification of Trent (1547). The Reformers themselves, however, preached a dynamic and effective justification message as the power of God for salvation (cf. Rom. 1:16). They uplifted the living Christ as the assurance of our total justification, or reconciliation, or adoption as children of God and heirs of salvation. Such a faith in Christ as our personal Savior and Surety on the basis of this substitutionary atoning sacrifice was a gift of Christ Himself.

The immediate effect of such a faith in Christ was the *indwelling* Christ in the heart of the repentant believer. Thus, the one Christ at the same time cured the sinner from his twofold evil: from his guilt and from his evil heart. The guilt was covered by Christ's infinite righteousness, and the selfish heart was reborn and transformed by the Holy Spirit unto willing obedience to all God's revealed will.

In this twofold grace of Christ, the Reformers saw the imputation of God's righteousness as fundamental to the indwelling of Christ in the heart. The relationship between the Christ outside us and the Christ inside us was so intimate that they conceived this not as a synthetic but rather as an organic interrelationship.

I wish to close this investigation with the brief remark that Ellen G. White is in basic agreement with these principles of the Reformation, especially regarding *effective* justification. Here are two of her pertinent statements.

> The atonement of Christ is not a mere skillful way to have our sins pardoned; it is a divine remedy for the cure of transgression and the restoration of spiritual health. It is the Heaven-ordained means by which the righteousness of Christ may be not only upon us but in our hearts and characters.[49]

> But forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose. When God gives the promise that He "will abundantly pardon," He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than

the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:7-9. God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness *for* sin, but reclaiming *from* sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10.[50]

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. E. G. White, *Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1888), p. ix.
2. *Review and Herald,* 67 (1890), 337.
3. E. G. White, *Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1898), p. 417.
4. *Great Controversy*, p. 595.
5. Calvin's *Acts of the Council of Trent with the Antidote* (1547), in *Tracts and Treatises in Defense of the Reformed Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958), III, 116.
6. See J. H. Leith, *Creeds of the Churches,* rev. ed. (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1977). Decree concerning justification in 16 chapters on pages 408-20.
7. Calvin, *Acts*, p. 116.
8. *Ibid.*
9. See H. Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1961), II, 256f.
10. See O. Wolf, "Die Haupttypen der neueren Lutherdeutung," *Ev. Theol.* (1937), 22f, 104ff.
11. *Spiritus Creator* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1953), p. 97.
12. *Luther's Works,* 31: 298-99.
13. *Ibid.,* 31:300.
14. *Ibid.,* 34:336-37.
15. *Ibid.,* 34:337.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. *History of the Christian Church*, VII, 122.
19. *Selected Writings of Martin Luther,* Th. G. Tappert, ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), II, 168.
20. *Ibid.,* p. 169.
21. *An Essay on the Development of Luther's Thought on Justice, Law and Society.* Harvard Theological Studies, 19 (Cambridge: Harvard, 1959), pp. 44-45, my emphasis.
22. Translated from *WA*, X, 11, 12f.
23. *Essay*, p. 68.
24. *Ibid.,* p. 71.
25. *Ibid.,* p. 70.
26. P. Althaus states: "Luther uses the terms 'to justify' and 'justification' in more than one sense. From the beginning, justification most often means the judgment of God with which he declares man to be righteous. In other places, however, this word stands for the entire event through which a man is essentially made righteous (a usage which Luther also finds in Paul, Romans 5), that is, for both the imputation of righteousness to man as well as man's actually becoming righteous . . . . This twofold use of the word cannot be correlated with Luther's early and later theology." *The Theology of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), p. 226.
27. O. Pesch concludes: "The early writings know the forensic sense of *justificatio*, the later writings also the effective sense, and sometimes even both meanings of the word occur after each other in the same text." *Theologie der Rechfertigung bei Martin Luther und Thomas von Aquin* (Mainz, 1967), p. 176, with documentation.
28. *Luther's Works,* 26:129, 130, 132 (on Gal. 2:16).
29. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.* J. Th. Mueller, tran. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1965), pp. xiv-xv.
30. *Von Augustin zu Luther* (Witten: Luther Verlag, 1959), p. 86.
31. "Justification in the full sense of the word consists in both of these: imputation and man's transformation to a new obedience together." Althaus, *Theology of Luther,* p. 235.
32. *Luther's Works,* 34:113.
33. *Book of Concord* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. 315.
34. *Luther's Works,* 34:152, 153.
35. *Melanchthon Neben Luther. Studien zur Gestalt der Rechfertigungslehre zwischen 1528 und 1537* (Witten: Luther Verlag, 1965), p. 212.
36. *Apology,* IV, 72 and 78; cf. IV, 117.
37. See Schlink, *Theology of the Lutheran Confessions* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961), pp. 105-107, 94.
38. Schlink, p. xxvi.
39. *Justification Today.* Studies and Reports, Lutheran World (New York: National Lutheran Council, 1965), p. 16.
40. See D. W. Lotz, *Ritschl and Luther* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974), pp. 130, 136.
41. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* III, 1, 4.
42. See *Ibid.*, III, 11, 1; Sermon on Gal. 2:17-18; Commentary on John 13:8.
43. See Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1959), p. 27.
44. *Ibid.,* p. 26.
45. Commentary on Matt. 22:11; *Calvini Opera,* 45:401; also quoted in Wallace, p. 27.
46. T. Stadtland, *Rechtfertigung und Heiligung bei Calvin* (Neukirchener Verlag, 1972), p. 116.
47. *Calvini Opera,* 49:310; 47:331.
48. Stadtland, p. 131.
49. *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1956), p. 114.
50. *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1900), pp. 310, 311, 312.

