

Whither Adventist History?  
Soviet Views of Adventism  
Analysis of John Paul II

# SPECTRUM

A Quarterly Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums

Volume 10, Number 3

## PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATION

Quality of Higher Education  
Roots of College English Teaching  
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# SPECTRUM

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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 pub-

lishing 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. © 1979. All rights reserved.

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# About This Issue

Since its very beginnings, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been committed to Christian education. Ellen White wrote extensively on the subject and today the church supports a vast system of institutions ranging from small elementary schools through universities offering graduate and professional degrees. In this issue, SPECTRUM publishes a wide variety of articles intended to provide some perspectives on Adventist education. Helen Ward Thompson, a respected Adventist educator, views with a critical eye the academic performance of the Adventist college system, and suggests that a new commitment to quality education is necessary. By tracing the lives and methods of the earliest Adventist English teachers, John Waller next provides a historical perspective on the origins of Adventist education. Two articles then describe Christian nondenominational education. In the first, Jonathan Glenn shares his impressions on attending graduate school at Notre Dame, and in the second, Dave Schwantes analyzes the goals of a nonchurch-supported Adventist elementary school. Our special section concludes with two reviews of books treating the history and philosophy of denominational education.

We are pleased to include in this issue two timely articles providing an international perspective on Christianity. Ron Walden analyzes the writings and teachings of John Paul II in the context of his visit to America and of twentieth-century Catholicism, and Chuck Scriven edits four articles published in the Soviet Union which provide insight into Communist attitudes toward Adventism. Two other articles provide further perspectives on subjects previously discussed by SPECTRUM. Benjamin McArthur suggests the serious implications of recent historical studies of Adventism and Ellen White, and Siegfried Horn analyzes the relationship between biblical chronologies and genealogies in determining the age of the earth. Finally, we include a short story by a widely published Adventist author, Steve Spruill.

Since the next issue will conclude the tenth volume of SPECTRUM, we will publish three articles analyzing developments in Adventist history, theology and science during the past ten years, and another article tracing the history of the Association of Adventist Forums. The issue will also include essays suggesting new directions for the church in the future and an index to SPECTRUM.

The Editors

# John Paul II and the Twentieth-Century Popes

by Ron Walden

Despite an eight-day media blitz, John Paul II leaves America as something of a mystery. He is surely an attractive figure, especially by papal standards. He sings, skis, walks like a linebacker and has trouble keeping his skullcap on straight. Yet, for many Americans who listened to what he said, he remains an enigma. He pleased progressives in and out of Roman Catholicism by attacking the values of bourgeois capitalism, but identified with conservatives within his church by stating bluntly in Philadelphia and Chicago that he opposed ordaining women and married men, expected priests to be unwaveringly loyal to the hierarchy and adamantly rejected not only abortion and divorce, but even birth control.

To penetrate the apparent contradictions in John Paul II requires an intellectual journey to the contexts that formed Karol Wojtyla's character: currents within contemporary European thought and the mainstream of twentieth-century Catholicism. First, we

shall look at John Paul's intellectual training and the school of European philosophy with which he has identified professionally. Then, we will review some aspects of the history of Roman popes during our century, with special attention to their developing positions on church renewal and issues of peace and justice.

John Paul II is a scholar of some stature. Unlike other popes, he has served on the steering committees of learned societies, published extensive technical treatises and supervised doctoral dissertations. And although John Paul I, the short-lived "September pope" with the smile, had been a professor, he taught in a typical little Italian seminary, whereas his namesake's university career has brought him into the mainstream of modern secular intellectual life. What can we learn from John Paul II's publications in the field of philosophy and theology that might illuminate his outlook on the world and his purposes as pope?

As a philosopher, the present pope is a phenomenologist. When it is used as a technical term in philosophy, "phenomenology" means more than just a purely descriptive study of some subject matter. It denotes rather a particular school of continental phil-

Ron Walden, a graduate of La Sierra College, holds an M.Div. from Andrews University and a Ph.D. in Roman Catholic theology from Yale University.

osophy and that school's methodology. The central and most influential figure in the phenomenological movement was Edmund Husserl, a German Jew who began his career as a mathematician but quickly moved on to philosophical issues, which he wrote about with a passionate intensity and at great length until he died, amid the gathering shadows of the Third Reich, in 1938. One of Husserl's important early collaborators was a Roman Catholic sociologist, Max Scheler, who published a major work on ethics in Husserl's journal. Scheler is the writer whom the pope quotes most warmly in his philosophical writings.

We can make some educated guesses about why the pope has found aspects of phenomenology appealing. Phenomenology claims to be an analysis of human consciousness, and as such, it makes continual appeal to concrete human experience. That is, in opposition to the rigid deductive approach taken by some Catholic philosophers, John Paul's philosophical school tries to think with constant reference to experience and without the prejudices of a preconceived theoretical formulation. Yet, phenomenology is not out-and-out empiricism. It does operate with the conviction that there is such a thing as human consciousness there to be analyzed. For that reason, the pope has obviously found it an attractive alternative to a thoroughgoing materialism or to certain forms of linguistic philosophy, which he seems to find less easily compatible with the Christian doctrine of man.

For him, the most distinctive and valuable aspect of a human being, — that which makes a human being a person, — is not rationality itself, but action. His longest and most original book, *The Acting Person*, is devoted to an analysis of the conscious human act and its structure and parts. The *actus humanus* was also a concern of Thomas Aquinas, but John Paul's approach to it is very unlike that of classical thomistic philosophy. His insistence that it is in action alone that the wholeness and distinctive individuality of a person emerge often sounds more like existentialism. Human life comes first, in all

its active particularity, and only then comes talk of its structures or "essential" patterns.

Of course, John Paul is too good a Catholic thinker to deny the essential rationality of human being, and here he decisively parts company with the existentialists. He believes that human action always has a rational aspect which tempers its quality of raw decision, but that reason itself does not constitute the particularity of the individual person. Rather, it is the concrete human act, which synthesizes motion, emotion and intention, that makes a person who he or she is.

Because it is personal, a human act has value of itself; even before it is brought into relation with rules or norms, it is a moral event. "The performance itself of the action by a person is a value," Cardinal Wojtyla wrote. This radical union of ethics and ontology sharply rules out legalism. Its implications in practice are hard to avoid: If a human act has value in itself, that value must be protected from external coercion. People must therefore be free to act as they see fit, or fundamental human dignity is injured.

It should be no surprise, then, that Pope John Paul II has been a consistent champion of religious liberty. As archbishop of Cracow, of course, he was untiring in his challenges to the government's restrictions on his church's freedom. But he also knows that freedom works both ways, that the church may not claim it for herself without offering it to others. One of his most memorable speeches at the Vatican Council was an eloquent defense of the principle that religious freedom must be extended to all, even to those in error, even to atheists.

In sum, John Paul's philosophical positions show extraordinary respect for the unique concreteness of each human situation and for the nobility of each person's groping, even mistaken, actions of self-definition. The details of his phenomenology of human life and of "acting" by "persons" will, of course, be subject to criticism, just as every philosopher's proposals are. The point to notice here is twofold: For the first time in centuries, the pope of Rome has an independent, coherent, technically competent philosophy of his own and, moreover, that philosophy suggests or

accommodates certain clear choices in theology and church policy as well.

In John Paul's theology, the result of his unremitting attention as a philosopher to the concrete human situation is a corresponding emphasis of the Christian doctrine of man. He continually approaches the central Christian mysteries by developing a synthesis of traditional and contemporary teachings about human experience. In his first encyclical, "Redemptor hominis," issued last

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March, he wrote, "We penetrate by means of the continually and rapidly increasing experience of the human family into the mystery of Jesus Christ." He then explicitly says that even in the secular realm, God's redemptive grace is at work, simply because human beings are there:

Against a background of the ever-increasing historical processes, which seem at the present time to have results especially within the spheres of various systems, ideological concepts of the world and regimes, Jesus Christ becomes, in a way, newly present, in spite of all his apparent absences, in spite of all the limitations of the presence and of the institutional activity of the Church. Jesus Christ becomes present with the power of the truth and the love that are expressed in him with unique unrepeatable fullness.

... what is in question here is man in all his truth, in his full magnitude. We are not dealing with the "abstract" man, but the real, "concrete," "historical" man. We are dealing with "each" man, for each one is included in the mystery of Redemption and with each one Christ has united himself forever through this mystery.

A companion emphasis, discernible in the last sentence of this quotation, is the one the pope places on the incarnation. Because God became a man in Jesus Christ, "the Church cannot abandon man, for his 'destiny,' that is to say, his election, calling, birth and death, salvation or perdition, is so closely and unbreakably linked with Christ." And a bit later the pope adds:

Man in the full truth of his existence, of his personal being and also of his community and social being. . . this man is the primary route that the Church must travel in fulfilling her mission. . . . because man — every man without any exception whatever — has been redeemed by Christ, and because with man — with each man without any exception whatever — Christ is in a way united, even when man is unaware of it.

When John Paul attempts as a philosopher to be an honest listener to the voices of concrete, active human beings, and when as a theologian he emphasizes the humanity of God and the consequent worthiness of all humanity, he does not thereby offer a new ecclesiastical program for the Catholic Church. What does set him apart is that he has his own independently forged intellectual framework to accommodate the church's teaching. The search for Pope John Paul II inevitably leads to an examination of the teachings of his predecessors.

**I**t is important at the outset that the history of the papacy not be identified with the history of the Roman Catholic religion. The office of pope is only one among many offices in the church. If one thinks for a moment about what individual Catholics do, and what parishes and schools, dioceses and national churches, and orders of monks and nuns actually do, it is faintly ludicrous to regard the Catholic church as simply an intricate extension of the pope's person and powers. Hence, to trace the course of twentieth-century papal history is to trace but a part of twentieth-century Catholic history; the preoccupations of the popes have been only some of the concerns of the church at large.

From Pius IX to John XXIII there were

five popes: the vigorous and subtle Leo XII, the saintly and pastoral Pius X, whose spirit was crushed by the onset of World War I; the skillful diplomat, Benedict XV, who guided the church during the war; Pius XI, pope between the wars; and Pius XII, an elegant and austere man whose caution on speaking out on issues of social justice gave way to militant anticommunism in the 1950s. All of these men faced variations of two main problems — renewal of the church and international relations, including the political issues of peace and justice.

During our century, the self-definition of the church has been at the heart of internal renewal. It began at the end of World War I and rallied at first around the slogan of “the Mystical Body of Christ.” Biblical scholars contributed importantly to the discussion.\* It is hard now to realize how profound in its implications was the shift from political metaphors to biblical images. Before our century, the Catholic Church had typically defined itself by analogy to a monarchical state, arguing that it, too, had a right to hierarchical government, to earthly sovereignty, and even to police powers and the means of coercion. By contrast, the “Corpus-Christi-mysticum” movement emphasized that the church was not just “visible and palpable, like the Roman people, or the Kingdom of France, or the Republic of the Venetians,” as the great seventeenth-century Jesuit Robert Bellarmine had claimed, but that it had a mysterious, com-

munal, even invisible side as well, which was better brought out by the biblical metaphor of the Body of Christ. The phrase seemed richer, more vital, less juridical, more accommodating of the genuine Christianity of non-Catholics, and freer of stifling clericalism than earlier ways of speaking of the church.

But the shift clearly made the curia and some of the popes uneasy. If people start emphasizing the living, affectively rich relations of Christians among themselves and with Christ, as the phrase “body of Christ” encourages them to do, they may easily turn away from a forbidding churchly institution and resist the authority of its officers. The tension between mystical body and visible church may become so great that the connections between them disappear. It was that danger which Pius XII meant to forestall by issuing perhaps the greatest of his encyclicals, “*Mystici corporis*,” in 1943. The pope placed his blessing on the movement and had words of high praise for the new vocabulary, but he sought to remove the threat it offered to the ecclesiastical institution by simply equating the mystical Body of Christ with the (presumably visible) Roman Catholic Church. In one bold stroke, he had turned a progressive slogan into a conservative one.

The role of the church in international affairs goes back at least to what came to be known as the “Roman Question.” Put simply, the issue concerned the pope’s right to temporal sovereignty over the Patrimony of Saint Peter, some rather extensive territory in central Italy which the papacy ruled at least nominally from the eighth century until 1870. It was beyond dispute the most important international issue on the papal agenda for the 50 years thereafter. Pius IX contributed to making the question intractable. He had been a foe of European political liberalism since it had temporarily exiled him from Rome during the revolutions of 1848, and he bitterly resisted the generation-long campaign to unify the Italian peninsula under a liberal monarch. In 1870, the liberals took Rome at long last and Pius retreated into the

\*The modern biblical movement began among Catholics during the so-called “Modernist” crisis of the turn of the century. Its popular side has consistently been supported by the popes, who have encouraged private Bible reading by the laity and supported such modern translations into the vernacular as the English Confraternity Bible and Mgr. Ronald Knox’s version. Scholars have not fared as well. Many of the Modernist positions condemned by the Holy Office in 1907 bore on the church’s use of scripture and on the concept of revelation, and the upshot of the crisis was that Catholic exegetes were more subject than ever to the detailed control of the churchly teaching office. But the biblical scholars kept plugging away during the dark years between the wars, their work enriching the movements for the renewal of the liturgy and the doctrine of the church, and finally in 1943 they were rewarded by an epoch-making encyclical of Pius XII, which cautiously affirmed “the freedom of scientific investigation in biblical matters” and serves as the *Magna Carta* of modern Catholic biblical studies.

Vatican palace, condemning anyone associated with the new Italian kingdom.

Under Pius' successor, Leo XIII, and even more under the twentieth-century popes, the church transformed its struggle for the political right to temporal sovereignty into a spiritual battle for independence from all political authority. The church needed a toehold of territory, the new argument went, not so that it could be one kingdom among others, but so that it could be independent from all earthly kingdoms. From the point of view of the church's mission, the loss of the Papal States was an inestimable gain. By the 1920s, the pope himself was ready to recognize that. The Lateran Treaty of 1929 and its accompanying Concordat confirmed the independence of the church by guaranteeing the extraterritoriality and nominal sovereignty of the Vatican and satisfied the Italian state by acknowledging that the former papal domains were part of a unified, secular Italy with its capital at Rome.

At last, in spite of themselves, the popes were set free from worldly concerns to become worldwide pastors. Since World War I, they may have suffered from theological shortsightedness, and they may have temporized badly on some ecclesiastical issues, but they have provided clear and consistent advocacy of morality in international affairs. Benedict XV had been a quiet but very effective supporter of the Wilsonian principles on which the League of Nations was founded. The correspondent for *The New York Times* wrote after his death that he

was undoubtedly possessed by the belief that the thing he was ordained to do in a world of war was to make peace. He had carefully refrained during the war from any action that might weaken his claim to be the arbitrator of conflicts. He passed no judgments on the belligerents except those protests against incontrovertible outrages like the sinking of the *Lusitania*, the bombing of churches, the slaughter of non-combatants. But he realized that the consequences of the war were more devastating than the war itself, and that a military peace was a kind of cosmic sarcasm so long as there was neither economic nor social peace.

In general, this was the program that all the popes followed through Pius XII: Quiet diplomacy behind the scenes rather than confrontations; ceaseless encouragement of peaceful solutions to international disputes; effective support for the institutions of international law; continued insistence that true peace must be based on social and economic justice.

And anticommunism. When, from time to time, the pope found himself allied with a figure or movement which later history has shown to be villainous, the mistake was almost always due to anticommunism. Most of the Vatican's unfortunate involvement in Italian politics, for example, stems from its hostility to the Italian Communist Party. Pius XII offered tacit — and Pius XI open — support to Mussolini because he was an alternative to the Communists. Since the war, the church has consistently supported the Christian Democrats, even when their governments have been weak and corrupt. Nothing seems to make the Vatican forget the advantages of the Concordat so quickly as a Communist gain at the polls; then, suddenly, the papacy again begins to act like an Italian Renaissance principality.

The Italian scene, though, is one example of a general rule about Catholic involvement in twentieth-century politics: The church has a very spotty record on the local and national level, while internationally it has been fairly consistent in its support of justice for the poor and international peace. Catholic bishops and clergy have often taken sides with their nation's lords of violence and oppression (one remembers the miters and croziers near Franco, and Cardinal Spellman in Vietnam), but Catholics can be justly proud of the international leadership of recent popes. With regard to poverty resulting from the inequities of capitalism, there is a succession of courageous papal documents.\* Pope Paul's eloquent United Nations speech

\*These begin with Leo XIII's "Rerum novarum" and run through Pius XI's "Quadragesimo anno" to Paul VI's brilliant "Populorum progressio." And with respect to war, Pope John's "Pacem in terris."



stands in line with 75 years of papal peacemaking.

The Second Vatican Council was known for “turning the church around” on the issues of church renewal, as well as peace and justice. Yet, as we have just seen, the Council’s positions on all these matters had important precedents. Vatican II was epoch-making not because it created new progressive doctrines

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out of thin air, but because it selected trends from an ambiguously rich and varied past and put an official stamp of approval on them.

The Council’s central achievement was to reformulate the church’s vision of its own nature and mission. By the time Vatican II opened in 1961, Catholic progressives had found a new slogan to supplement the “Mystical Body of Christ” in their theories of the church. It was another biblical image, this time found in the Old Testament’s “Pilgrim People of God.” At a critical moment during the Council, Pope John XXIII dramatically interrupted the proceedings in order to insure that this new vision of the church would prevail. When official Catholic theology highlights the people of the church instead of its institutional structures, then a profound shift of emphasis has taken place. A “Copernican revolution” has occurred. That is just what happened at Vatican II.

With the aid of Pope John XXIII, the progressive majority of bishops at the Council rewrote the Catholic doctrine of the church. They decisively subordinated the older, defensive emphasis on the church’s changelessness and rigid institutional perfection (guaranteed by a privileged clergy and especially the pope), to a new emphasis on a

people, gathered by God’s providence to undertake an often stumbling pilgrimage through time, equipped with certain gifts and services. Among these services, or “ministries,” are the priesthood, the episcopacy and the papacy. But these offices exist for the sake of the people, and not the other way around. In the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church the chapter on the people of God comes first, and the chapter on the structure of the churches comes afterwards.

In the Council’s other masterpiece, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, a corollary shift of emphasis occurs. Here, not only does the hierarchy exist for the sake of God’s people and not the reverse, but also the church itself exists for the sake of the world, and not the reverse. Just as the clergy serves the church instead of commanding it, so, too, the church serves the world instead of commanding it. These profound changes in Catholicism’s definition of itself and its mission were not unprecedented. We have seen how nearly a century of papal history had prepared for the second Vatican Council.

**A**gainst this historical background, John Paul II has no surprises to offer. The majority of cardinals wanted to elect a whole-hearted supporter of Vatican II, and they got one. The new pope agrees with his immediate predecessors. Like Pope John and Pope Paul, he is somewhat anticapitalist on social issues, though anti-Marxist as well. In the spirit of Vatican II, he appears eager to find new, more collegial patterns of governing the church. But in matters of sexuality (married priests, ordination of women, birth control, abortion, homosexuality), issues the Council did not treat in detail, he takes the traditional line, just as John and Paul did. His speech to the bishops in Chicago left no doubt about that. On the issues, he offers nothing new.

Yet, John Paul II’s accession to the See of Saint Peter and his actions since then have stirred an excitement that not even John XXIII evoked. “John Paul, Superstar!” screams *Time* magazine. Why? I think it is due to two matters of style: The pope is Polish, and he is young.

Both of these facts are more serious than they seem at first, and both of them bear a relation to the increasingly international character of the Catholic Church. The Christian church has always claimed to be "catholic," that is, worldwide. But only since the nineteenth century has Christianity become truly universal. And only since the pontificate of John XXIII has that universality become evident in the governance of the Roman Catholic Church. When all the world's bishops assembled in St. Peter's for the Vatican Council in 1961, it was a shock to notice how few of them were Italians and how many of them were not even white! Of all the accomplishments of Pope John's successor, Paul VI, perhaps the most decisive was his internationalization of the College of Cardinals. The conclaves that elected John Paul I and John Paul II were comprised almost entirely of Paul's appointees; and they were the first in over half a millennium not to be dominated by Italians, and the first since classical times to be so influenced by non-Europeans. In the lifetime of most of the readers of this journal, the Roman Catholic Church has become genuinely internationalized.

Just as the election of a Pole represents internationalization, the youthfulness of John Paul is a sign of its recent date. It is as if the Cardinals wanted to acknowledge that the world had recently become a "global village," thoroughly international and unified, with a premium on youth and vigor. For them, John Paul's style has significance.

Of course, the "global village" is brought

together by what the Vatican quaintly calls "the instruments of social communication," that is, the media. And John Paul is a media star, the first pope truly to understand television. Pope Paul never realized that if you speak of your "great joy" but your face is pinched, the television will mercilessly show your grimace, not your joy. John Paul, on the other hand, is a natural on television. He can work the crowds, intone a slogan and exploit a symbol with the skill of a Kennedy. On his American tour, he deftly chose the holy places of the American civil religion and the archtypical centers of American ethnic groups and made just the right remark, just the appropriate gesture, at each. He shrewdly saved his hard words for the end of his tour, after the television and newspapers had made him beloved.

We have said that all this amounts to a difference of style, not of substance. John Paul II has said nothing that his three immediate predecessors have not said. But this pope has personal qualities and media skills that do set him apart from all other popes. He therefore has, and can increase, a large fund of goodwill from masses of people. He has the self-possession and intelligence to know how he wants to spend that support. In the modern world, a difference of style is a difference of substance. The substantial style of John Paul II will undoubtedly continue to attract worldwide attention. After observing his American tour, it can safely be predicted that Pope John Paul II intends his enormous appeal to draw people in the direction set by his twentieth century predecessors.

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# Where Are Historians Taking the Church?

by Benjamin McArthur

We are witnessing the first great age of Adventist historical revisionism. Although there has been but a scattered handful of articles, unpublished papers and a single book thus far, their impact has been felt far beyond their number.\* Ronald Numbers' *Prophetess of Health* has particularly aroused passionate debate. This paper will *not* be a critique of these works, however; there is no intention of discussing the merits or shortcomings of their arguments. I will assume a familiarity with them on the part of my readers. But to briefly summarize what I see as the unifying argument running throughout these works, I would say that their authors all share the belief that the cultural milieu in which Ellen White lived and worked to a large degree shaped her writings on history, prophecy, health and, by implication, every other topic

\*Besides the work of Numbers, I am thinking of articles in SPECTRUM by William Peterson, Gary Land, Eric Anderson, Donald Casebolt and Jonathan Butler.

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she discussed. At issue, then, is the nature of her inspiration and thus her authority in the church. My purpose is not to arouse passions, but to shed some light on the impulse to revise the tradition that has defined Ellen White and Adventism first by considering some of the sociological factors at work, and second, by suggesting what the new scholarship's impact on the Adventist Church will be.

The dilemma of the Adventist historian fits into the wider problem of the intellectual in the church. A movement that was originally peopled by folk of modest means and education has grown into an institution composed of many who are highly educated and whose field of specialization leads them into areas ripe for doctrinal conflict. One thinks immediately of those Adventists in the physical sciences, such as geology, whose research has important implications for the church's view on creation and the age of the earth. Here, the evolutionary presuppositions Adventists must work with in their discipline conflict with church dogma. This conflict between science and faith is one with which Adventist laymen have long been familiar. The threat to faith of the historical

science, however, has broken upon church members unexpectedly. That this should be so may be explained by a failure to appreciate the central role of the historian in any community.

In their most traditional function, historians are the guardians of tradition. They record the words of its wise men and the great deeds of its heroes; they carefully select and edit the material that will compose the society's view of its past, and by extension, define the meaning of its present. History is the chief means of binding people into a cohesive and self-conscious unit. This has been true from the earliest days of humanity when tribes gathered around a fire to hear the ritualistic telling of their origins, to the twentieth century Marxist historians' attempts at building working-class solidarity through their particular brand of revisionism. Nineteenth-century American historiography partook of this same kind of community-building. Bancroft, Parkman and Weems wrote histories that developed a sense of nationhood, that created heroes for generations of children to emulate.

But the deeply nationalistic historical writing of the last century has fallen out of favor in recent times, giving way to a new ideal: that of dispassionate analysis. For example, the celebration of the American experiment, though not repudiated by all historians, has been replaced by a systematic questioning of old truths, exposing fraud and prejudice alongside altruism and tolerance. Instead of being guardians of tradition, historians have become social critics. This change of attitude and function accompanied the professionalization of historical writing in the late nineteenth century. Graduate education instilled the practitioners of Clio's art with the value of scientific objectivity; sentimental attachments to cherished figures and institutions could not stand in the way of the pursuit of truth. In this spirit, influential and iconoclastic books appeared, such as Charles Beard's *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution* (1913), which dared suggest that America's pantheon of Founding Fathers might have been motivated by self-serving ends. From that day on, no American hero has been safe from unflattering revisionism.

Adventist historiography has followed a pattern of development similar to that of the historical profession as a whole, albeit with a time lag of many decades. Histories of the Adventist Church have always been apologetic. Loughborough, Olson, Froom, Nichol, Spaulding and Maxwell used history to inspire confidence in God's leading among members of the church and to refute the charges of outsiders. Lines of causation frequently led to an underlying providential guidance. To a striking degree, the church's history was divorced from its social matrix. Above all, the apologias accepted unquestioningly the inspiration of Ellen White's pen, thus making the search for historical influences not only unnecessary but also threatening.

The revolution in Adventist historiography has been a function of graduate school education. To be sure, ever since Everett Dick pioneered the history Ph.D. in the 1930s, a number of Adventist historians had pursued higher education. But the usual path to the doctorate had been via academy teaching, with graduate school being taken in bits and pieces, during summers and infrequent leaves, often extending the degree program for years. Some of the best historians of our

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denomination had to follow this circuitous route. But it necessarily kept them from becoming full participants in the very special culture of graduate school. By contrast, the reformulators of the Adventist tradition all went through nearly uninterrupted history graduate programs (and one in English) at an early age and at prestigious institutions. They felt full force the impact of the critical

methodology which lies at the heart of graduate training, and when they brought these intellectual tools to bear on their own ecclesiastical tradition conflict was inevitable.

There has been created, in effect, a new class of intellectuals within the church, bound together by their common educational heritage, whose function is to offer critical examination of the church's tradition. The Adventist Church has not known such a group before and is having trouble accepting its legitimacy. Criticism, in the worst meaning of the word, had always come from dissidents, from the Canrights; understandably, then, even the most gentle questioning of dogma could easily be confused with disillusioned quibble. Yet, in a deeper sense, church leaders are rightfully concerned about this "unattached" intellectual class, for its members' unequivocal loyalty to orthodox belief can no longer be taken for granted.

But uneasiness about their new role characterizes the historians as well as church leaders. They are caught between the tug of religious nurture and institutional loyalty on the one hand, and adherence to the creed of their professional discipline on the other, which demands that they follow the logic of their evidence wherever it leads. The discipline's insistence on finding causal explanation within the temporal realm heightens the problem, for it seemingly counters the assumption that God acts directly in the affairs of humanity. The problem is not that the Adventist historian lacks faith in God's providential leading, but that there is no way for them to include it in historical explanation. Thus, discussions of Ellen White's writings are bound to lead to her reliance on other historians, or on reformers, or on the prevailing social climate of her time. Ultimately, Adventist historians will have to come to terms with the contention of Van Harvey and others that orthodox belief and critical historical judgment are incompatible. Does a presupposition of belief necessarily preclude sound historical judgment?

Perhaps more important than the causes of revisionism is the question of its impact on

the church. Will the qualifications of Mrs. White's inspiration truly become the "new orthodoxy," as Eric Anderson maintained in a recent discussion of McAdams' work (SPECTRUM, Vol. 9, No. 3)? And more to the point — should it?

Only future historians can answer the first question, as the ramifications have not yet been worked out. But literalist readings of Mrs. White are so much a part of Adventist belief that any change could only come with great difficulty, possibly at the cost of schism. As long as revisionist writings remain either unpublished or unread by the rank and file membership, their long-range effect may be negligible. Much depends, of course, on the openness of church leadership, especially regarding the editorial policies of the *Review and Herald*, *Ministry* and the Sabbath School quarterlies. The church's publications, along with ministerial influence from the pulpit, probably shape attitudes concerning the Spirit of Prophecy more than anything else, and it is extremely unlikely that liberalization will occur in either of those places. Yet, the influence of Adventism's intellectual class should not be minimized. The work of one historian has gained a sympathetic hearing from General Conference leaders and White Estate administrators, indicating that they are willing to consider new points of view if approached in a conciliatory fashion. The greatest influence would come, in fact, from a deliberate working within the institution to change attitudes rather than firing revisionist salvos that would only invite counterattack.

But what if ministers no longer cited Ellen White as authority and the *Review and Herald* conceded that her writings were historically conditioned? What would be the effect on the church if that became the prevailing attitude among church members? Some would argue that not a great deal would be lost. One could still accept Mrs. White's prophetic function, even while modifying the level of her writing's inspiration. From this point of view, Mrs. White would serve in the same way that many Old Testament prophets did: to encourage and build up the community of faith. Her writings solidified the body of believers in her time and can still be of great

devotional benefit today, but they offer the modern reader no inspired revelation concerning history or health or any topic about which we can know more than she. This reformulation of the meaning of Mrs. White's inspiration has the attraction of retaining her status as a prophet of the church (albeit one reduced in authority), while removing the ground for conflict with the historical-critical method. Yet, such a tactic removes the propositional heart of her writings, reducing them to either pages of historical interest for students of nineteenth-century religion or, as mentioned, eloquent devotional messages.

But most Adventists continue to read Ellen White in the belief that they are learning the *true* facts of the Reformation, that her counsels on health owed nothing to contemporaries and were based on eternal principles, and that her statements on the eschatological role of the Catholic Church transcend their 1880s' origin, to name three issues of contention. The belief that Mrs. White provides us with timeless and irrefutable knowledge of

**“Literalist readings of Mrs. White are so much a part of Adventist belief that any change could only come with great difficulty, possibly at the cost of schism.”**

heaven and earth goes to the core of Adventism, for it seems to offer the greatest evidence that we are God's chosen church. Her body of writings form the central tradition of the American Adventist Church, supplying the very definition of Adventism for a large percentage of the church's members. Widespread doubt about her writings' inspiration, therefore, would transform the church, requiring the creation of a new tradition. Some may question this judgment, pointing to the Adventist Church in other parts of the world where Ellen White's messages play a less vital role without inhibiting piety or growth. But

analogy fails here, for among American Adventists, a reliance on the Spirit of Prophecy for definitive answers on all religious questions has been engrained through generations and is a characteristic trait.

**M**ore appropriate than a comparison with non-American Adventists may be a glance at the nineteenth-century Jewish experience, where the impact of the historical-critical method on the Jewish tradition suggests possible results of Adventist historians' tampering with tradition. The Jewish community was very similar to the Adventist Church in its strict adherence to extrabiblical tradition; in its case, the commentaries of the Talmud. For centuries, from generation to generation the traditions were passed on, with additions and reinterpretations, but always with a firm belief that the unfolding truth came from God himself, thus possessing a binding authority. This set of religious norms encompassed far more than strictly doctrinal matters. Like the writings of Ellen White for the Adventist community, they set down the total way of life. The historical community of the Jews was made possible by this devotion to their tradition.

In the early nineteenth century, the Jewish people experienced the same revolution of historical consciousness that Adventists are beginning to experience now. In what was called “the science of Judaism,” Jewish scholars like Leopold Zunz and Solomon Steinheim undertook historical and philological investigations of various aspects of Jewish history. Their assumptions and methods resembled those of modern Adventist scholars: first, in their endeavor to maintain total objectivity in their research, free from any prejudicial theological preconceptions; and second, in their consciousness of the distance between the world they studied and themselves. Their guiding assumption, and one also shared by Adventist revisionists, was that however else the tradition might be understood, it must be studied historically, by examining the temporal conditions framing the origin of every practice and belief. This approach had a secularizing effect on Jewish tradition undercutting the

tradition's normative authority, for it could no longer be seen in the same way as God's revelation.

With tradition no longer capable of serving as a binding force for the major segment of Judaism, the Jewish community faced the prospect of losing its identity. Through the rest of the nineteenth century, certain Jewish scholars, notably Nachman Krochmal and Heinrich Graetz, took up the task of isolating the essence of immutable Judaism and separating that from the impermanent products of historical development (again, similar to the hopes of some Adventist historians). But the Jewish thinkers never again achieved a consensual basis for a new Judaic tradition, and their community splintered into the various parts that we know today. The nearest approximation to a unified tradition came with the Zionist movement of the late nineteenth century, but even the new hope of a homeland failed to revive the vibrant tradition they once knew.

I would certainly not lay all the blame for the fragmentation of the Jewish community on a handful of scholars; the powerful tug of assimilation into gentile society, which itself encouraged the historical revisionism, was the primary force at work. Moreover, parallels between the Jewish and Adventist experience can easily be overdrawn. Nevertheless, the impact of the historical-critical method on the Jewish tradition should give Adventist historians occasion to reflect on the potential effects of their own work. Like the Jewish people of the nineteenth century, Adventists face ever greater temptations to lower the barriers of distinctiveness between themselves and the world. In the past, this threat was always met by recourse to the Spirit of Prophecy, whose counsels ended argument and safeguarded standards. But, if Mrs. White's writings are shown to be historically conditioned, they will lose their traditional authority. Without the tradition to rely on, secular challenges will be difficult to turn back. Adventist identity itself will be threatened.

Many argue that Mrs. White's writings are overused and abused in the American Ad-

ventist Church, and that revisionism may lead to healthier, if less extensive, application of her gift. This may be true. But I would question the feasibility of such a middle ground. If one is going to have a prophet, the risk of misuse probably cannot be fully removed. Again, it comes down to whether one wishes to retain the normative authority of Mrs. White's writings and accept the occasional abuse with which we are all familiar, or to state categorically that her writings must stand the scrutiny of historical investigation before they will be accepted. The objection may be raised here that I am positing a false dichotomy, that it is not necessarily an all or nothing proposition. Why cannot we, based on reasonable investigation, determine those writings grounded in nineteenth-century understanding that no longer apply today, and those that bear the mark of prophetic inspiration and continue to compel respect? But this solution, I believe, would inevitably cast a pall of tentativeness on all of Mrs. White's writings, which is inimical to the very notion of prophetic utterance.

I am not in any way questioning the faith or good intentions of those historians involved in the revisionistic enterprise. They are responding not only to the demands of their profession, but also to the strain of rationalism that runs deep in the Adventist mentality. Our tradition has always stressed that the truth can stand the closest scrutiny, that our belief has nothing to fear from careful examination and should, in fact, be rigorously tested. In a sense, Adventist historians are only carrying out that dictum to its logical conclusion. Nor should their attempt at an objective analysis of Mrs. White's books be interpreted as a dispassionate quest. They care deeply about certain problems they see in the interpretation of her work, and their writings, at least in most cases, are an attempt to resolve the problems.

Perhaps a more appropriate question than whether reinterpretation is a good thing is whether we have any alternative to a critical examination of our church's traditions. Have we reached that stage in church development when the kind of theological reformulations our church has always known must also be matched by historical self-examination? The

General Conference's commissioning of Richard Schwarz to write a denominational history textbook, a history intended to be nonapologetic, indicates that such needs are felt among church leadership. Although the presuppositions and conclusions of leadership may be far from those of the revisionist historians, both church leaders and historians share a sense of the importance of having analyzed the church's history in a complete and intellectually respectable manner; both want a tradition fully congruent with historical truth. But once the Pandora's box of history has been opened, there can be no recalling the disturbing facts that will escape. They can change a church's historical understanding of itself, and a change of that type is very difficult to reverse.

In essence, the church is experiencing a clash of values. The older value of traditional authority is being challenged by those of the academy, which stress an intellectual approach to problem solving and believe that all truths should be thoroughly tested. There are no clear sides in the issue, for everyone concerned has a degree of loyalty to both sets of values. But can the church hold both? This dilemma, common to nations and institutions undergoing modernization, afflicts

Adventists with particular acuteness because of the belief that there should be no disjunction between faith and reason.

The point should be made once again that the revisionistic history may make no lasting impact on the church's view of the Spirit of Prophecy. Prevailing attitudes may be more resilient than some might think, and one should avoid the fallacy of inevitability. Yet, the experiences of other cultures that have suffered the pangs of modernization suggest that these issues rarely go away of their accord nor are they easily resolved. Tradition and secular learning have proved incompatible bedfellows. There may be no way to avoid the kinds of questions being posed by Adventist historians. If so, there will almost surely follow a change in our understanding, and subsequently, in the authority of the prophetic gift. The challenge of such a change is clear. It could, on the one hand, enervate the Adventist community. But taking a more hopeful view, it could also result in a rethinking and renewal of the Adventist faith. It could encourage a faith based not upon prescriptive authority but upon reflective consideration of what the Christian life demands in the morally complex situations of day-to-day life.