V. An Interview with Paxton

Jonathan Butler interviewed Geoffrey Paxton at Loma Linda. The interview was edited for SPECTRUM by Tom Dybdahl.

The Editors.

Spectrum: Tell us a little about yourself, your background and how you came to write this book.

Paxton: Well, I'm an Anglican clergyman, as you probably know. I'm married and have two boys. I was president of a theological seminary in Australia, and I got interested in this project by contact with Adventists. I was ministered to, you might say, by Seventh-day Adventists in terms of their hospitality and friendliness and in terms of their application of sanctification into the area of the body, and it coincided with a time when I was looking into sanctification in contemporary theology.

Another aspect was that by virtue of my association with Adventists, I came into quite a deal of flak in the evangelical world, which eventually resulted in my losing my job. And I was very interested to see why Adventists were looked upon in such a poor way by evangelicals. That's really how it all began.

Spectrum: Were you acquainted with Robert Brinsmead?

Paxton: Yes, I'd been friends with Brinsmead ages before I entered onto this project, and for the record, it may be as well to say that I entered upon it quite independently of Brinsmead. Some people have thought because of my association with Brinsmead that he is lurking in the shadows somewhere, but it was historically quite independent of Brinsmead. I had certainly worked with him and been friends with him before I embarked on this project, however.

Spectrum: What has been the Adventist reaction to your tour in North America so far?

Paxton: "Mixed," I think is the word. I started off with, on the one hand, an opportunity to speak in Washington in Capital Memorial Church. But I also had in my possession at the time letters from the General Conference banning me from Adventist churches. I don't really know why it went ahead in Washington, because it was in an Adventist church.

And I'm not sure why the letters were sent out. It wasn't that I had said anything that was wrong, because I hadn't said anything up to that point, and yet the general leadership of the church reacted unfavorably to the book.

Spectrum: Did this surprise you, or did you anticipate some controversy in connection with the book?

Paxton: I can't say I anticipated controversy. I thought that they would be quite active and discuss it and say whether I had misrepresented the actual facts of the situation. I expected some discussion, and I expected some disagreement, of course, but I certainly didn't expect anything like an ecclesiastical ban, even from the outset. I went from Takoma Park to Southern Missionary College and was received, I felt, in the spirit in which I wrote the book. There was a friendly, Christian sort of atmosphere, and I had a wonderful time, and quite an overwhelming response from the students and a very good response from the faculty.

But by the time I got to Andrews, all sorts of strange things started to happen. I was not only banned from Adventist churches, but I was banned from the institution a day or so before the thing was to take place, with no explanation given. I also found that some of the faculty had apparently been advised not

to attend the lectures, and some of the faculty members advised their students not to attend.