# Can the Bible Establish The Age of the Earth?

by Siegfried H. Horn

The question “Can the Bible establish the age of the earth?” suggests that the Bible, besides fulfilling many purposes, is also a source book of historical chronology. This means that we expect the Bible to provide us with data of a chronological nature in order to obtain dates for biblical events and perhaps even for some secular events. In the search for such data in the Bible, we are not disappointed, because Bible texts do exist which are quite explicit in this respect and contain specific chronological information.

For example, Jeremiah dates the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in terms of two independent dating schemes, namely, in the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah, and also in the nineteenth year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (Jer. 52:5, 12). Even more explicit is Luke’s chronological statement that the beginning of John the Baptist’s ministry took place in the fifteenth regnal

year of the Emperor Tiberius, when Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and Trachonitis, Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, and Annas and Caiaphas high priests in Jerusalem (Luke 3:1-2).

Yet, while such explicit statements of a chronological nature as the ones quoted do exist in the Bible, not all biblical events can be securely dated, and there are differences in the certainty of dates derived from the available data. Let us review some.

## **First Millennium B.C.**

Only one biblical event is absolutely and securely dated to the day, the month and the year, and that is the conquest of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar under the reign of King Jehoiachin — March 16, 597 B.C. For this date, we have biblical statements (2 Kings 24:10-17) and the Babylonian chronicles.<sup>1</sup> Other events can be dated with almost equal certainty, such as the surrender of Jerusalem by King Jehoiakim to Nebuchadnezzar when Daniel went into exile in 605 B.C., or Nehemiah’s return from Persia to Jerusalem in 444 B.C.

Some biblical events can be dated with a reasonable certainty, namely, with a margin of error that does not exceed one year. The

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return of Ezra is an example, an event which took place either in 458 or 457 B.C. If the author of the book of Ezra used the Persian calendar in writing his report, the date of his return to Jerusalem would be 458 B.C. On the other hand, if Ezra used the Jewish calendar, the date would be 457 B.C. Most modern Bible commentators use the former date; we Adventists have always defended the latter. Fortunately, we have a basis for the date of our preference, since literary and archaeological evidence shows that Nehemiah, as well as the Jews in Egypt during the post-exilic period, used the Jewish and not the Persian calendar.<sup>2</sup>

Even a more recent event such as the death of Christ is difficult to date with absolute certainty. The available evidence points to either A.D. 30 or 31.<sup>3</sup> We Adventists prefer the date A.D. 31, because it fits the prophecy of Daniel 9 better than does the year A.D. 30; for the same reason, we defend 457 B.C. for Ezra's return and reject the year 458.

There are other biblical events which can be dated within a margin of possible error that does not exceed a few years. For example, the year 966 B.C. for the beginning of the building of the Jerusalem Temple by Solomon is defended in the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*<sup>4</sup> on the basis of E. R. Thiele's work,<sup>5</sup> with which I fully agree in that respect. But, some scholars have dated this event a few years later, although no one differs from our date by more than ten years. While not all biblical scholars agree with regard to the actual year in which Solomon began his building activity, all agree that it happened within a span of ten years of the date quoted above. Hence, a medial date of about 960 B.C. can be considered as correct.

So far I have mentioned only events of the first millennium B.C. and of the first century of the Christian era, because for this period, we are on more or less solid ground as far as chronological dates are concerned. We also have secular sources with which we can correlate biblical data. For the events from Solomon to Nehemiah, some Egyptian kings are mentioned by name in the biblical records which are well known from the

monuments, namely, Shishak, Tirhakah, Necho and Hophra. Several Assyrian kings appear in the Bible, namely, Tiglathpileser, Shalmaneser, Sargon, Sennacherib and Esarhaddon, as well as the Babylonian kings Merodach Baladan, Nebuchadnezzar, Evil Merodach, Belshazzar, and the Persian kings Cyrus, Darius, Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes. We are well acquainted with all of these kings from contemporary hieroglyphic or cuneiform sources.

Furthermore, we also have evidence that comes from the opposite direction. This evidence is provided by Assyrian records which mention the Israelite kings Omri, Ahab, Jehu, Menahem, Pekah and Hoshea, as well as the kings of Judah, Jehoash, Jehoahaz, Azariah, Hezekiah and Manasseh, while Babylonian records refer to Jehoiachin by name and to the last king of Judah, Zedekiah, without preserving his name. Since the Assyrian, Babylonian and Persian chronologies are well established by means of astronomical checks, it is obvious that all these cross references and correlations between biblical and nonbiblical data provide us with a biblical chronology for the first millennium B.C. that is quite reliable, and which can contain only very small and inconsequential errors.

One point I want to make clear before leaving the period of biblical chronology which deals with the first millennium B.C., and that is the fact that even for the dates of this later period we are depending on secular chronological schemes to anchor our biblical data. Whereas the biblical evidence indicates that there were 345 years between Solomon's death and the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, we would not be able to date either the former event nor the latter on the basis of biblical data alone. It is only with the help of the Assyrian and Babylonian records that we can provide the dates 931 B.C. for the death of Solomon and 586 B.C. for the end of the Kingdom of Judah.

Also, for the dating of postexilic events such as those described in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, we depend on secular sources. These events are dated in the Bible in terms of the years of the reigns of Cyrus, Darius, Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes, whose regnal years we can establish only on the

basis of secular records. Let us never forget that without secular sources we would not be able to date any biblical event in terms of a continuous era such as the B.C. or A.D. scheme or any other. We would, for example, not know from the historical records of the Bible that a period of about 400 years passed between Nehemiah's time and that of Jesus Christ. No historical biblical evidence could show us how many years elapsed between Darius II, the last king mentioned in the Old Testament, and the Emperor Augustus or King Herod, the first rulers men-

**“It is important to remember that a biblical chronology cannot stand on its own feet and can be established for the historical periods only with the help of nonbiblical material.”**

tioned in the New Testament, if we did not have secular source material. It is important to remember that a biblical chronology cannot stand on its own feet and can be established for the historical periods only with the help of nonbiblical material. By saying this, I am fully aware of the fact that we Adventists believe that prophetic statements, such as those of Daniel 9:24-27, can bridge historical gaps in the Bible, but such prophetic passages depend on interpretation to make sense and, therefore, are left out of this historical discussion.

### **Second Millennium B.C.**

Whereas we have thus a biblical chronology covering the first millennium B.C. which is quite well established and about which there are hardly any disagreements among biblical historians, this picture changes suddenly when we go back into the second millennium B.C., where we encounter great differences in the view of biblical scholars, depending on their acceptance or rejection of biblical data.

The main reason for such disagreements is the fact that we do not have a correlation between biblical and secular events. The Bible mentions not one king of Egypt or Mesopotamia by name who has been identified with certainty, and the secular records of the second millennium B.C. do not mention any individual known from the Bible. Egyptian kings are referred to regularly as “pharaohs,” but pharaoh is not a personal name, and Mesopotamian kings mentioned by name such as Amraphel of Shinar or Chedorlaomer of Elam are not yet identifiable from the available records. It is, therefore, not surprising that scholars differ widely with regard to dates of such biblical events of the second millennium B.C. as the Exodus. However, if we leave aside the arguments of those who do not accept clear “chronological statements” in the Bible, but accept such statements as a base for our dates, we can date some important biblical events of the second millennium B.C., such as the Exodus to 1445 B.C. or Abraham's call to leave Haran to 1875 B.C. These earlier dates can be based on well-established dates of later periods, such as the beginning of the building of the Jerusalem Temple by Solomon in 966 B.C.

Hence, the Exodus date is obtained by using 1 Kings 6:1, which tells us that Solomon began to build his Temple in the 480th year after the Exodus, whereas the earlier date is arrived at on the basis of Paul's statement that the Law of Sinai was given 430 years after God entered into a covenant with Abraham (Gal. 3:16-17), which helps us to understand a few ambiguous texts of the Pentateuch, such as Genesis 15:13 and Exodus 12:40-41. Since the date of Solomon's Temple building is reasonably well established as 966 B.C., we easily reach the year 1445 B.C. for the Exodus by counting back 480 years, and by going back another 430 years we reach the year 1875 B.C. for the year in which Abraham was called.

These dates are as far back as we can go on the basis of chronological biblical sources. Before leaving this period of Old Testament history, let me make clear how I am using the

term “chronological statements.” A statement such as the one found in 1 Kings 6:1, which gives us the number of years that had elapsed since the Exodus had taken place at the time Solomon began to build the Jerusalem Temple, is clearly a chronological statement, regardless of whether it is acceptable or not, whether it is considered to be true or false, accurate or exaggerated. Also Jeremiah’s statement, referred to above, that Jerusalem was destroyed in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign is a chronological statement. It is very important to understand this term and use it accurately, because it is sometimes used by students of the Bible for data to which it does not apply, as will be seen below.

### Periods Before Abraham

This leads me to a very important observation. While there are numerous “chronological statements” in the Bible pertaining to the periods from Abraham down through the ages, not a single “chronological statement” can be found in the entire Bible which helps us to date any of the earlier events, whether it be the building of the Tower of Babel, the confusion of tongues, the Flood, or Creation. For the time preceding Abraham, no events recorded in the Bible are connected with any dates, secular kings, or any other chronological peg on which we can hang the biblical stories.

What we have for the pre-Abrahamic periods in the Bible are two genealogical lists, one from Adam to Noah, and a second one from Noah to Abraham (Genesis 5 and 11). These two lists provide us with names of 20 men, usually referred to as patriarchs, from Adam to Abraham. Of each of these patriarchs, the age at the time of the birth of his first son is presented, as well as his age at time of death. For example, the list says that Adam was 130 years old when Seth was born, and that he had reached the age of 930 years when he died (Gen. 5:3, 5). By adding up the ages of the 20 patriarchs at the time of the birth of each one’s first son from Adam’s creation to Abraham’s birth, one reaches, according to our English Bible, the sum of 2,008 years. We could then conclude that Abraham was born 2,008 years after creation.

Many students of the Bible have in this way for centuries built up a biblical chronology which has provided them with dates for the events preceding Abraham’s time. The most famous of these chronologies is that of the Archbishop James Ussher, published 1650-1658, and incorporated into the margins of the King James Bible from 1679 until recent times.

However, the matter is not so easy as it may seem at first sight. The English Bible figures of Genesis 5 and 11 are based on the Hebrew Massoretic Bible manuscripts, and these show great differences with the other ancient versions of the Bible, namely, the Septuagint (the earliest Greek version of the Old Testament, referred to as the LXX) and the Samaritan Pentateuch, as well as with the data given by Josephus.<sup>6</sup> In the LXX, 15 of the 20 patriarchs from Adam to Abraham have different ages at the time of the birth of their sons than in the Hebrew texts, so that an adding of these figures leads to 3,394 years instead of 2,008 years. The Samaritan Pentateuch shows ten differences with the He-

**“There is no biblical basis for any date . . . for a biblical event preceding the birth of Abraham. If an Adventist wants to believe that Creation took place about 4,000 B.C., he should not claim that he bases his belief on a biblical chronology. . . .”**

brew text and leads to 2,249 years instead of 2,008 years from Creation to Abraham. Josephus’ account differs in 13 instances and reaches a total number of 3,237 years instead of 2,008 years for the period from Creation to Abraham.

This raises the question: Which of the four ancient sources is the most reliable? Our first choice would be the Hebrew text, because we know that the Jews copied and transmitted the text conscientiously and with great care, and because, traditionally, all

Protestant Bible translations have for several centuries been based on the Hebrew Masoretic text. However, let us not forget that the LXX translation is based on Hebrew manuscripts which no longer exist (except for some of the Dead Sea scroll fragments) and which preceded those now in existence by centuries. Furthermore, we must be very cautious to condemn the LXX version out of hand, since the New Testament writers, with very few exceptions, used the LXX, even in texts where they differed from the Hebrew Bible (cf. Acts 7:14 with Genesis 46:27, or Matthew 21:16 with Psalm 8:2). It is not my purpose to defend the LXX against the Masoretic text over another when they differ, since the authenticity of both is so well attested through the use of inspired writers.

Another difficulty in dealing with genealogies is the fact that they seldom seem to be complete. Let us not confuse accuracy with completeness. I do not say that the genealogical lists are inaccurate; in fact, I believe that each individual statement in a genealogical list can be accurate, although the whole list may be incomplete. If one compares any two genealogies given in the Bible, one of the two is usually shorter than the other. For example, Ezra's genealogy of his own ancestry reaching back to Aaron leaves out several generations (cf. Ezra 7:1-5 with 1 Chron. 6:3-15) and the list of David's descendants on the throne of Judah as presented in Matthew 1:6-11 lacks several kings, as a comparison with 1 Chronicles 3:10-16 shows. Even the two existing biblical lists of the genealogies between Noah and Abraham are not identical, as a comparison between Luke 3 and Genesis 11 shows. Luke in his list presents a Cainan (ch. 3:36) who does not appear in the list of Genesis 11. In the light of these difficulties it must, therefore, be considered possible that the genealogical lists of Genesis 5 and 11 may be incomplete. It is a simple fact that we are still far removed from understanding ancient Israelite genealogies.

The apostle Paul seems to have realized the difficulties connected with the ancient genealogies, because in his writings he warns two of his fellow ministers to avoid discussions that deal with genealogies. In 1 Timothy 1:3, he counsels Timothy not to

occupy himself "with myths and endless genealogies which promote speculations rather than the divine training that is in faith" (RSV), and in his letter to Titus, Paul rates genealogies on the same level as "stupid controversies," "dissensions, and quarrels over the law, for they are unprofitable and futile" (Tit. 3:9, RSV). It is for this reason that in all my ministry of more than four decades, I have avoided getting drawn into discussions on biblical genealogies. Because of the difficulties connected with the genealogical data of the Bible, I have always refused to date any event that precedes Abraham's birth.

It may be argued that there is nothing in the Bible which is unprofitable or that is preserved without a purpose. I would agree. Consequently, one can reason that the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 which are in the Bible must have a value and should teach us something. This is true. But I still maintain that we do not fully understand them, and with regard to this lack of understanding, we are in good company, namely in the company of the apostle Paul. More than half of the first book of Chronicles consists of genealogies and lists of names. Their inclusion must either have been of value for the people of the past, or must be of value for the future, but their present importance is difficult to ascertain. Even Ellen White quotes from the first ten chapters of 1 Chronicles only a few times; once from chapter 5, twice from chapter 2, and three times from chapter 10, but never in her voluminous writings quotes even once from the seven chapters, 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

In conclusion, I do maintain that there is no biblical basis for any date in the B.C. scale for a biblical event preceding the birth of Abraham. If an Adventist wants to believe that Creation took place about 4,000 B.C., he should not claim that he bases his belief on a biblical chronology, for he bases it, in reality, on a combination of biblical and secular chronologies for the last 4,000 years, up to about 2000 B.C., and on the Hebrew text of genealogical data for the preceding 2,000 years. It would be much better to say that he bases his defense on the several statements of Ellen White, in which she declares the earth to be about 6,000 years old.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

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2. Siegfried H. Horn and Lynn H. Wood, *The Chronology of Ezra 7*, 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C., 1970).
3. See the discussion of the evidence in the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 255-265.
4. See *ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 134-135, 749.
5. Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1965). Thiele's chronological work is concerned only with the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah. For this reason, his scheme begins at the time of Solomon's death and Rehoboam's accession in 931 B.C. (see p. 54). However, the early years of Solomon's reign can easily be computed by applying the rules of Thiele's chronology to Solomon. Since that king had come to the throne 40 years earlier, thus in 971 B.C. when his accession year started, his fourth regnal year began in the autumn of 967 and ended in the autumn of 966 B.C. The month Zif, in which the Temple building began, is a spring month, which leads us to the conclusion that the Temple building began in the spring of 966 B.C.
6. See the *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, pp. 248 and 289 for tabulations of the data mentioned here.

# Soviet Views of Adventism: A Communist Analysis

edited by Chuck Scriven

The following four articles appeared in Russia in 1978 in a publication called *The Journal of Science and Religion*. Written from a Communist point of view, they describe and comment upon Seventh-day Adventism in Russia, for the reason, as the Preface states, that it is a “system of spiritual influence upon people” the knowledge of whose “peculiarities” is required for success in “atheistic work” among its adherents. The articles give, of course, a primarily negative account. The authors sometimes fire their salvos without benefit of supporting argument—Adventist belief just *is* delusory, for example; its primary appeal just *is* the promise of escape from earth’s misery. They do, however, suggest empirical backing for their central claim—that the Adventist Church in Russia is now in a process of crisis and decay. All four writers play upon this single theme.

The texts of the four pieces appear as they have been translated from the Russian, ex-

cept for minor stylistic changes and excisions, often quite long, for the sake of brevity. These latter, where longer than a phrase or so, have been indicated by means of ellipses. Where they run to more than a paragraph or so — and of the second and third articles we are actually publishing only excerpts—summaries of what has been left out, written by the editors and printed in italic type, appear as an aid to readers.

In reprinting the articles, the editors of SPECTRUM do not, of course, vouch for the accuracy of the descriptive content, let alone the adequacy of the commentary upon it. The idea is that from this sample of Soviet analysis, we may gain some insight into how Russian Communist writers perceive the religious movement of which we are part, and in so doing learn something about Communism and its relationship to Adventism in the U.S.S.R.

## Preface

They call themselves “Adventists” from the Latin “adventus,” which means “arrival” or “coming,” and by this very name they

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emphasize that the substance of their doctrine is based on their belief in the coming of Jesus Christ. But, in contrast to devotees of other Christian movements, they are convinced that the second coming of the Son of God to earth will take place, not in the far distant future, but very soon, and they are constantly preparing to meet Christ so that they will not be caught unawares.

This belief in a near second coming is only the starting point of a very delicate and flexible system of spiritual influence upon people. And precisely this is what helps Adventism to retain its position and, to a certain degree, even under conditions of a crisis in religion, to widen its ranks in some countries of the world.

In our country there are followers of the notable branch within Adventism—the Seventh-day Adventists. Moreover, there are still some local groups of the Adventist Reform Movement. Atheistic work among adherents of these movements requires specific qualifications, and, firstly, demands a knowledge of the peculiarities of their faith and of the sometimes contradictory processes which today are passing through Adventist groups. With precisely this purpose in mind, the following material is published.

### **Article 1: “This Quiet Sabbath World”**

by V. Franyuk

Snow had fallen the evening before in the city of Karaganda, and from the trampled path it was evident that more than a few people had come and gone recently along this little alley. On both sides, small houses nestled behind fences as though in hiding. The little street was the picture of repose and tranquility.

On this Saturday morning, people in groups or by themselves are wending their way toward a solidly constructed building with a new fence, iron gates, open shutters and wide windows. Behind the side gate, the well-kept young apple trees and small path paved with concrete display the order and neatness of a manorial seat.

The host is a 27-year-old carpenter, Vitaly

Eugenevich Snytko. His official family consists of a wife and two children. But Vitaly Eugenevich considers himself a member of the family of the local 150-member Seventh-day Adventist church, which rents the house from him. Every Sabbath — this day begins for the “brethren” and “sisters” with sunset on Friday evening, and ends with sunset the following day — three prayer meetings are held. I, too, have come to attend the morning meeting.

In the lobby are a long clothes rack and an antique organ. Church members are sitting in the hall on benches covered with bright cloth, conversing in low voices. One door opens into the parlor where there is a table and a sofa; another into the assembly room. A strip of carpet down the middle divides the rows of benches, and hanging on the wall in an age-darkened frame, “the commandments” contrast with the contemporary clocks. Alongside the pulpit is an electric musical instrument, and places for the choir. The assembly room has seven wide windows with blinds. On the ceiling there is a large ventilator.

The house has central heating. It is warm. The floor shines with its coat of light-brown paint. The entering “brethren” take their seats strictly in front at the right; the “sisters” arbitrarily. Before sitting down, they bow their heads and “talk with God.” There are children present.

A young man enters. He wears glasses with yellow frames, a black suit and tie and a white shirt. He carries a folder in his hand. This is Snytko. Being the host, he goes up to the clock and moves the hands forward (they were behind). He becomes absorbed in talking with his God; then takes his place beside the pulpit. After praying in the same manner, a young lady takes her place behind the musical instrument. She is the choir leader.

The clock strikes ten. Three men walk along the carpeted strip to the pulpit, kneel behind it. Everyone in the room stands up after a short pause for silent prayer. When the pastors arise, the members sit down again. The leader of the congregation announces: “Let us glorify our God with a Sabbath song.”



Observing this worship service, I discover an interesting peculiarity. Seminary-style, the participants pursue a theme by means of questions:

“What was the motive for Jesus’ doing all He did?” asks the leader of the congregation.

Two ladies stand up. “Love to his neighbor,” they answer simultaneously.

“Who wishes to express his thoughts?” asks the preacher.

An elderly man on one of the front benches stands up and asks a quirkish question: “There are many different faiths, each guaranteeing salvation while considering the others delusions. Which one is right?”

The preacher calls out asking if there is

**“This belief in a near second coming is only the starting point of a very delicate and flexible system of spiritual influence upon people.”**

anyone who wishes to answer the question. Some do, but neither their explanations nor those of the preacher himself satisfy the elderly man, who reproachfully shakes his head. Whispers are heard among the “brethren.”

The choir leader stands up on the small platform, and the choir enters and sings. Although two of the men are unable to carry their bass part, and women’s voices predominate, the singing is impressive. After prayer, two ladies accompanied by a guitar present a religious duet. The preacher speaks on the subject of God’s commandments, that they are life’s compass. He uses an illustration from secular literature: The French author, Jules Verne, in his novel, *The Children of Captain Grant*, relates an incident of when the compass once began to mark a wrong course, because someone had intentionally put a piece of iron beside it, and so the ship went off course. Likewise, every encroachment on Christ’s teaching, causes our life compass to deviate, and we get off course. This, of course, is a reference to the man in the con-

gregation who had asked the quirky question.

At the close of the service, the man who had led out introduced himself to me as Vasily Vasilievich Novosad, chairman of the church board. I don’t remember how it happened, but in speaking with the preacher, it came out that he and I were colleagues in the past, having traveled into the North Atlantic some time ago. We took pleasure in recalling how cozy, in stormy weather, we found the channels of the Faroe Islands, the white slopes of Iceland and the fogs along the shores of Britain. The reminiscences about the sea aired thoughts of prayer out of Vasily Vasilievich’s mind, and he enthusiastically began to recall the names of different ships, and especially that of our own ship, *Michael Kalyinin*.

Novosad is 33 years old, works as a mechanic with escalators, is married and has two children. He grew up in a Seventh-day Adventist family, but in his younger years, he did not follow the teachings of the church. According to his own words, during the years he spent at sea his life was filled with sin. After several months at sea, he had a good amount of money in his pocket, felt solid ground under his feet, and, as the saying goes, his soul soared to heaven when he was on land again and he began to live a life of pleasure.

“After staying on shore for some time, there was again no other choice if I wanted to earn some money but to go to sea again for some months, and my former life repeated itself. Then I asked myself what purpose there was in living such a life.”

“And did you find the answer to that eternal question?”

“Oh, yes, with the help of faith I found a purpose for my life in establishing a right relationship with God.”

The “brethren” and “sisters” had by now gone to their homes until time for the evening worship service. The house was empty, and the host, Snytko, joined us in talk. He, in contrast to the former sailor, Novosad, preferred to talk only about the Bible. He was pouring out quotations.

His way to God, Vitaly Eugenevich Snytko said, began in his childhood under

the guidance of his parents. When he was 12 years old, he began to think for himself, and a grasp of understanding came upon him. Once he asked his biology teacher after the lesson, "Is nature alive?"

Of course, the teacher answered that nature is not an organism with functions inherent in all that is alive. "This will be gone over later," he said. The thoughtful student made the logical conclusion: if nature is not alive, it cannot create a living cell; and furthermore, if this is so, someone must have created it; and still further, if it is unknown who, there remains only God.

The biblical explanation about the creation of the world was acceptable to the boy's understanding. When he decided to believe in this myth, he accepted the importance and great devotional meaning of the whole Bible. After finishing school, Vitaly Snytko graduated from a photography course, and took a job in photography with the government. However, he was compelled to work on Sabbaths, days which every Adventist is obligated to devote to God, so he had to change his work and become a builder. He kept his devotion to religion during his army service, also.

**H**umanly speaking, let it be said without disparagement, Novosad and Snytko left me certain painful feelings. Not just because they devote so much time preparing for the coming judgment, and not even because they spend their life energy on interpretation of pseudo-profound thoughts about ancient legends and myths. It is also distressing to see them trying to enhance themselves before their fellow believers by means of oppressive persistency, almost consecration, in abstaining from logical reasoning, arguments or comparisons.

"Logic is nonessential for the true faith," asserts Novosad.

"Christ's teaching doesn't need to be re-evaluated," reiterates Snytko. "It is eternal and unshakable."

And yet they do agree that in the realities surrounding us, the human mind, intellect and reason yearn to discern new things and to put under the screw that which has outlived

itself. There arises a certain spiritual dead end. The human belief in a better future changes into the doomed expectation of a terrible judgment.

*The author continues by describing how Novosad and Snytko are "tormented by contradictions," and how most Adventists avoid television and the cinema. He then describes other Adventists whom he met, including one man who asked that his name not be published.*

P., a locksmith in an institution, is 34 years old and has a secondary school education. At the prayer meeting, he attracted my attention by his difficult, penetrating analysis of a Bible chapter from the pulpit. Then, he took a place in the choir. When he offered prayer from the pulpit, he wiped away his tears. I talked with him later in his shop. I already knew that he was a most conscientious worker.

The story of P. is a dramatic one. In his childhood, he lived near the railway station among Adventists. At the age of nine, he fell under a wheel and lost his foot. At 18, he was lost during a snowstorm on the steppe. In his despair, he promised God he would accept the faith if his life were spared. He went at random through the snowstorm and finally stumbled on a house. He has kind eyes and hands that are rough from work. He is a typical, skillful master-dreamer. Such are always mastering something unselfishly in a

**"Many of those whom I met here were drawn into this queer world by a religious upbringing from childhood, producing in them a moral passiveness."**

skillful manner, or creating or inventing something. Maybe, if he hadn't been caught in a snowstorm, his fate would have turned out quite differently.

Many of those whom I met here were drawn into this queer world by a religious upbringing from childhood, producing in them a moral passiveness. As a rule, every one of them had met some difficulties in life, and likewise, every one was unable to with-

stand them, but readily hid in the fragile shelter of religious faith.

After the worship service, we went with Novosad, in an old “Volga.” The snow had begun to melt, and from the railroad tracks, the noise of passing trains was heard. In the back seat was seated his wife with a child in her arms. She was the one who had led the church choir, and beside her was eight-year-old laughing Vovka. Vasily Vasilievich’s wife had studied music, but at the insistence of her parents, became a nurse. In Adventist families, the will of the older people is law. Yet, music remained her favorite occupation. Involuntarily, I began to think of restless Vovka, whom the parents brought to the morning worship service. What will her fate be?

## Article 2: “In Expectation of the Latter Rain”

by D. Koretsky

The words of the sermon echoed sadly through the Seventh-day Adventist church in the city of Chernovtsy:

We live in perilous times. Within the church there is a struggle for authority and supremacy. Believers do not trust each other any more, and it seems that the words of the prophet Jeremiah are written especially for our time: “Take ye heed every one of his neighbor, and trust ye not in any brother” (Jer. 9:4). Satan has succeeded in focusing the attention of God’s people on minor questions. And even worse, many of us are doubting the perilous nature of sin. There are persons who are heading toward temptation like insane people toward a beating.

We could quote more, but there is no need, because it is all more or less the same and nearly in the same words. In short, the content of the sermon is as follows: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is going through a crisis and decay. Pastors are struggling for authority, and believers are less devoted to the teachings of Christ and more and more taken in by the temptations of secular life. In the world also, the “abomi-

nation of desolation” is evident as scientific and technological progress gives rise to perplexity, fear, uneasiness among nations (struggle between classes in capitalistic countries, and national liberation movements).

We will return to this sermon later, but now let’s take a look at the church in the city of Gorlovka, in Donets province. Here the talk is of other things — of earthquakes and other calamities, and the voice of the preacher sounds different, quite assured and almost prophetic: “Men’s hearts failing them for fear and fainting.”

Both sermons, the first about decay within the Seventh-day Adventist Church and “abomination of desolation” in the world, and the second about terrible natural events and calamities, are directed toward the same end — that is, to convince the believers of Christ’s soon coming. “Soon the Lord will pour out the latter rain upon His people,” proclaims the preacher in Chernovtsy. “Today the signs of the times tell us that we are now on the threshold of great events. There is anxiety everywhere. The prophecies are being fulfilled before our very eyes. . . . Take care, or you will be found at the king’s dinner without a wedding garment,” so echoes his colleague in Gorlovka.

Is this just a coincidence? Of course not. For about one and a half centuries, Adventist preachers have managed to find in everyday events some signs predicted in the Bible which show that Christ could come any day to our earth. During this period, the lives of the people have changed, their world has changed, even the face of our planet has changed, but the untiring preachers still look for and find their signs, just as though there were not thousands of forerunners, who all turned out to be false prophets — every one.

And most remarkable in all this is the fact that Adventist preachers, not knowing how, and not wanting, to look at the world without prejudice, contrive to find confirmation of their persuasion! A tract, “The Shaking,” plainly states that “perplexity” among the adherents of Adventism is “programmed beforehand in God’s plan of future events!”

The existence of a crisis is so evident, the

process of deterioration of religious belief so intense, that denying it is just impossible. The ministry has only one way out: to appeal to the conscience of the believers and pretend that all this was foreseen in God's plan and that this decline itself is one of the most convincing signs of Christ's soon coming. Indeed, the crisis in religion cannot be settled with such measures, it can only be lessened in some degree.

*The author next cites what he sees as evidence – such as stories of disagreements among members, of decline in membership – of a “process of disintegration” within Soviet Adventism. This leads to his short article’s final paragraph.*

Adventist ministers are unable to hide these facts and processes from the believers, and, therefore, they declare that the crisis in the Adventist Church is “measured and programmed by God,” and over and over again they convince the believers that “very soon the Lord will pour out the Latter Rain upon His people.”

### **Article 3: “In Search of an Exit”**

by S. Orlov

*The author claims that certain social changes (which he does not describe) have brought “crisis” to Seventh-day Adventism, one manifestation of which is a “split” in the church dating to the mid-1960s. One group, said to be “the more reactionary,” is led, according to the author, by P. Matsanov, and has established “parallel communities of Seventh-day Adventists.” The other group, called “moderate,” is said to have the backing of the General Conference, which has tried without success, the author says, to reunite the groups. The Matsanov group is now linked with the “Reform Movement, an extremely reactionary branch of Adventism which started during the First World War in Germany.” It stands for rigorous separation from the world. The following excerpts further describe and comment upon the two groups.*

The credo of this more moderate branch of Adventism is shown in this statement by one of its leading ideologists: “What should our course be? Should we accept the complete liquidation of Adventism and leave God’s true church, or hold on to what we do have,

amidst all our difficulties, and look for new approaches to the task which has been given to us — to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth?”

Following this principle, a number of realistic Adventist preachers admonish the believers to pay attention to what is going on in the world around them, to overcome their tendency to live within their own narrow circle, and to seek to fulfill their duties toward society and the state. They think the future of the church depends on finding the right solution to this problem.

This sane approach to the problem is presented in the paper prepared by one of the prominent modern Adventist leaders under the title, “The Christian in Society and State.” The author says:

We Adventists who live in the U.S.S.R. have every reason to treat our socialist state with warmth and gratitude. We cannot equate socialism and the Gospel, but the principles upon which the Soviet state is built are considerably nearer to the Gospel’s spirit of care for man than are the principles of capitalist society. We consider it a great privilege to be citizens of this country.

The paper goes on to refer to the great changes which took place in our country after the October revolution. Special attention is given to the fact that in our country the church is separate from the state, and reference is made to the religious persecution which was in force under the Czarist state. This is a worthy answer on the part of believers who live in our country to agitators abroad who day and night proclaim to the world that in the U.S.S.R. there is no freedom of conscience and that the rights of Christians and the church are not respected.

The author of the article expresses satisfaction that believers can take part in work for the welfare of the country in common with all citizens: “For us Seventh-day Adventists, it is a great joy that our humble creative efforts can be united to those of the millions of people in our country toward achieving progress. In this way, we directly participate in the common success and deplore the mistakes and problems, and feel ourselves part of a society which places before it not a few and

high ideals.” Without any doubt, one must not ignore these positive expressions which are based on a wise and unprejudiced view of the objective process. These men are educating the believers in a feeling of patriotism and an understanding of their duties to their earthly motherland. . . .

**U**p to the present time in our country, small groups of the Adventist Reform Movement continue to function. They are well known for their reactionary views and the antisocial character of their activities. Under the influence of their fanatical leader, Adventist Reformists refuse to register their churches, prohibit their children from joining the Young Communist organization, and instigate the youth not to serve in the army, and they produce and spread literature which contains slander against our socialist regime.

The ringleaders of the Reform Adventists aim at completely isolating their supporters from life. In a handwritten brochure, “Separation from the World,” they state: “We are living in a worldly age when our physical relationship with the world is much closer than in former times. Automobiles, radio and other modern devices have completely changed circumstances under which we live and have made it much more difficult than at any time before for us to be separate from the world and maintain our pure customs.” Asserting that radio and television transform

**“Small groups of the Adventist Reform Movement continue to function. They are well known for their reactionary views and the antisocial character of their activities.”**

the apartments of believers into theaters and other places shameful for saints to be in, the Reform Adventists try to ward off the effect of mass information on the conscience of believers. “We must do nothing, not read, look or speak, under any circumstances that have been forbidden by divine precepts,” they admonish.

To the dogmatic principle, common to all Adventists, of observing the Sabbath day, the Reformers ascribe special significance. On this day, it is absolutely forbidden to engage in any kind of work, except prayer. Even the purchase of a newspaper or food, conversation on ordinary topics and visits to public places are not allowed on this day. The believers are instructed: “Meet the Sabbath with prayer and singing and end it with hymns of praise; do not allow on this day any worldly lesson, music, occupation or conversation.” On Sabbaths, children are categorically forbidden to attend school. To back this up, they are reminded of Ellen White’s statement: “Adventists cannot count on God’s divine blessing if they send their children where they cannot fulfill the fourth commandment.”

But all these endeavors of extremists to separate their followers from the world, cannot withstand the influence of modern times. More and more reformists are deviating from their directives and involving themselves in different spheres of social life. . . .

#### **Article 4: “In the Captivity of Unattainable Expectations”**

by A. Bilov

*The introductory paragraphs note Adventist belief in the Second Coming and the fact that several attempts have been made to predict the exact date of Christ’s return.*

. . . On March 21, 1843, many thousands in North America in the United States met the day in fear and anguish. They had devoted years of preparation to becoming witnesses of the Second Coming and to rising with Jesus Christ to the 1,000 years of rule with God. Many took leave of their close relatives, put on white clothes and went to the tops of hills and mountains in order to be the first to meet the coming Christ. But the sound of the archangel’s trumpet was not heard. The Second Coming did not take place.

In history there have been many prophecies about the Second Coming. In different countries people appeared who set a time for the terrible judgment and the end of

the world. But then for the first time a “prophet” born on North American soil managed to captivate believers, not by eloquence or emotional appeal, but by a scheme of deductions pretending to be scientific, from “holy” texts which seemed convincing.

The founder of Adventism was William Miller, a small farmer and preacher in a Baptist group. After many years of careful Bible study, he became agitated by the idea that he had found indications in the book of Daniel as to the time of the Second Coming. He assumed verse 14 in the eighth chapter of Daniel, where it speaks of the evenings and mornings, meant that the Second Coming would take place after 2,300 years. Then Miller had only to find the starting point. Penetrating into the meaning of Daniel’s prophecy, he established the beginning date as 457 B.C., when the Persian king, Artaxerxes, gave permission to renew divine service in the temple at Jerusalem. As a result, it came out that Christ’s Second Coming was to take place in 1843.