Spectrum: Where did you speak, then?

Paxton: I spoke in a place adjacent to the university, where all the plans had been made. I felt it should go ahead, because, in a sense, I'm a friendly, open critic to Adventists; I don't pay any dues. I've already paid a price for this in my own constituency, and I didn't allow them to dictate to me on my approach to Adventists, and so I really felt that I shouldn't allow Adventists to dictate to me. So we went ahead in an adjacent complex, and a thousand folk turned up, and we had a good time.

"The majority of response has been that a lot of Adventists have been confused about justification. They've felt acutely a sort of Laodicean state of affairs, and they've been very much in the dark about why the situation really is like it is."

I was really quite puzzled as to why the General Conference did this, because in actual fact, the way it appears to me, it went against them. If they had really wanted to crush me a bit, they could have done it best in a very tightly structured situation in an institution where I was out of my own waters, as it were, and where all the professors were in their own waters, and it could have been under control. But they threw it open to a much freer, much more open, situation.

I must say that in coming to Loma Linda, any disappointment that I felt from the Andrews situation was more than compensated for. I've been approached as a respectable Christian gentleman in a respectable Christian spirit. Even folk here that I knew would disagree with my theological position have met me in a very cordial, Christlike manner. And so that's restored my hopes in Adventism a little bit, and I'd like that to go on record.

Spectrum: In the book, you make some comparisons between Adventists on the West Coast and those on the East Coast. Do you find your impressions confirmed as you take the tour, or have you modified them?

Paxton: More or less I find my impressions confirmed. They seem to be a lot more conservative on the East Coast, and a lot more free or open on the West Coast.

I do feel that in the light of the present itinerary, I should make an additional comment. I have been disappointed with Andrews University. I know that pressure was brought very heavily on the men handling the situation in Loma Linda, but they stood firm because I take it they believe that there is a very precious principle involved here: the principle of Christian liberty and of the priesthood of all believers. I was literally shocked by Andrews. I didn't think they would capitulate so readily. Very precious principles were surrendered, and I feel very disappointed that this center of theological learning should capitulate to hierarchical dictates.

Spectrum: Do you feel that part of the reason for your mostly good reception on this tour might be anti-Washington feeling, a kind of theological populism among Adventists who see you as someone who has taken on the powers in Washington?

Paxton: I think there's always that danger. I think that you'll always get people, and even movements, who will want to use someone. Controversy and antagonisms bring together very strange bedfellows; we've seen that in the New Testament and we've seen that in history. I think that's always a danger. And I dare say that I have encountered some folk like that along the way. But they've not been in the majority by any means.

The majority of response has been that a lot of Adventists have been confused about justification. They've felt acutely a sort of Laodicean state of affairs, and they've been very much in the dark about why the situation really is like it is. I've had a lot of folk come to me, not least of all young folk,

who've said things like: "We've praised God for your book, you know it put everything into perspective and said things I've sort of been coming to myself." Other folk came and said even that they'd been converted through reading the book, and I've even met folk who've become Adventists through reading the book.

One of the other things that I've picked up along the way is that I really believe that a lot of Adventist folk are fed up with being sort of dealt with in a heavy way from the top. And I think they don't see me so much as a sort of crusader against general leadership, but that they see me as a symbol of something that they feel strongly about.

Then I think there are those who genuinely see very precious principles at stake; the priesthood of all believers and religious liberty. They want to stand by that, and I don't think it would matter whether it was me or anybody else, they would still stand by that, and I would certainly applaud that, of course.

Spectrum: There is a group of Adventists in Australia who are very much involved in theological discussion, maybe in a way that Adventism was in an earlier era. But I'm not sure that's true in America. How much are you seeing Adventist history and theology through the lens of Australia?

Paxton: Well, I suppose it has to be that way to some degree because I'm an Australian and I come from there, and I don't think anyone can shake off his connections. We have, for instance, in the whole country of Australia perhaps the population of greater Los Angeles, for a start, so this obviously makes discussion a lot easier. However, whether that is true or not, I see it as a side issue, because in my research I certainly tried to quote a wide range of Adventist thought on justification and tried to look at the thing very much in a wider context. I think the issue should not be where it comes from so much as whether it is correct.