We will not here go into the details of Miller’s reckoning, nor into his very arbitrary interpretation of Bible texts and his violation of the elementary rules of logic. This has already been done in our literature [A footnote to this paragraph appears in the Russian article, which reads as follows: “See E. Vartoshevich and E. Borisoglebsky: ‘They Are Awaiting the End of the World,’ M. 1963. A Below: ‘Adventism,’ M. 1973.”] But to many Americans at that time, Miller’s calculations seemed an authentic revelation. His call to carry the message of salvation everywhere was taken up by a great number of believers.

Miller’s prophecy resounded among those strata of the population which especially felt the uncertainty of the tempestuous development period of the capitalistic production method, which was accompanied by reinforced exploitation, crises of overproduction and disruption of the middle class. Small farmers, artisans, mechanics and tradesmen, not having the ability to make out what was going on or to understand the

reasons of the industrial upheaval which brought uncounted sufferings to millions of people, quickly took up the sermons on an imminent end to this world and the coming of a 1,000-year kingdom. They saw in it the opportunity of getting rid of earthly miseries.

During that period, the teaching on the imminent Second Coming had not yet attained its distinctive form; there was no talk of establishing an organization. The early Miller movement ran within existing religious groups. There was not even talk of a more or less logically concordant religious doctrine. The religious zeal rested completely on Miller’s prophecy and the signs of the Second Coming, which in the mouth of the “prophet” looked convincing to his followers.

Naturally, the expectations proved to be false. The Second Coming did not take place on March 31, 1843 as predicted by Miller, nor in subsequent years, though the ideologists in the movement several times brought in corrections on their computation. In no way would they admit the unsoundness of their predictions. According to one version, Christ had first to cleanse the heavenly sanctuary. After that, he would come to earth in order to cleanse the earthly sanctuary.

However, to take away the bitterness of the disappointed people who had believed Miller was impossible. Most of them broke away from the movement, from which several groups emerged, each construing differently the biblical predictions on the Second Coming. One of these groups is connected with the name Ellen White. Essentially, she is the founder and ideologist of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Ellen White (nee Harmon) was the wife of one of the passionate adherents of Millerism. In preaching her ideas, she was above all else concerned that they should sound to the believers, not as her own fabrications, but as the testimony of God’s revelation. According to her words, everything she said was inspired by her constantly arising visions, and thus was God’s word passed on to the people through His chosen person.

It is interesting that Ellen White’s visions

were repeatedly the subject of dispute even among Adventists. To convince the believers that these visions were really given from above, followers of the prophetess several times published conclusions of doctors who had observed her during her ecstatic condition. The doctors concluded that “the source of these visions was divine.”

Curiously, some unprejudiced persons tried to evaluate these conclusions objec-

**“One can assume that a psychically unbalanced, mystically inclined woman actually fell into ecstatic states accompanied by hallucinations of a religious character.”**

tively. In a book published about 20 years ago in Stuttgart by a West German author, Kurt Hutten, *Foreseers, Dreamers, Enthusiasts*, the direct question, “Was Ellen White a prophetess?” is asked. After carefully analyzing a great number of testimonies of neutral observers and her own writings, the author points out that all conclusions on the “divine character” of Ellen White’s visions were made, as a rule, by commissions composed of favorably biased individuals. Besides, the visions described by the prophetess in her writings were constantly changing in reprints, and some were simply excluded from the text in harmony with the development of Mrs. White’s own views.

Perhaps more important, however, is the fact that Hutten succeeded in convicting the prophetess of plagiarism. A number of her visions are simply borrowed from the works of other authors. Yet, she wrote to the believers: “When I send you testimonies, warnings and instructions, many of you evaluate them as Sister White’s opinion. In this you offend the Spirit of God. You know that the Lord reveals Himself through the Spirit of Prophecy. I was able to see the past, present and future.” But how can this be harmonized with the fact that in her books, *Patriarchs and Prophets* and *The Life of Paul*, as well as in

other writings, in literally tens of places, other works are copied? One can assume that a psychically unbalanced, mystically inclined woman actually fell into ecstatic states accompanied by hallucinations of a religious character. Even to this day, Seventh-day Adventists accept these hallucinations—to them, “visions”—as “divine signs” and refer to them constantly as equal to the Bible. . . .

*The author briefly describes the beginnings of the organized Seventh-day Adventist Church, calling Ellen White its “founder” and remarking on its worldwide missionary work.*

. . . Already by the end of the last century, Seventh-day Adventists were printing their literature in 91 languages. Simultaneously, Adventist missionaries appeared in Russia, to begin with in German colonies in the south of the country, and then in other places, also. Their preaching was successful among the peasantry, above all among the poorer classes who tied the teaching about the soon Second Coming in with their hope for deliverance from poverty, the heavy toil to which they were subjected, and their unbearable existence. Characteristically, it was mainly adherents of Russian Orthodox, who viewed their church as a true servant of autocracy, who turned to Adventism. In 1912, 64 percent of Seventh-day Adventists had come from the Orthodox Church. It is appropriate in this context to recall Lenin’s statement: “The struggle with the state church combined with the preaching of the new purified religion, that is, the new clarified, refined poison for the oppressed masses.”

Contemporary Adventist authors, in reviewing the history of their sect in Russia, focus on the persecutions the first missionaries were subjected to by the autocracy. Such cases actually took place. The main reason for this was that at that time the Russian Orthodox Church did not tolerate any rivalry in her influence on the minds of the people, and was especially hostile toward Adventism.

Adventist leaders tried to assure the autocracy of their loyalty, and, in 1905, when Czarism was compelled to allow persons leaving the Orthodox faith to join other religions, the Seventh-day Adventists are among those listed as loyal to the imperial

powers. It is interesting that in the circular to all governors of the Russian empire, the Minister of the Interior, Stolypin remarked: "Seventh-day Adventist teaching resembles that of the Baptists and can be regarded as a form of the latter, and, inasmuch as Baptists are freely permitted to profess their religious doctrine, there are not sufficient grounds to refuse the same privilege to Adventists."

Thus, statements about Seventh-day Adventist conflicts with autocracy are clearly exaggerated. The leaders of the Adventist groups repeatedly expressed sentiments like "loyal subjects of the sovereign," although, some of them were hostile and were even

**"Adventists have had success where we atheists in the main are indifferent to man and do not stretch out a hand to him when he is in difficulties."**

involved in the October revolution. These are facts which historians of Adventism prefer to pass over in silence.

Time has brought changes of attitude in the political orientation and social doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists, and compelled them to reexamine some of their dogmatic positions. Among Adventist ideologists, there are passionate disputes, heated arguments and strongly differing viewpoints on various problems.

At their fifth congress, in 1924, Seventh-day Adventists stated their position toward the Soviet government as one of loyalty as a basic principle of political orientation. It was at this congress that the split in the church originated. Some of the members did not accept the stated position toward the government, separated from the main body and tried to create their own organization with a bias toward extremism. They joined the so-called Reform Adventists, which emerged after the First World War in Germany. Such a split is not an unusual phenomenon for sects. It is the result of instability and differing attitudes of different social classes and religious

societies toward the Soviet power and comes about in their search for methods to retain and strengthen their positions. Similar processes took place also in the Baptist and the Evangelical churches. . . .

It is only natural that under socialist conditions, Adventism is experiencing a crisis. This results in a change of traditional religious ideas and in a considerable change in the psychology of the believers. In their minds, more and more place is given to "worldly things," while the "divine" gets weaker and weaker. . . . Under conditions of a general crisis in religion and a decline in piety everywhere, even Adventists, with their refined and flexible methods of spiritual influence on the people, have to search constantly for special ways to maintain in their adherents the little fire of faith. All this causes anxiety to the church leaders and compels them to action.

**I**n our country, there are comparatively few Seventh-day Adventists. Outwardly, contemporary Adventist religious teaching retains all its traditional doctrines, including belief in the 1,000-year reign of Christ and in the judgment of the living and dead, the conviction that Adventists are chosen of God to proclaim the message of salvation in all corners of the globe, and the necessity of an inner renovation involving observance of the Lord's commandments in order to earn the right to enter into the 1,000-year kingdom. . . . Adventists also hold to the doctrine of the mortality of the soul, which, somehow, does not tie in with general Christian teaching. But, the peculiar interpretation of the doctrine concerning the soul does not in the least affect the belief in life after the grave. . . .

A characteristic peculiarity of Seventh-day Adventists is the requirement of the absolute fulfillment of the fourth commandment. . . . In practice, the Sabbath day is used for strengthening the prayer exercise. Prayer meetings are held and "God's Word" is analyzed, often in the form of a Bible lesson. Believers are admonished to begin and end the Sabbath with prayer and reading from the Bible. Since there are 52 Sabbaths in a year, 52 days besides others each year are dedicated



to strengthening the spiritual life of the people.

Now, then, one cannot fail to call attention to the fact that the keeping of the fourth commandment at times leads the believer to violate his civil duties. Some of them refuse to go to work on this day, all because of religious obligations. . . .

*The next few paragraphs remark on tithing, baptism and worship rituals.*

The teaching of inner renewal deserves special attention. This is the Adventist interpretation of the Christian understanding of self-improvement, which includes emphasis on praying incessantly to grow in faith, repressing doubt, repentance and drawing nearer to Christ. Not so long ago, Adventist leaders demanded “self-sacrifice,” that is, denial of “worldly temptations.” In the *Week of Prayer Readings* for 1961, one could read: “Daily banish from your heart all that is worldly. Prepare yourself for the judgment so that when He comes and all believers bow before Him, you, too, may stand among those who are ready to meet Him.”

The *Week of Prayer Readings* for later years include no such frank, open summons. Life is changing, and the believers are indifferent; they cannot isolate themselves from society completely, or lock themselves up in the narrow road of religious experience. This compels contemporary preachers of Adventism to search for new words, new approaches to believers. In the *Week of Prayer Readings* for 1976, we find the following: “Let us pray that we may conduct ourselves in the correct pattern of life and be true Christians, worthy members of society and faithful citizens of our country—our earthly fatherland.”

Always emphasizing that the coming of Christ is near, preachers call upon believers to prepare to meet the “Saviour of mankind.” They constantly insist on the necessity of surrendering completely to God, and of remembering always that we are living in “the last days,” for it is possible to miss out on the 1,000-year kingdom. But it is doubtful that merely admonitions and instructions could have given Adventist ideologists what they often succeeded in achieving. The Seventh-day Adventist system of spiritual in-

fluence over people plays an essential role here.

For instance, the so-called “health reform” is especially influential. In different countries of the world, Adventists have opened hospitals and sanitariums which have worked out a lot of rules. But, let us note that the health reform was used right from the beginning for missionary purposes. The Adventists turned their health institutions into centers for the spreading of their faith, and the medical personnel into preachers of “the saving message.” The *Week of Prayer Readings* contain advice on diet, work and relaxation. Some are excerpts from medical sources, others do not come up to the level of contemporary medicine. Such advice represents an integral part of their religious doctrine. It cannot be denied that believers are attracted, for instance, by advice not to use alcohol, narcotics, and not to smoke. But the main point is that, objectively, this concern for people’s health is one of the refined means of strengthening religious experience and adherence to the Adventist faith, for, according to the design of the church’s ideologists, it daily convinces its adherents of the special compensations of professing this faith. Strictly speaking, this is the substance of health reform.

The Seventh-day Adventist world church now has 141 hospitals, 221 dispensaries, and many other types of medical facilities with approximately 8,000 medical employees. These medical institutions have cared for about 5,000,000 sick people during the last few years. Such concern for the believers’ health, in the eyes of the ignorant, is a philanthropic activity. Adventist preachers emphasize that the most important integral part of the Adventist message is the message of a healthy way of life, of which people are in great need.

**I**n order to accentuate the humanism of Adventism, ministers today call the attention of the believers to problems they did not touch upon in past decades. They talk, for example, about peace between nations, the rights of all peoples to equality and freedom, etc. This reflects, of course, the influence of the times, and contrasts with the traditional

doctrine of Adventists, which has been cast in an eschatological and chiliastic framework. Ellen White taught in *Gospel Workers*: "The Lord wishes His people to keep silence concerning political questions. You who work as educators, preachers and workers in every branch of God's work must not fight in the political world. You must live as citizens of Christ's kingdom." But today spiritual shepherds cannot avoid questions which are agitating all people. Willy nilly, they are compelled to deal with problems which encompass far more than Adventist eschatology and religion in general.

As was mentioned, Adventism demands from its followers participation in missionary activity. According to the principle of the "common priesthood," every believer must bring the "message of salvation" on the Second Coming everywhere. In such books as *Gospel Workers* and *Testimonies to Ministers*, it is stated that "every Seventh-day Adventist is a missionary," and it is everyone's duty "to win souls for Christ." The believers are taught how to educate children so that they will grow up as "true Christians." They are told how to conduct their conversation with those who "are ignorant of this truth" and how to bring them to an understanding of it. It is suggested that special attention be paid to

those who are in difficult circumstances and in need of help and support. In this connection, the humanitarian role, which sometimes looms large in creating trust toward missionaries of Adventism, comes into play.

Coming across such cases, one can see that Adventists have had success where we atheists in the main are indifferent to man and do not stretch out a hand to him when he is in difficulties. And how important it is to contrast this illusory humaneness of religious preachers to the true humanism of our society.

To be honest, it must be admitted that the growth of the Adventist Church is largely due to family members and believers from other denominations. But such data do not give us a basis for self-complacency. Not a few people are still under the power of the unattainable expectation of the Second Coming of Christ. They are following all the commands of their spiritual instructors. They do missionary work, educate their children in their faith. But they are not able themselves to see their delusions and don't have the ability to look upon the world without prejudice in order to see how unrealistic and groundless all their expectations are. In this they must be helped.

# PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATION

## Some Thoughts on Academic Quality

by Helen Ward Thompson

Our schools are to take a higher position academically and intellectually than any other schools in the land” (*IV Testimonies*, p. 425). “Every department is to bear the mark of divine excellence” (*Counsels to Teachers*, p. 57).

I feel uncomfortable when I read this counsel from E. G. White. And I find I am not alone with that feeling. College administrators, past and present, admit the same concern over the apparent inability of Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities to produce a larger proportion of especially able scholars.

Perhaps the counsel is simply a goal to be striven for but never reached. Yet, the words

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do not seem to offer much room for such interpretation. Serious acceptance of the statements, however, forces reassessment of the academic success of our colleges. For example, the results of national examinations in various academic areas ought to show that students in our college departments have learned standard material in their fields exceptionally well. And where there are few, if any, national examinations available, student scores on examinations developed by academic departments ought to show that a high calibre of learning is going on by the students in those disciplines.

Yet, the raw scores and percentile ratings for national examinations taken by students from the Adventist colleges that I am acquainted with indicate that many students are not learning as well as their faculty would desire, or perhaps as well as the students themselves would wish. And in many cases, the academic deans of the institutions and the

faculty are involved in studies to see what changes could be made to produce better results.

Some of the policies of the colleges, however, mitigate against much improvement in academic standards. A brief examination of four common policies shows part of the problem.

First, most of our undergraduate colleges want more students. This fact seems to dictate an open-admissions policy, resulting in students' being lured to the college who are ill prepared or even unable to pursue college-level work. The teacher is then faced with two alternatives: to teach "down" to his students, watering his courses so that his pass rate is respectable; or to teach solid college-level classes, helping the unable or unwilling as much as possible, but failing them academ-

**“The most serious factor in teacher responsibility for the academic level of their students is in the confusion evident when easy and undemanding academics and Christianity are considered synonymous.”**

ically if they do not accomplish the necessary level of learning. The former leads to a milquetoast course in which some learning takes place, but not nearly as much as the college students have the right to expect. A teacher who follows the latter course often becomes unpopular and even untenured.

Second, in most Adventist colleges in North America that offer remedial work, the percentage of students directed into those classes has increased over the last few years. This increase may have come about because advisors have better recognized the need for such skills as reading and writing and mathematics, but it may also be because the colleges are accepting more students with low abilities. At any rate, remedial classes are booming.

This increase in remedial education is probably good if the students are receiving

competent instruction, but when advisors register students for remedial classes, those same students are often *simultaneously* registering for other classes in religion, psychology, history, fine arts and other "core" curriculum requirements. The teachers, then, in these basic classes are faced with an impossible task: to teach college-level courses to large numbers of students admittedly unready for them. And the college need for student retention makes it difficult for the teacher to fail large percentages of these freshman classes. Yet, the college itself has determined that these students are not ready for college-level work, usually because they cannot read or write well enough to handle college classes.

Third, in some cases, less able students are advised to take two-year vocational programs which are devised to lead into four-year programs. Yet, an examination of the requirements of these two-year programs shows that too often the sophomore classes are some of the more difficult courses required in the four-year program. Thus, in his sophomore year, a less able student in a two-year program may actually be taking classes ordinarily taken by juniors or seniors in a four-year curriculum.

Fourth, Seventh-day Adventist colleges all admit some especially able students, yet only a few of our colleges have any programs that are particularly designed to enable those students to march to a different drum. Honors programs are ordinarily expensive: the more individually designed the program, often the more expensive. The exceptional students are usually taught in the same basic classes with the numerous students unready for college work. The result can be unchallenging, even stupefying, so that these potentially able scholars fail to get the stimulation as well as the learning they need to develop to their full capacity.

**A**dministrative policies thus contribute to the academic problems of our colleges. However, faculty also share the responsibility for the academically mediocre product of a college. At least four factors contribute to the problem. For example, fac-

ulty occasionally begin teaching in college when they are ill equipped to teach at a college level. Their background may be successful academy teaching with no college experience and little orientation by colleagues or the dean as to the different academic level of college teaching. Or teachers just out of graduate school with no teaching experience step into the college classrooms and begin teaching as they were taught in graduate school. In either case, the teacher is unprepared to do an excellent job.

Faculty also want to build their departments by generating more programs "for their students." Yet, many of those student needs could well be met with present course offerings if proper attention were given to redesigning one or two existing courses. The result of developing new programs is the teaching of a broader and broader spectrum of courses, many of which the existing faculty (and few new are now being added) are relatively untrained to teach. The outcome often is a weak major taught by faculty not specialized in their teaching areas. Another result may well be faculty overload.

Third, sometimes faculty equate missionary work with mediocre work. Underlying this confusion is the subtle influence of the everpresent knowledge that Adventist college faculty work for less than they would receive in a state system or in many other private systems. The difference varies considerably, from very little difference at the instructor level to considerable at the associate professor and professor levels. Yet, the mental excuse sometimes for not giving that extra measure, for not making that extra push, for not bringing the teaching art to perfection is the knowledge that wages are low, anyway.

But probably the most serious factor in teacher responsibility for the academic level of their students is in the confusion evident when easy and undemanding academics and Christianity are considered synonymous. I still remember a student who came to me to complain about how unchristian one of his teachers was because he refused to give him extra time (and extra academic advantage) to do some assignments. Yet, the student frankly admitted that he had no reason to be

late but had simply procrastinated. Another of his teachers had granted him extra time, and that teacher was quickly labeled "Christian." The "Christian" teacher is confusing, it seems to me, Christianity with sloppy scholarship and faulty character development.

The constituency of the church as a whole also shares the responsibility for the less than ideal academic achievement of the college students. For example, the idea is prevalent that college is for all Adventist young people. And that somehow, when they get there, they should all have a "success" experience. This places the college in the position of babysitting, being a penal institution, and being a recreation center, as well as an educational institution. Now, while a college can do some of the first three, it cannot major in any or all of those and still maintain stature as an educational institution. All Seventh-day Adventists should not go to college, although many or even most should in today's world, provided the colleges are adequately staffed and equipped to handle them.

Another idea that affects the academic level of the college is the lack of understanding among the constituency that Christian education is indeed a doctrine of the church and is the most effective evangelistic agency of the church. The longer a student attends one of our schools, the less likely he is to leave the church in later years. This means that the constituency should make absolutely certain that every Adventist young person who would benefit from a college education has the opportunity to attend an Adventist college. Many very able Seventh-day Adventists are not now in Adventist colleges. They ought to be if the colleges were offering the curricula to fit them for their lifework.

**H**ow can some of these factors be ameliorated, some of the problems solved? Three steps might be helpful. While they are stated generally, they actually are specific and need to be so considered.

First, while Adventist colleges undoubtedly will continue to have an open-admissions policy for some time, they should

immediately give more serious consideration to “complete” programs for students unready for college-level work. No longer should the regular college classes be academically bottom heavy, forcing the teacher to dilute his material or have an undue proportion of failures.

Second, faculty need to teach better. Hiring practices, orientation sessions, philosophy of work considerations, curriculum restrictions — all of these should be focused on the teacher’s doing the best possible job in the classroom. The soundness of a teacher’s academic practices as well as his personal commitment to the church ought to be considered in the hiring process. Search committees need to determine as far as possible whether a faculty member will be an effective teacher, able to hold high standards in a kind way, or whether he will succumb to the multitude of pressures urging him toward popular mediocrity.

In addition, faculty in-service training ought to keep the teacher abreast of the latest developments in teaching techniques and

grading skills. Also, constant feedback for the teacher from his students, both personally and through examinations, is essential for the teacher to know how well his students are learning compared with the students of his colleagues nationwide.

Third, a specific, organized, determined effort should be continued at both the conference and division level to educate the constituency that college is for college-level work, that remedial programs are available for those students who need them, that every Adventist young person should not necessarily go on to college, but that every one whom the college can serve should attend. Then, the constituency needs to see that every deserving student is financially able to go.

Only if the college with its admission policies, the faculty in its teaching expertise, and the constituency with its understanding and financial support work together can we have hope of meeting the goal: “a higher position academically and intellectually than any other schools in the land” with departments of “divine excellence.”

# Adventist English Teachers: Some Roots

by John O. Waller

Seventh-day Adventists ventured into higher education, founding Battle Creek College in 1874, a mere 17 years after Lafayette, a small liberal arts college in Pennsylvania, became the first American college to establish a chair of English language and literature. Lafayette, in 1857, so appointed a remarkable young scholar of language, Francis Andrew March (1825-1911), who remained at Lafayette for the next 40 years while becoming one of the world's most eminent philologists. He wrote *A Comparative Grammar of the Anglo-Saxon Language* (1870), became director (1879) of the American staff of the great *Oxford English Dictionary*, was elected third president (1892) of the Modern Language Association of America.

These facts alone might make us suspect that English studies in their American infancy were decidedly language-centered, English-language-centered. Indeed they were. For centuries, higher education had been dominated by the intensive study of Latin and Greek. Now, from the mid-1850s, this ancient language emphasis, already being diluted by such expanding disciplines as history, philosophy, mathematics and the natural sciences, would be further challenged by a different, and rival, brand of language study. For the entrenched classicists, the era of decline had begun. The new philologists such as March would demonstrate that English had always been more Germanic than

Latinistic, so that studying Latin could not take the student more than a short way toward truly understanding English.

The new study of English aspired to be no less rigorous than the older study of Latin and Greek had been. The new field was, first of all, the English language, as language — its history, the derivations of its words, its grammar, its own best ways of being distinctively itself in rhetorical situations, its triumphant realization of its sublime potentialities when voicing the thoughts and dreams of great orators, essayists and poets. The study of the English language would provide keys to unlock the unique riches of English and American literature.

It was not intended, then, that language and literature would be allowed to drift apart, and decidedly not intended that language study would ever become subordinate, practically crowded out by the study of literature. But neither was it intended, and this point needs emphasizing now when so many self-confident echoes are urging us to scurry “back to the basics,” that the study of grammar would be the end-and-all, driving out the study of literature. The basics, our professional ancestors would have stoutly insisted, were firmly implanted in Professor March's title, “English Language *and* Literature” (emphasis supplied). The two together, always together, an educative force for developing men and women in a dynamically expanding new nation — this ideal would impel the growth of English studies in the second half of the last century.

Even more revolutionary during that same half-century was the transformation of the American public schools from wretchedly taught, haphazardly administered, pov-

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erty-hampered places into something at least recognizably resembling the highly organized, professionally staffed, centrally funded ones we have now. The post-Civil War years, and especially the 1880s and 1890s, witnessed a ferment of newly established and fast-expanding teacher-training institutions, called normal schools; of state and county and district teachers' organizations; of frequently held teachers' institutes at horse-and-buggy distance apart, all over the United States, where successful teachers, some sent from normal schools, would lecture and demonstrate; of the writing, publishing and promoting of textbooks. Suddenly, the education of average boys and girls had become a major American growth industry. It inseparably accompanied the new growth of systematic English studies. The normal schools admitted students with little or no Latin, but with enthusiastic determination to learn how to teach. Many had already begun teaching when as young as 16. They knew what they urgently needed. They looked to the normal schools to help them master the "common branches," and English was the branch from which the others hung.

A distinguished example was one new normal school established in 1879 in forested central Pennsylvania at Lock Haven. Its bulletin proudly announced its aim:

. . . to make the study of English the basis of all other acquirements. No school in the United States gives a more critical course in the study of all that tends to make pupils proficient in the proper and fluent use of their mother tongue. The study of English Classics receives special attention, and no pupil is presented to the Examining Board until he has made an application of English Grammar and Rhetoric in the criticism and analysis of at least *ten* English and American Classics by as many different authors. While pursuing this course he also studies somewhat extended biographies of at least *forty* British and American authors. These critical exercises, in connection with the frequent written recitations, reviews and discussions give our students an exceptional ease and fluency of expression in English.

We carefully note the sequence. The begin-

ning and the end were language. Linguistic — grammatical and rhetorical — insights were applied to the "English Classics." This process led to composition, both written and oral, and the end product was new public school teachers with "an exceptional ease and fluency of expression in English."

**I**n these two complementary contexts, the steady rise of English in the universities and its predominance from the outset in the normal schools, we should view the beginning of Seventh-day Adventist English education. Up to 1900, it is largely the story of two men — Goodloe Harper Bell (1832-1899) at Battle Creek College and George Washington Rine (1859-1938) at Healdsburg and Pacific Union Colleges. Although Bell taught at the college for only its first eight years, teachers he had trained succeeded him there, and his English textbooks were a force in Adventist education even after his death. Both Bell and Rine were recently baptized Seventh-day Adventists deeply committed to Christian education. Both had been nurtured as public school teachers in that time of burgeoning English studies. Bell's first language study textbook, published while he was still at the college, sold widely in the public schools. And at Battle Creek, whether we like it or not, he was primarily a teacher of future public school teachers. In 1877, at a time of almost no Adventist church schools anywhere, there were 235 enrolled in the teacher-training course.<sup>1</sup> Of necessity, they went out into the public schools, where jobs were plentiful. Out at Healdsburg, Rine arrived as a graduate of that normal school back at Lock Haven so resolutely committed to English. And both Bell and Rine, as we shall see, were men of aesthetic sensibility and imaginative literary appreciation who fervently believed that a heart knowledge of good literature would help turn Adventist youth into culturally rounded, spiritually mature, effective witnesses for their faith.

G. H. Bell in 1874 was already a seasoned teacher, 42 years old, who had begun teaching when only 19. We know almost nothing about his early life. His 1899 obituary sketch in the *Youth's Instructor* says he had very



briefly attended Oberlin College until family circumstances forced him out. Before Oberlin, he may have attended an academy somewhere, but this is not confirmed. After Oberlin, he had to educate himself, seizing every spare moment for “training the faculties with which God had blessed him.” By then, he was beginning to be recognized as a superior teacher. The obituary declares that he filled “important positions in various city schools” and “was known as one of the most thorough, successful, and intelligently progressive educators in Michigan.”

Concerning Bell’s teaching methods in his early Battle Creek years, we have very little evidence. A few surviving diary entries and snatches from his students’ letters are largely from his final years at the college. His first textbook was finished the year before he left. One student writes in 1879, “In grammar we are at present, and have been for 3 weeks, considering punctuation; Prof. Bell has worked out a chart by which any style of

**“Both Bell and Rine. . . believed that a heart knowledge of good literature would help turn Adventist youth into culturally rounded, spiritually mature, effective witnesses for their faith.”**

composition in the Eng. language can be punctuated; its rules are equally as concise as those which he has written for the use of capitals.” This same student, attending the college three years earlier, before leaving to earn money, had been delighted with the compositions he and his classmates had written for Bell: “I think here is a splendid chance for improvement especially for myself.” Another student in 1880 writes, “I now have five recitations daily . . . The first in the morning is Literature, which I enjoy *very* much. . . .”<sup>3</sup>

Most probably, though, Bell’s teaching methods and college classroom demeanor

were better suited to the children he had taught for more than 20 years than to the adults who came to Battle Creek. He had a loyal following, but by some students he seems to have been more feared than loved. During recitations, he was an exacting drillmaster who did not always avoid the pain-dealing weapons of ridicule. His Battle Creek principal, the University of Michigan-educated Sidney Brownsberger, writing years later, preferred to remember Bell as underappreciated because he had so persistently endeavored “to inculcate in youth the principles necessary to the formation of a perfect character. . . . The average youth will resist even the patient endeavors of such faithful and true men and women. . . . They are content to remain in a lower scale and resent any persistent effort to have them progress toward the highest ideal. . . . Still Prof. Bell was appreciated by many of his pupils and assigned his proper rank among educators.”<sup>4</sup> But Ellen G. White, by 1880, took a less benign view, testifying against Bell’s tactless severity and his unremitting concentration upon grammar, particularly in his “work for those that were to be ministers.” “He had not,” wrote Mrs. White, “adapted himself to the situation. He has not always been patient, and encouraged men who have left their fields of labor at a sacrifice of time and expense to learn what they could in a short time. . . . He might have done his part in sending forth these men with much greater knowledge if he had not made grammar his idol, and kept the minds under his charge drilling upon grammar when they should have been receiving a general education upon many subjects. . . . He has kept drilling certain students upon grammar — making that the one all-important study. . . and some have left college with only half an education. . . . In this particular he has kept the minds confined to such a thoroughness as would not be essential in one case out of a hundred.”<sup>5</sup>

Before Bell left Battle Creek to become the first principal of South Lancaster Academy (predecessor of Atlantic Union College), he had become unpopular with a large part of the college students. He himself, writing to Brownsberger some years later, said that he

had been “hissed out of the college when I left it.”<sup>6</sup> To what extent this experience, or Mrs. White’s counsel, or both may have altered his fundamental approach to grammar — or whether, indeed, his approach was ever substantially altered — we can only speculate. But his language textbooks present an educator to whom the finer details of grammatical theory were of only minor importance. His books consistently made a point of starting with actual sentences, first calling attention to just what each sentence said, its every implication — its “thought,” as he always called it. Only after the thought had been carefully explored did Bell venture to introduce any traditional grammatical terminology. The entire first volume of his language series, *Primary Language Lessons*, avoids using even one grammatical term — not even “noun” or “verb” — but gives short readings, mostly about nature, followed by question after question, simply worded, all eliciting the thought brought out by every word or phrase, but never abstractly labeling any. A child starting with such instruction would have been thoroughly habituated to grammatical ways of thinking before encountering any grammatical terms.

**B**ell stressed this philosophy in his instructions to teachers. “For example,” he wrote, “we think of *objects*, and in speaking of them must *name* them; we think of the *qualities* and *actions* of objects, and in expressing such thoughts must have words to denote qualities and actions; we think *when*, *where*, *how*, and *why* certain actions took place, or certain conditions existed, and must have words for the expression of such thoughts. This plan is adhered to, not only in the introductory lessons, but throughout the entire work.” “Thus,” he explains, “the energetic teacher will be enabled to prevent his pupils from losing the *thought* in the intricacies of grammatical analysis. . . . This is of utmost importance; for how often the pupil becomes wholly oblivious to the meaning of a sentence while giving its grammatical analysis!” Concerning figures of speech, Bell insisted, “The name of the figure, being in itself of little consequence, is made wholly incidental;

but the figure is so explained as to show why it is appropriate, and what gives it its chief charm.” And finally he admonishes the teacher: “Do not be too strenuous or exacting in those mere technical forms of parsing that have no practical bearing upon the use of the language. Remember that parsing is only a means to an end. . . .” The sentences quoted in this paragraph were dated May 29, 1881, before Bell left the college but after the comments by Ellen White. They may or may not represent a change in philosophy or practice. Mrs. White had criticized the wasteful prolongation of grammatical drill, inflicted upon mature ministerial students to the neglect of more valuable information, and the professor’s impatience — his failure to adapt “himself to the situation” — not necessarily the fundamentals of the method itself.

To insure that the thoughts in the sentences studied should be well expressed and intrinsically valuable, Bell frequently turned to the works of leading English and American authors. Lines from Bryant, Whittier,

**“In his direct teaching of literature, Bell believed in minimizing biography and history and studying the literature itself. Here, too, he emphasized thought.”**

Longfellow, Lowell, Coleridge, Shelley grace his grammar exercises, so that grammar and literature blend obliquely together. “Good taste in language, like good manners,” he explained, “is acquired by association. This continued association with the best thoughts and the best forms of expression is afforded by the multitudinous examples furnished for class drill. . . . In this way a love for the concise and beautiful in thought and style is steadily, and certainly, though unconsciously attained. The culture thus secured. . . leads the learner to select and enjoy the best reading our literature affords, and to shun the coarse and vulgar.”<sup>8</sup>

In his direct teaching of literature, Bell believed in minimizing biography and history and studying the literature itself. Here, too, he emphasized thought. "How do you progress in the study of literature?" he wrote a former student. "The book I lent you is not a book that treats of literature so much as of literary men. I can form a better acquaintance with authors from reading their writings than I can from reading what other men say of them. . . ." His preface to the literature volume of his language series was even more emphatic: "The first thing to be considered is the primary object for which the study is to be pursued. It is pleasant to know who wrote this or that book, and to know the history and peculiarities of noted authors; but all this does not necessarily ennoble one's character, discipline his mind to more vigorous thinking, or materially improve his language. It is not studying literature, but simply its history. The real study of literature is the becoming acquainted with such writings as are by their intrinsic worth valuable to all people in all times. Such is the Bible; and such are all writings whose tendency is to call into healthy action the nobler attributes of our nature, thus contributing to the building up of a beautiful and symmetrical manhood. . . to become fully acquainted with such writings is to drink in of their spirit, — to be stirred by the motives and emotions that prompted them. Here is where the help of the teacher is most needed. Reading aloud with the class is one of the best things a teacher can do. His enthusiasm, his appreciation, his sympathy with the thoughts and motives of the author, will be contagious."<sup>10</sup>

And even more pointed for Adventist teachers is this appeal:

This leads to the paramount object of studying literature in schools; namely, the developing of so pure a taste that the learner will be able to discriminate at once between real literature and trash. The time will come for our pupils when they cannot have parents, teachers, or friends by their side to tell them whether or not a book is good reading. They must learn to recognize for themselves the moral tendency, the literary character, the trend of influence, which constitute the inherent power

for good or evil of any piece of writing. There is but one way for teachers to inculcate this, and that is by getting their pupils so thoroughly enamored with what is true and beautiful that they will instinctively turn away from everything of an opposite nature.<sup>11</sup>

Healdsburg College, mainly an academy at first, was starting its fifth year when Rine, in his first year of Adventism, joined the faculty for the 1886-87 term. Rine was a Pennsylvania "Dutch" German, about 27, and strikingly diminutive, hardly five feet tall. But he was every precious inch a teacher, an 1883 graduate of the strenuous teacher-training program at Central State Normal School, Lock Haven, Pa., under the principalship of a phenomenal educator, Dr. Albert Newton Raub. A man of admirable integrity, Raub epitomized the finest order of progressive career educator during those boom years. When Rine finished there, the school Raub had founded six years before was leading the normal schools of the state in producing certified teachers. Raub himself was the product of a normal school, although he had honorary degrees from both Princeton and Lafayette (March's college). He had authored 17 textbooks in grammar, rhetoric, literature, arithmetic, reading, general teaching methods and school management, and was much sought as a lecturer and consultant at teachers' institutes. After leaving Lock Haven, he would found his own educational publishing company and issue a weekly magazine, *Educational News*, to promote his generally conservative brand of educational reform. Still later, Raub became president of Delaware College, which would evolve into the University of Delaware. Raub had a reasoned opinion on almost every conceivable educational topic, and Rine was his disciple, following his methods and introducing some of his textbooks at Healdsburg and sending him at least three articles for the *News*.