Spectrum: You refer to Ellen White as a wax nose among Adventists that can be bent this way and that. She is quoted on both sides of this question of righteousness by faith, though you avoid using her in your book. Can she be quoted accurately on both sides of the question?

Paxton: She surely can be quoted on both sides of the issue, there's no question of that. She's not alone there, as Luther scholarship will show. Luther is quoted in the same way, and so is the Bible itself. Everybody thinks the Bible teaches a particular approach to things, so in that respect Ellen White can be quoted on both sides.

I keep out of the issue, as you say, in the book for two reasons: one, I feel that it would sort of muddy the waters when I feel that I have a clear enough case without it; and second, even now, I always feel somewhat loathe to quote Ellen White because when everybody quotes her on different positions, it helps eventually to minimize her authority.

Spectrum: What is your prognosis overall for Seventh-day Adventism? Do you see it as evangelicalizing and moving into the main stream a little more, or do you see it as kind of ghettoizing and entrenching itself in sectarian terms?

Paxton: That question almost exceeds my competence. But what I feel strongly is that Adventism is standing at a crucial point in human history. I am not a skeptic. I could argue a good *prima facie* case for Adventism if I wanted to, but that's not for me as a Babylonian to do an Adventist's work for him, you know. Another way of putting it is that Adventism stands face to face with the sieve. And I honestly believe that God is now sieving this movement after 133 or so years of existence so that the chaff will be put on one side and the true remnant movement will remain.

In my role, I don't make any pretentious claims. God once used an ass, and I say that gives me good precedents, and He may be using an ass today to sort of shake a little.

There are lots of things we've talked about, how that there are needs for more openness; scholars and leadership need to get together. People who are where they are because of sanctificational prowess and because of academic skill need to get together, lest sanctificational prowess and academic insight war against each other. And the leadership needs to make more vital, meaningful contact with the grass roots of the church.

Responses from Readers

On Adventist Publishing

To the Editors: I understand that publishing department criticism and suggestions for improvements or changes (Vol. 8, No. 4) are mainly related to the U.S.A. situation, three publishing houses serving one publishing market. We do hope that some efficient solution will be found affecting the English-reading population outside the U.S.A. as well.

There are two remarks I would like to make which I feel have failed to be mentioned in this issue of SPECTRUM. As Adventists, we believe in the blueprint given in Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy, but none of the writers have given any positive statements regarding how matters should be arranged to match the blueprint, either changing without hurting the blueprint and stating this with actual quotations, or returning to the blueprint if a departure from it has taken place. This, in my opinion, would be very beneficial.

If we suggest a change we must make sure we are not changing contrary to God's inspired counsel for the proclamation of the Advent Message through the means of the press. If we feel that times have changed and previously given counsel is not relevant anymore, such an opinion must be supported by an in-depth study of that previous counsel to see whether it was timely counsel or was to last until the end of probation. If some of your writers would take the time to make such an in-depth study this would be very helpful.

My next remark is against a very unfortunate statement on page 9 of said issue of SPECTRUM. First of all, the latest report, April 1978, covering the year's totals for 1977 issued by the General Conference Publishing Department, state that the world field reported 14,661 full-time and part-time literature evangelists, who for that year 1977 were responsible for at least 16,639 baptisms. Almost each division, including North America, showed an increase in the number of literature evangelists.

I think the writer could have quoted the latest figure for literature evangelists and not a previous figure of 6,000. If that figure of 6,000 represents only full-time literature evangelists, then the latest figure is still better, which is 9,040, or about a 30 percent increase.

To state in the same column of page 9 that our distribution methods through literature evangelists is outdated, at least in some environments, is very, very unfortunate, to put it kindly. From a highly intellectual journal with an Adventist background, I would have expected something better. This statement is fully contrary to Spirit of Prophecy writing regarding this matter.

Literature evangelism will never be outdated. If in some environments the activities are not what they should be, this is because of complacency among our believers lacking the missionary and right soul-winning spirit, which not only has an adverse effect upon the publishing department in some areas of the world field, but upon other departments as well. I realise we have problems, but not to the extent that we can say the method is outdated.