Two of these, written during the year Rine joined the Healdsburg faculty, show his professional pride and lively English prose. He deplores the mechanical use of "model lessons" from teachers' manuals: "What our

schools most need at the present time is a great deal more *doing* and a great deal less *talking about* doing, and a little less. . . of the disgusting 'Polly wants a cracker' reproduction of a 'A Model Lesson in numbers by Miss \_\_\_\_\_ of C. C. Normal School.' " Every teacher has the duty "to devote several hours" a day "to thinking out, devising and formulating plans for each day's work." Prepackaged lessons will not work because every particular school has its own "peculiar requirements," and no two teachers are the same: "We believe there is a deep, hidden well-spring of power in each one of us, but so many of us have not yet unearthed ourselves sufficiently to discover it. It is . . . vital . . . that every teacher should know whence the source of her power so that she may take advantage of it in her all-important mission of training that most subtle and susceptible organism of man — the mind."<sup>12</sup> Another short article protests

**" 'The mission of poetry is to enable those who have eyes and see not, and ears, but hear not, to perceive and enjoy the beauty and the eternal meaning which God has put into all his works. . . .' "**

against shallowness in self-cultivation, the "great tendency in our schools and colleges . . . to taste everything and digest nothing." Under such superficial study and teaching, "the mind becomes enfeebled and dwarfed, and languishes from sheer starvation. . . . Surface culture is worse than no culture at all. Its fruits are vanity, presumption and pedantry. It confers no practical ability, power, or material advantage. . . . Deep, thorough culture is what is needed. Every subject taught should be fully investigated, scrutinized, examined, analyzed, imbibed, and appropriated by the learner." Already, we discover a Rine mannerism that would become folklore during his 31 years (broken by periods of

other denominational service) at Healdsburg and Pacific Union: his delightful recitations of catalogs of synonyms, each word topping the previous one, reinforcing the power of the sentence! He concluded on a biblical note, "'In all thy getting get understanding'; but to understand something is to know it completely, and comprehend it fully. We must be masters of something or everything will be master of us."<sup>13</sup>

**W**e remember that Bell believed that studying literature itself was more important than learning facts about authors' lives. No doubt Rine would have agreed, but from his master Raub he adopted a method of using authors' lives to arouse student interest in the authors as human beings. When we begin to know a person, supposedly, we want to know his thoughts, listen to his songs, hear the stories he has to tell us.

This method provided a scenario for our most fruitful source of Rine's literary ideals. During 1898 and 1899, his twelfth year at Healdsburg College, he sent the *Youth's Instructor* a series of articles concerning American literature. An imaginary high school teacher, undoubtedly modeled after Rine himself, and a class of "bright, earnest, ambitious students," who also, improbably, write and talk like Rine, spend a term discussing the lives and writings of Irving, Bryant, Hawthorne and ten other American writers. The students look up their authors in reference books (exemplifying Raub's principle that "it is what a child does for himself that gives him culture and strength"), and write their findings in their own best English to read aloud in class. Quite patently, however, Rine's chief motive throughout, using both teacher and students, was to give his *Youth's Instructor* readers his own ideas concerning literature.

Best of the series was an essay, "Poetry: Its Nature and Mission."<sup>14</sup> "The most suggestive and poetical of attempted definitions that I have found is from the poet Shelley: 'A great poem is a fountain forever overflowing with the waters of wisdom and delight.' " Rine's matured aesthetic orientation, we observe, was of the English Romantic

Movement—his germinal critics Shelley and Coleridge. “A genuine fountain,” he continues, “bubbles, sparkles, refreshes, and gladdens forever. The most protracted draught can not exhaust its lusty life. Its uses and interests are perennial. We quaff its cool, limpid waters with as much zest and delight the thousandth time as we did the first. Even so is a great poem.” And then like Shelley himself in his similes for the skylark, Rine gives equivalents for a poem: “like the first acorn ‘which held all oaks potentially,’ ” “a candle from which a thousand other candles may be lighted without in the least diminishing its own light.” True poetry gives a “refined, spiritual pleasure which beautifies and expands the soul and warms and deepens the sympathies.”

Rine valued literature for its *affective* value, what it can *do* to and for readers:

The genius of the poet, with his metaphors, similes, personifications . . . looks upon a dry stick, and it instantly becomes like Aaron’s rod, budding and blossoming into a thing of life and power and beauty. He lifts his wand over the arid waste, and it becomes a sunlit garden. The mission of poetry is to enable those who have eyes and see not, and ears, but hear not, to perceive and enjoy the beauty and the eternal meaning which God has put into all his works; it is to make men happier, stronger, and more useful by making them better.

**A**s we move into our own century, the roots of our profession proliferate in many directions—several expanding colleges, various new academies and church schools across the land. A competently edited Seventh-day Adventist educational periodical, *Christian Education*, provides details of English curricula and teaching philosophies.

A Battle Creek College graduate and sometime colleague of Rine’s at Healdsburg, Warren E. Howell (1869-1943), while associate editor of *Christian Education* in 1911, summed up his position on the teaching of literature. This subject, he wrote, occasioned “differences of opinion,” but the diversity was “made needlessly wide and dissonant . . .

by wrong methods” of evaluating. We approach literature “in too ‘scientific’ an attitude of mind,” becoming too preoccupied with “its forms and technique, with minor, petty details of history and philology and biography . . . and attempt to reduce its production to rules and regulations . . . . With our compass we describe a circle on the plane of literature and say, ‘What is inside of this circle is good, what is outside is bad.’ With as much propriety might we fence off an acre in the heart of some city and say that all the people living on that acre are good, all the rest are bad. . . . People live in literature as they live in a city—all mingled together, good, bad, and medium. Truth and beauty, error and ugliness, dwell together in literature like trees in a forest. Analytical, dissecting, piecemeal processes do not work well in discovering any of them.” Howell, of course, an educator generally remembered for his conservatism, was not advocating an “anything goes” attitude toward literature that would condone the pernicious or trashy. What he desired was a rational overview. “It is not so much the gem of beauty here and the morsel of truth there that constitute the worth of a production, but what is the massed effect—what the influence upon my life that I can neither gage in inches nor decompose into its chemical elements, though I may be certain it is uplifting? The impression I carry away with me is what tells.” So we gather from literature “inspiration and food for nobler, broader, more fruitful living.” The greatest writers are among God’s “many interpreters of himself among men,” who help us see and learn “in the experience and work of others, the ways of God in dealing with men.” Through literature we “get outside of our own small circle of thinking and consider what other men and women have thought and said. . . . Reading the best thoughts of others is a powerful stimulus to our own thinking. By communing with the best minds, our own tastes are formed.”<sup>15</sup>

With Mahlon Ellsworth Olsen (1873-1952), our story encounters a man with an earned Ph.D. in English. The son of O. A. Olsen, a former General Conference president, he was in his middle thirties when he received his doctorate, at his own expense,

from the University of Michigan in 1909. For eight years previously, he had worked in England as managing editor of a health reform periodical, *Good Health*. His Ann Arbor dissertation, about the prose of the King James Version, was many years later (1947) reduced and revised for a book. The teaching of English—especially of writing and of literature—was Olsen’s best-loved work, although it directly occupied hardly more than a dozen full-time years of his life, divided between Washington Missionary College (1907-1917) and Union College (1920-1923). After 1923, he was president of Fireside Correspondence School (Home Study Institute) and worked tirelessly building and promoting that important work until his retirement in 1946.

Olsen attributed his great love of good literature largely to the influence of Bell, under whom he took private lessons while living at Battle Creek. Olsen liked to tell of his six a.m. visit to catch Bell, who also grew and sold vegetables, before he started on his morning rounds:

I found Professor Bell dressed in a suit of blue jeans with an old straw hat on his head. . . . At this . . . time the number of his students was very small, and his income must have been likewise. Yet he seemed as happy and unconcerned as if everything were going his way . . . It was restful just to be in the neighborhood of such a man. I began the conversation. “Good morning, Professor Bell.” “Good Morning, my young friend. Did you wish to see me?” “Yes, Professor Bell, I would like to study literature with you this summer.” “You are from Battle Creek College?” “Yes.” “Well, I have had one or two college students come to me and want to rush them through Literature in the summer, so as to get the grade. I don’t do jobs of that kind.” “But I want to study literature under you because I am interested in the subject and want to take plenty of time to do it full justice.” “Won’t you insist on my taking you through before school begins next fall?” “Not at all. I hope you will let me study with you for a year or more.” “Oh,

well, if that is your idea, come along and study with me. We’ll have the best time in the world. I thought you were one of those young fellows who are wanting a grade, and as little work attached to it as possible. But if you are of the other sort, we shall get along famously. When do you wish to begin?”

Olsen remembered the lessons as “exceedingly informal.” They “actually lasted, with some interruptions, throughout the rest of my college course, and in fact till Professor Bell died some five years later.” Olsen did most of the reading. Bell would ask a few questions, Olsen would ask more. “Sometimes he would read a few lines to bring out some special point, and he read with wonderful sympathy and interest, seeming to enter into the inner heart of the author, and give such an interpretation of the words as the writer himself would give. . . .” They would always begin punctually, but would not “end

**“ ‘The Bible became dearer and also more intelligible to me because it holds in itself all that is noblest and best in literature, and these other authors but lead up to it.’ ”**

on the hour. It was a real companionship, and it led us afield under the open heavens.” They would sometimes bicycle out to “some deep wood where birds and squirrels kept us company. Sitting down on a fallen log we discoursed on the deep things of life. . . . It was not always what he said, but what he somehow inspired his pupil to think and say.” With Bell, Olsen first read Keats and developed a profound love for Wordsworth, who became his favorite poet. Bell “explained that the reading of the works of Wordsworth would mean so much to us in after life, how we would get a new insight into poetry of the noble and serious kind and would come to look on the woods and fields with a deeper sympathy and interest than before.”

“Suffice it to say,” Olsen testified, “that Professor Bell gave me his matchless companionship all along the way and every hour that I spent with him in the study of English literature was one of delight and sometimes of rapture. We walked hand in hand through the centuries, studying the noble and beautiful things that will live on through the ages, and feeding our souls on that which makes life precious and meaningful. The Bible became dearer and also more intelligible to me because it holds in itself all that is noblest and best in literature, and these other authors but lead up to it. Other studies became more interesting to me and likewise more intelligible, because of the intimate companionship I had cultivated with the best writers.”<sup>16</sup>

Olsen represented also the dedicated research scholar. He worked, as his busy schedule allowed, for many long months in and out of the libraries of the United States and Europe upon an immensely ambitious history of Adventism, culminating in Seventh-day Adventism, a study fated to be greatly reduced in scope before it was finally published. In his long letter to the General Conference Council in 1913, describing his complicated researches and requesting additional time, we find the credo of the true research scholar:

If we want a history which will not have to be re-written, which will be a credit to the denomination, it must not show signs of haste. There must be nothing in it ill-digested or immature; it must show wisdom in its statement of facts, as well as courage and skill in handling the narrative. It must be interesting without being sensa-

tional, and must give an account of the rise and development of this denomination which will cheer and encourage the hearts of our own people and at the same time set us in a proper light with the general public. Such a history is sure to be read by friends and by enemies, and a careless word here, and an unfortunate expression there, might work untold injury to the Cause. . . .

No book worthy of the name can be written except as the outgrowth of a deep heart experience. In fact, good books are never made mechanically; they grow, and sometimes their growth is slow. . . . I also want your earnest prayers. I feel that my path is beset with many difficulties. Unless divinely helped step by step, I am sure to go wrong. Indeed, had I at the outset realized to the full the difficulties that would confront me, I am afraid I should have declined the task. But now that I have gone so far, I am determined never to give up, but with God’s help to press forward to the goal.<sup>17</sup>

Upon stout foundations laid by such articulate scholar-teachers, such lovers of the beautiful and true in thought and language, Seventh-day Adventist English education has rested. With prayerful humility, trusting never in our own unaided wisdom, but guided by Scripture and later prophetic witness, we like them must do our work with the proper measure and quality of unassuming pride. Why should we, too, not be proud to perform and daily strive to do better, the always rewarding work that God Himself has commissioned us to do?

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# Graduate Studies ‘Outside’

by Jonathan A. Glenn

For a variety of reasons, whether financial or academic, many Seventh-day Adventist students choose to attend non-Adventist graduate schools. When I chose to study at the University of Notre Dame following my graduation from Walla Walla College in 1977, reactions among my friends ranged from the inane (“You mean they do something there besides playing football?”) to the well-meant, however ill-conceived (“Isn’t that a *Catholic* school?”). One friend expressed concern regarding my adjustment to a society of drinkers, smokers and swearers; another urged me to beware of Sabbath problems. These sorts of difficulties, however — primarily social, and easily dealt with — have not ultimately been of real import. My experience here at Notre Dame — a Christian school — and that of my friends at secular institutions suggest, rather, that for the Seventh-day Adventist graduate student the problem of the non-Adventist graduate school is essentially one of fellowship and isolation. Will the student invoke the ancient watchword, “In the world but not of the world”? If so, how will he interpret it?

The Seventh-day Adventist graduate student, having newly arrived at his non-Adventist graduate campus, typically finds his life abruptly dichotomized. Once-a-week church simply does not take the place of the warm womb of the Seventh-day Adventist college community, where, though many students do not share an equally confirmed commitment to the Adventist faith, most students do share a relatively homogenous

cultural background, at least in terms of religion. Obviously, the cold outside world of the non-Seventh-day Adventist graduate school is not, and does not attempt to be, such a community. A friend recently wrote to me: “. . . among all the other changes any student going to any graduate school experiences, the SDA student going to a non-SDA graduate school suddenly finds himself in an environment in which his spiritual activity is totally disjoint from his scholastic pursuits. This is especially apparent in the form of his peers and professors, but it is just as extant in the total tone and direction of the campus.”

At the same time, not all is well back in the womb of Adventist culture; even there a split exists. Though the phenomenon is by no means an exclusively Seventh-day Adventist one, the split between “the people” and the intelligentsia (even our own terminology dehumanizes us) seems wide in the church. Certainly, there is little enough sympathy for areas of interest such as mine (Old English poetry) in any average group; a Seventh-day Adventist group will additionally assign eternal demerits to what it sees as a waste of temporal talents — that is, to what it believes not to have any immediate practical importance (or, perhaps, to what it does not understand).

An additional problem exists not in the church and not in the world of the graduate school, but in the graduate student himself — the problem is that of *mission*. My friend writes: “The fact that I ran into successful people who had strong personalities and held radically different basic assumptions than mine really caused me to wonder about mine. Not so much whether or not they were good enough for me, but whether or not they were good enough for them. You see, I came [to graduate school] somewhat as a mission-

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ary to the heathen intellectual. I had much more to learn than to teach, however.” Though I myself did not come to Notre Dame thinking of myself as “a missionary to the heathen intellectual,” I do think that one of the basic assumptions trained into young Seventh-day Adventists is the mission-directedness of the church and, hence, of each church member’s life. The problem, here, lies in the fact that active proselyting and honest intellectual pursuits (*as pursuits*) are not compatible.

Such problems are not, of course, without their solutions, and these solutions do not consist of retreating into the womb, for such a retreat is a retreat from reality: as far as a person rests in such absolute security, just so far is he unaware of himself as a human, of his church as a human institution, and of his God as one of whom it can be said, “Clouds and darkness are round about him. . . .” (Ps. 97:2) The seventh-day Adventist graduate student can find some neonatal comfort, however, in the discovery that the cold world affords opportunities for fellowship just as rewarding as those of the illusory womb. I have found no basic spiritual concern of mine as an Ad-

**“Does the Adventist graduate student have a mission on the non-Adventist campus? Yes, I believe; it is the human mission, the Christian mission. . . .”**

ventist that cannot be discussed reasonably with non-Adventist graduate students. Certainly, the terms of such conversations must be different from those of a discussion taking place within the Seventh-day Adventist coterie — one talks in Christian or human terms rather than in Adventist terms. Yet, is not such a recodification good? Adventist terms, it seems to me, have come to consti-

tute Adventist spirituality; under normal circumstances, they automatically produce the appropriate response — on a prereflective level. Conversation with those not of the coterie allows one to escape the conditioned responses, to reflect without the predetermination of reductive assumptions.

Additionally, one must deal with the problem of mission. If one sees his mission as one of proselyting — *e.g.*, for the Seventh-day Adventist Church — he cannot, it seems to me, maintain a responsible scholarly commitment. Though we may more often use the term “witnessing” for our proselyting, the two generally suggest the same activity: the attempt to convince another person of the truth of some position, almost always fixed. It is this fixity of position which invalidates the entire process, for the responsible thinker cannot assume an absolute stance. He does, certainly work from a position, but his own position constantly bears the same scrutiny other positions must; otherwise, he creates, again, the illusion of the warm womb, effectively isolating himself, if he is a graduate student, from the community of peers, professors and ideas with which he should be involved. The graduate student’s “mission,” then, cannot be one of proselyting for any fixed position, not even that the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Does the Adventist graduate student, though, have a mission on the non-Adventist campus? Yes, I believe; it is the human mission, the Christian mission, if you will, of realizing in himself and in his relationships with other human beings the continual completion of God’s creation. “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground . . .” (Gen. 2:7): God creates by combining constituents, by building consistencies. Man’s mission is to create thus, to form (from a Christian position, perhaps — not fixed, not rigid, not brittle, but considered) that consistency and wholeness which make him man.

I have found, thus, that I must deal with the problem of fellowship and isolation not by entrenchment, but by involvement; not by stasis, but by growth.

# Country Garden School: Back to the Basics

by Dave Schwantes

Seven-year-old Julie Messinger draws her pencil in an arc across the blue-lined tablet. "Move across the top of the clock from the 2 to the 10," her teacher tells her. "Around to the 8 and 4. . . back up to the 2 and down."

Julie bites her lip as she completes the pencil strokes. "Aaaw," Julie says, pronouncing deliberately the lowercase "A" she has just written on the paper. A smile of accomplishment brightens her face.

Julie sits at a low table, one of five such tables in an almost spartan classroom. She and her Level I classmates spend a major portion of their school in phonetic training. They must master the skills of writing and spelling before progressing to studies in reading and grammar. Julie's other classroom activities include memorizing Bible texts, performing hand work, practicing music and participating in aerobic exercises.

Is Julie a victim of some tutorial timewarp? A fugitive from an earlier educational era? No, Julie Messinger is a normal, healthy, active girl, one of 35 students enrolled in Country Garden School, a proprietary Christian elementary and secondary school. It is housed in a two-room annex to the home of Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence Hawkins, who own four acres of farmland near Walla Walla, Washington.

The General Conference is aware of the existence of alternative school systems such as Country Garden, but does not sanction their operation. According to Dr. Charles B. Hirsch, director of the North American Di-

vision's Office of Education, the church, through its local conferences cannot officially recognize these institutions, nor can it participate in their funding. "To do so," explains Hirsch, "would be to dislodge our present educational system."