I trust that you will accept this letter in the

spirit in which it is written, love for the cause of God, and great confidence in the publishing programme of the Adventist Church, in spite of the fact that I still believe we have room for improvement and expansion. In my mind the statement stands firm, "that in large degree through our publishing houses the work will be accomplished of that other angel" (*Testimonies*, Vol. 7, p. 140).

More, much more should be done to make sure that this statement meets its full fullfillment and not in the least through the faithful missionary endeavour of our literature evangelists around the world.

J. T. Knopper
Publishing Director
Australasian Division

To the Editors: A copy of Pastor J. T. Knoppers' letter, dated May 10, 1978, has reached my desk. In this letter, he refers to Vol. 8, No. 4, of SPECTRUM. Some time ago, I read the material referred to here and must confess that I was also surprised at the lack of facts relating to the General Conference Publishing Department and its program. It reminded me a bit of someone's making a trip through a foreign country, first time abroad, and then writing a book on the problems of that country.

My hope would be that in the future any time there is a desire to write on the publishing interests of the church, that this office be contacted for the latest figures and facts. This, in my opinion, would strengthen the voice of SPECTRUM rather than weaken it.

Bruce M. Wickwire
Director, Publishing Department
General Conference

On Homosexuals

To the editors: The article, "The Christian, Homosexuals and the Law" (Vol. 9, No. 2), by Jack W. Provonsha, follows an interesting progression from an exceptionally tolerant explanation of homosexuality to an implicit endorsement of California's upcoming anti-homosexual teachers initiative. From "the Christian knows, if he is informed, that a homosexual may not have chosen to be a homosexual," the logic proceeds to "if they . . . promote a lifestyle that undermines society's valued institutions (in this case, the family), society has not only the right but also the duty to restrain them — for example, to deny them access to youth role-modeling positions." However, if the informed Christian holds the view that certain people will be homosexual whether or not they want to be, then he should encourage access of homosexuals to role-modeling positions.

Provonsha fails to identify exactly what aspect of homosexuality he sees a threat to the institution of the family. The only inherent difference in such unions is the impossibility of progeny. If this is the point that makes them dangerous, are singles or members of couples who cannot or choose not to have children also to be denied access to role-modeling positions?

Because Provonsha fails to be specific, I will choose a point often held against homosexuals. On the average, they are likelier not to form marriage-type unions as often as heterosexuals, but there is no proof that this tendency is inherent and not sociologically determined. America does not legally recognize homosexual marriages. Society's general non-acceptance leads to a lack of support from the families of homosexuals for committed relationships. Discrimination against homosexuals in jobs and housing, in fact, encourages a lifestyle of covert sexual activity rather than of stable commitments.

If we are to accept the premise that some are born homosexuals, what is really the threat to a society built on families? Is it openness and acceptance of homosexuality and encouragement of stable couples that would give young homosexuals good examples to pattern their own lives after? Or is it silence and an absence of role models that would leave young homosexuals the confusing options of disastrous homosexual-heterosexual marriages or the vicious cycle of society-threatening promiscuity?

The rising amount of marriages in gay churches and the great numbers of gays that

form committed relationships despite total lack of support from families, religions, government and society in general should indicate that it is the bigotry and not the homosexual struggle for validity that is the threat to society. One can't both allow the legitimacy of homosexuality and deny it a voice to help it find a place in society that would strengthen and not threaten the structure.

Nancy Mann
San Francisco

On Pacific Press Case

To the Editors: Since publication of the last issue of SPECTRUM, the *U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission* v. *Pacific Press* case has proceeded to trial. The agreement described by Robert Nixon on page 5 of SPECTRUM (Vol. 9, No. 2) was never signed.

Although the parties agreed orally to the terms of the settlement, an insurmountable problem arose over putting those terms in writing in a mutually binding legal agreement. The Press also declined to settle the monies withheld from all women employees between 1970 and 1973, and so the Government has now filed a complaint alleging discrimination practiced by Pacific Press in wage and benefit payments to all employees, based on gender.

The basic facts and figures concerning wage and benefit discrimination against women employees are admitted by Pacific Press to July 1, 1973, and stipulated to by both the Press and the Government. The issue before the court is whether the Press must comply with laws against such discrimination.

The Press continues to insist it is not under the law. As part of its defense, counsel for Press reintroduced unchanged the "first minister," "spiritual Leader" and "hierarchical tribunal" affidavits of R. H. Pierson and N. C. Wilson. Their brief again argues broadly that "the attempt by government to regulate the conduct of Pacific Press is unconstitutional." (Pacific Press Opening Post-Trial Memorandum, June 2, 1978, page 13.)

To this the government replied, "The [First] Amendment . . . hardly vests any religiously-affiliated institution with an unreviewable [constitutional] right to determine the legality of its own employment practices or to sit as a judge on its own conduct — matters clearly affecting another's rights . . . . No case has extended First Amendment protection to conduct which injured the rights of others." (EEOC Post-Trial Reply Brief, June 16, 1978, page 5.)

Concluding arguments will be heard by the Federal District Court in San Francisco on June 29, 1978.

Lorna Tobler
Sunnyvale, California

On Adventist Creed

To the Editors: I have greatly enjoyed reading the series of articles appearing under the topic "An Adventist Creed?" (Vol. 8, No. 4). I was particularly impressed with the article by William Wright, which presented the argument *against* creeds most persuasively from a historic standpoint. I find, however, the historical argument, impressive as it is, less than convincing.

Leaving out W. J. Hackett's original article in the May 26, 1977 *Review and Herald* which gave rise to the whole controversy, I would like to point out for your consideration a few aspects of the problem which I feel the expressed opposing views failed to take into account.

1) Just because churches that adopted "creeds" later used them to set up inquisitions and quash dissent, it does not follow that a causality is thereby established between their behavior and the "creeds." Other factors about those church bodies might be responsible — either with or to the exclusion of the "creeds." Some church bodies did (and unfortunately some still do) use the Bible in the same way. There is, therefore, little comfort in the retreat to the position that "the Bible is our only creed," as if that automatically served to protect us from intolerance and bigotry.

2) While I agree that "a doctrinal or position statement" and a "creed" may differ only in name, there is no question but that the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a body holds a number of characteristic beliefs, or doctrines, naturally on Bible grounds, to the exclusion of, or even in contradiction to, those of other religious bodies also claiming Biblical authority.

3) If it is all right for me as a Seventh-day Adventist talking to another Christian, say a Baptist or a Catholic, to call attention to those characteristic doctrines which set me apart from him/her and are shared collectively by the brethren in my church, why does it become suddenly wrong to call the attention of a fellow SDA to the same set of views when he/she appears to be deviating (pardon the word) to a position more in keeping with that of, say, a Baptist or a Catholic?

4) Whether or not anyone wishes to argue that we have no right to declare any basic Adventist beliefs as "nonnegotiable," one has to admit that if we ever "negotiate" some of those beliefs we will no longer be the same — save perhaps in name. The question is thus not whether one has the right to hold individual beliefs that may differ from those of the brethren within the church, but to what extent one may differ and still remain an SDA. There, is, therefore, a range of variation beyond which identity within a class may be lost.

I am, of course, aware that there are many areas about which neither the Bible nor the Spirit of Prophecy seem to shed enough light — at least in the context of our present spiritual experience and, perhaps, ability to understand. I have been around long enough to have heard and read statements made from the pulpit and printed in official periodicals which I am sure the authors must have wished they had never uttered publicly — in light of subsequent events. I also know enough about human nature not to hold any illusions concerning our ability to repress forever our tendency to engage in speculations. But the day some of those speculations start being taught as more than speculations (or I should say become established) in our institutions of learning in the name of academic freedom — in lieu of our traditional views and without the benefit of proof or further prophetic light — we might as well disband and send our children to public schools.

The real issue then seems to be not whether we should adopt a "creed" or "statement of beliefs" considered basic to the retention of our identity as Seventh-day Adventists, but how we arrive at such a statement and what use we shall make of it. We can go the way of Babylon with or without a "creed," and we can even do so while clinging to our Bibles.

Albert P. Wellington
Interlaken, New York