He adds that these schools "cannot be taken under the department's umbrella" if the department does not know what's going on in these schools. The denomination has to answer to government agencies such as the Internal Revenue Service concerning the operation of its sanctioned organizations. "How can we vouch for an institution's tax status or its nondiscriminatory policy," Hirsch asks, "if we don't know what's happening in that institution?" The church's only official contact with these schools is through its affiliation with the Association of Privately Owned Seventh-day Adventist Services and Industries.

Although Country Garden School may not be typical of the nearly 80 known self-supporting mission outposts around the world, its operators share a common belief with those in the other institutions that organized Seventh-day Adventist education has fallen short of the Christian ideal. "Our purpose," Mrs. Hawkins says, "is to provide youth who may be educated and trained so that all their powers will be given to God's service."

Dr. and Mrs. Hawkins chartered Country Garden School four years ago to meet the educational needs of their four children. Even before moving in 1974 to Walla Walla, where Dr. Hawkins serves as an anesthesiologist on the staff of Walla Walla General Hospital, they became concerned about the "humanistic" tendencies they detected in traditional Adventist education. While still

Dave Schwantes, chairman of the communications department, Walla Walla College, is the author of several books, including *Taming Your TV and Other Media*.

living in California, they began reading in the works of E. A. Sutherland, former president of Madison College.

In a pamphlet entitled *Educational Experiences Before the Midnight Cry Compared with Educational Experiences Before the Loud Cry* first published in 1915, Sutherland contended that the great Protestant denominations failed because they did not free themselves from the papal system of education. Quoting freely from Ellen White, he compiled a study of Christian education to "help us as Seventh-day Adventists to avoid their [the Protestants'] mistakes as we approach the loud cry, soon due to the world" (p. 1).

Mrs. Hawkins observed the teaching of values clarification in some Adventist schools. She defines values clarification as "a method for teachers to change the values of children without getting caught." Under her concept of values clarification, parents and teachers reject the "right answer syndrome." Humanistic educators insist that there are "simply no right answers, especially in the area of morals."

Although Dr. and Mrs. Hawkins did enroll their children in Rogers Elementary School, the local Seventh-day Adventist school, when they first moved to Walla Walla, they began searching for a smaller, rural school where their children could be taught in "the true science of Christian education." Not finding such a place, they decided to start their own Bible-centered school where students would acquire "unquestioning confidence in God, our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer."

**I**n charting their own educational course, Dr. and Mrs. Hawkins faced two immediate needs: a suitable meeting place and a teacher whom they felt was "a student of the Spirit of Prophecy." They contacted ministers both inside and outside the local Adventist community in trying to find a school facility. They finally located a basement in need of remodeling in the Four Square Gospel Church. They were permitted to use the facility in return for maintaining the church and its grounds.

Their search for a teacher led them across the United States to Dr. Richard Hansen, medical director of the Wildwood Institute, a self-supporting medical/educational facility near Chattanooga. Hansen suggested Betty Nick, a teacher at Yucki Pines Institute, Seale, Alabama. Mrs. Nick had been a student at Wildwood and had trained under Ethel Wood, who later became a curriculum developer for Bethany Homestead.

Mrs. Nick assumed duties as head teacher of the one-room school with 15 students in grades 1-8. The basement facility was upgraded to meet county health standards and was approved by the state of Washington as meeting basic legal requirements for safety, pupil attendance and teacher certification.

Since enrollment in the basement school was limited by the state to 20 students according to the number of square feet in the facility, Dr. and Mrs. Hawkins began searching for a more acceptable school location which would permit them to grow as interest in alternative Adventist education grew. They found not only a school site, but also a home-site. Next to the five-bedroom house, which they purchased in 1976, stood a one-story, wooden structure that, with a little remodeling, became the new location for Country Garden School.

In the last three years, enrollment has nearly doubled. Two secondary grades have been added. Three full-time teachers and several teaching assistants conduct courses in science, nature, health, mathematics, social studies, reading, music and art.

In addition, all students spend time each day engaged in practical skills such as cooking, washing, ironing, mending, cleaning, woodworking, auto mechanics and ceramics. The children have garden plots which they are responsible for maintaining, and they perform a modified form of aerobic exercises based upon the Canadian Air Force plan.

Students are placed according to levels rather than grades, and advancement depends upon mastery of skills rather than age. Children are encouraged not to enroll before age eight, although younger children, such as Julie, are evaluated on an individual basis for admission.

“During the first six or seven years of a child’s life,” Mrs. Nick contends, “special attention should be given to his physical training rather than his intellect.”

Each student’s performance is evaluated according to his individual abilities and achievements. Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled to discuss the student’s progress.

Country Garden School, along with two similar institutions in eastern Washington, sought last year and, for a short time, received recognition by the education department of the Upper Columbia Conference as an alternative educational facility. This permitted them to participate in teachers’ conferences and training sessions and to receive materials from the education department.

But members of a conference advisory committee raised questions over legal responsibilities which might be incurred by the

**“Although Country Garden School may not be typical of the nearly 80 self-supporting mission outposts around the world, its operators share a common belief that . . . organized Seventh-day Adventist education has fallen short of the Christian ideal.”**

denomination, and the arrangement was modified. The conference no longer officially recognizes Country Garden’s operation, but it still shares informally information and resources with the alternative schools.

**M**ost Seventh-day Adventist elementary and secondary schools offer a basic curriculum similar to Country Garden’s, designed to develop the body, mind and spirit of the student, and some denominational schools have even opted for nongraded levels of achievement.

What makes Country Garden School and other self-supporting institutions different

from organized Adventist education, according to Mrs. Hawkins, is a combination of five distinguishing characteristics:

1. The Bible serves as the basic textbook in all courses.
2. Children learn to read using a pure phonics method.
3. Teachers emphasize mastery of the basics.
4. Discipline comprises a cornerstone of education.
5. All students engage in a work-study program.

Mrs. Hawkins draws her philosophy of the ideal Christian education from Ellen White and quotes her writings frequently in explaining the operation of Country Garden School.

The Bible becomes the child’s first reader, Mrs. Nick explains, and as such serves as the basis for study in all areas. Science, history, math and other course work are related to the Bible and biblical times. In addition, students in all levels spend at least 30 minutes each day memorizing Bible verses.

But before students are taught to read, they learn to write and spell using a pure phonics approach. This approach, according to Mrs. Hawkins, teaches “the ability of the mind to analyze, to take apart the difficult so that the simpler components can be understood.” After students have learned to write letters and to spell words, they progress to sentences, paragraphs and essays. But mastery of basic skills is stressed at each step of the progression. As an older or more advanced student masters a subject, he will work with the younger student until the younger student has acquired mastery of the subject.

Mastery is achieved through discipline, according to Mrs. Nick. Consequently, discipline plays an important role in learning at Country Garden School. Mrs. Nick speaks not merely of self-discipline, although that is her goal, but she also emphasizes discipline from the outside as administered by the teacher. “This is the same thing God does for us,” she explains.

One way in which teachers at Country Garden School promote discipline is through a work-study program. Students spend a

portion of each day engaged in some practical experience. Even the youngest have duties for maintaining the classroom and school grounds. In addition, each student has a garden plot or greenhouse space where he or she tends a variety of edible and nonedible plants.

Mrs. Hawkins believes that the practical experience not only encourages self-discipline but also instills a work ethic in the student. She is a strong believer in the free-enterprise system and contends that each person should be rewarded according to his or her works.

The relative importance of individual achievement is where Country Garden School differs most significantly from its self-supporting counterparts. Persons at Wildwood Institute and its affiliates practice what Mrs. Nick calls "religious socialism." They live a primitive, almost spartan existence of self-deprivation and communal sharing. According to Mrs. Nick, there is no personal property. Group accomplishments are stressed over individual accomplishments, and students are discouraged from harboring individual ideas or opinions.

As a result of her belief in the free-enterprise system, Mrs. Nick contends that students should be taught good business techniques. Consistent with this belief, secondary level students take a course in book-keeping to supplement their practical work in typing, shorthand, printing or duplicating.

The educational philosophy of Dr. and Mrs. Hawkins and its embodiment in Country Garden School is generally well received or at least tolerated by the local Adventist community. While not all agree with the basic tenets of the school, members of the community do feel it provides a needed alternative for those families seeking something other than the traditionally organized Adventist school system.

**J**ohn Thorn, principal of Rogers Elementary School, probably stands to lose the most

to Country Garden's existence in a moderately positive light. "Schools such as Country Garden provide a safety or release valve for those in the community wishing to become more directly involved in the operation of their school," he explains. "There are always those looking for a school with the 'blueprint,' whatever that means."

Thorn believes that the Rogers School program is biblically oriented and that it meets the needs of the majority of Adventists in the Walla Walla Valley. He can say this with some confidence since his school's enrollment is up from a projected 266 students to 329. Where he does take exception to Country Garden's program is its almost total reliance upon the Bible to teach all subject matter. While agreeing that the Bible should serve as the basis for Christian education, Thorn contends that lessons should be made relevant and contemporary to students.

Thorn explains that Christ used familiar examples and parables to teach spiritual lessons and that teachers can do the same today. "What's most important," he contends, "is not the specific example used in the lesson, but the spiritual manner, tone and flavor in which the teacher presents the lesson."

Thorn expresses caution over the Upper Columbia Conference's recognition of Country Garden's operation. "When we take in a school, we are in essence sanctioning its program even though it may differ from accepted state and denominational standards, and we are ultimately responsible for its program should it get into legal difficulties."

Seven-year-old Julie and her classmates at Country Garden School could not care less about conference recognition or state standards. They know little about curriculum planning and have even less desire to learn about humanism or religious socialism at this stage of their lives. All Julie wants to do right now is to finish her writing lesson so she can go outside and see how her tomatoes are doing.

# Two Books on Adventist Education

Reviews by George R. Knight

## Educational Philosophy

Raymond S. Moore, *Adventist Education at the Crossroads* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1976), 200 pp., Index.

Raymond Moore is a man with a message, and that message is evident throughout his book. In essence, Moore is issuing a thrusting call to the Adventist Church to follow the educational plans of God as revealed through Ellen G. White.

The main theme of *Adventist Education at the Crossroads* deals with the necessity of a balanced work-study program in every Adventist school. Moore frequently quotes from *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, page 211, which states that "our teachers should not think that their work ends with giving instruction from books. Several hours each day should be devoted to working with the students in some line of manual training. In no case should this be neglected." His emphasis often falls on the last sentence, and he has defined "several hours" as three or four. In his interpretation, it is therefore a divine imperative for every teacher in every school to work three or four hours a day with students in some form of manual labor. To be faithful in this, as well as in other aspects of God's plan, is to qualify

for the blessings of Deuteronomy 28. On the other hand, if one neglects any part of the program, he is likely to suffer the curses of that same chapter. Adventist education, Moore implies, is at a crucial crossroad. Its choice of direction will determine whether it reaps blessings or curses.

*Crossroads* postulates that the teacher-student balanced work-study program is "the perfect answer for the community of Christ" (p. 63). The program is set forth as a divine panacea that, when properly applied, solves a wide range of administrative, teaching, student and financial problems. It is an integral part of "God's plan of education for this time" (pp. 52-54).

In the introduction, Moore lists three purposes for writing the book. First, he wants to identify certain dilemmas in Adventist education; second, he desires to link these problems to the solutions of the Scriptures and the writings of Ellen G. White; and third, he wishes to offer support for these counsels in terms of actual experiences and experiments that will act as stimuli for further implementation (p. 11). Moore is not interested in a merely theoretical discussion of the issues involved. His book is primarily aimed at those who are determined to follow God's principles at all costs and are asking, "How can these ideals be applied in actual school situations?" On the other hand, he is certainly not against proselyting readers to his point of view.

Many themes besides the omnipresent work-study with all teachers and students

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involved are also highlighted and often treated in a helpful manner. Some of these oft-repeated minor theses include his emphasis of the nongraded classroom, creative homework rather than dull routine, teaching students how to think rather than emphasizing rote, the desirable age for entering school, students teaching students in monitorial fashion, the importance of the home as an educational agency, and possible avenues of cooperation between home and school. These minor themes are generally integrated into some phase of his major theme.

**A** definite problem in *Crossroads* is its organization. Early in the book, the reader is confronted with a defensive stance regarding

**“A definite problem in *Crossroads* is its organization. . . . the finished product resembles more an assemblage of prohibitions and imperatives than it does a closely reasoned and carefully written document.”**

“God’s program of education,” the rewards of the plan, and how to initiate it in actual practice. Nowhere, however, are the components of “the plan” outlined in a manner that leaves the reader without doubt regarding the identity and interrelationships of its major constituents. The reader wanders through the book and picks up the elements of the “ideal program” in isolated snatches rather than as a cohesive whole. The desired emphasis is made through redundancy of ideas and references rather than through an organizational plan leading from a statement of position to the application of the leading principles. As a result, the finished product resembles more an assemblage of prohibitions and imperatives than it does a closely reasoned and carefully written document.

The reading of the volume for its unique contribution is also made more difficult by

long excursions into general educational lore dealing with such issues as homework, administrative principles and teaching methods. These subjects are good, true and helpful in themselves, but are loosely related to Moore’s fundamental argument. It seems that much of this material could have been shortened or deleted. For example, nearly one whole chapter is quoted from a National Education Association study on homework, an interesting article, but hardly distinctive to God’s plan for Adventist education. If the manuscript could have been both shortened and clarified through a tighter organizational pattern, its major thesis would have been more forcefully argued.

The most serious difficulty in *Crossroads* lies in the slim documentation of the major thesis. There is no doubt that it is a rewarding experience for teachers and students to work together. Ellen White makes this clear in several places.<sup>1</sup> In only one reference, however, has the reviewer found the qualification that this should never be neglected and that it should be for several hours each day. Yet, it is upon this isolated case that Moore has based his argument. He refers to this passage at least one dozen times and leaves the reader with the false impression that Ellen White repeatedly emphasized the point under consideration.

The passage in *Counsels to Teachers* was written to a particular school with a definite, but not unique, set of circumstances. Fernando School in California had been boasting of its curriculum, emphasizing many languages, its “college” status, and its intellectual program, while neglecting the reason for its existence — the sending of practical missionaries right into the field prior to a collegiate education. A study of the manuscripts concerning the problem of the Fernando School makes it explicit that Ellen White had been earnestly speaking with both the teachers and the administration concerning their educational role. She specifically noted that Fernando was not a college, that colleges had a different function than intermediate schools, that Fernando was to delete “flowery notices” of what it intended to do from its bulletin, and that it was to uplift labor and basic educational skills rather than advanced



studies.<sup>2</sup> It is in this concrete context that Ellen White made her strong statement in *Counsels to Teachers*. To develop this statement into a universal mandate and a divine command for every teacher in all schools is to go beyond the documentation, to obscure the moderation of other statements,<sup>3</sup> and to divorce the writings of Ellen White from the historical context that gives them meaning. It is a theological safeguard that a doctrine is not based on an isolated text. Likewise, an educational theory cannot be developed out of a single reference.

In his introduction, Moore claims that his book is his interpretation of God's counsel rather than a "fiat from Mount Sinai" (p. 12). After reading the manuscript, however, one is tempted to feel that one must either agree with the author or carry the heavy burden of being wrong—with all the eternal penalties entailed therein. Despite this implication, the reader may choose to disagree with the rigidity of Moore's conclusions but still benefit from reading his book. Moore has emphasized aspects of Christian educational theory that are generally neglected in practice. Although at times he has not maintained perfect balance, many of his suggestions are provocative and will be a stimulus to experimentation and diversification in Adventist education at all levels.

The title of Moore's book is indicative of an ongoing problem and challenge confronting Adventist education. Adventist education has for the past 100 years stood at the crossroads of secular and sacred educational philosophy and practice and has all too often opted for the secular. *Adventist Education at the Crossroads* is one sincere attempt to direct Adventist education to a fulfillment of its special mission.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 325; *Counsels to Teachers*, pp. 203, 208; *Testimonies for the Church*, VI, 179; *Education*, pp. 212, 219.

2. E. G. White to the Teachers of the Fernando School, May 17, 1903, Letter 89, 1903; E. G. White to Those in Charge of the Fernando School, May 17, 1903, Letter 88, 1903; Remarks by E. G. White at the Los Angeles Camp Meeting on Sept. 17, 1902, MS 54, 1903; Portion of an Address Given at the Opening of

the Fernando, Calif., School on Oct. 1, 1903, MS 47, 1903. See also MS 125, 1902 and *Counsels to Teachers*, pp. 202-213.

3. For example, "And, so far as possible, facilities for manual training should be connected with every school. To a great degree such training would supply the place of the gymnasium, with the additional benefit of affording valuable discipline." *Education*, p. 217.

#### Educational History

Maurice Hodgen, ed., *School Bells & Gospel Trumpets: A Documentary History of Seventh-day Adventist Education in North America* (Loma Linda: Adventist Heritage Publications, 1978), 308 pages.

**S**chool Bells & Gospel Trumpets is a pioneering venture in the history of Seventh-day Adventist education, an almost untouched territory. That Adventists have generally neglected the history of their educational activities is remarkable considering the emphasis Adventists place on education. Until recently, works in Adventist educational history have focused on institutions. Foremost among these histories have been Emmett K. Vande Vere's *The Wisdom Seekers* (1972), about Andrews University, and Everett Dick's *Union: College of the Golden Cords* (1967). Beyond these histories of specific institutions, there is E. M. Cadwallader's *A History of Seventh-day Adventist Education* (4th ed., 1975), a mimeographed volume circulated by Leaves-of-Autumn Books. Cadwallader's work is in essence a collection of institutional histories. It is incomplete and does not attempt to synthesize the development of the various institutions, to cover the evolution of educational theory among Adventists, or to provide insight into the dynamic interaction that takes place within a burgeoning educational system. In addition to institutional histories, Adventists have produced some biographies of educators. Illustrative of this approach have been Merlin Neff's *For God & C.M.E.: A Biography of Percy T. Magan* (1964) and Richard Schwarz's *John Harvey Kellogg, M.D.* (1970).

Given this rather sparse offering of institutional histories and biographies, Maurice

Hodgen's comprehensive documentary history is a welcome new development. There are only two other major collections of Adventist educational documents. The first is *Early Educational Materials*, which appeared in 1936 under the sponsorship of the General Conference Department of Education. The second, *Reprints on Christian Education by Church Leaders*, came out of James M. Lee's efforts in the early 1970s. A chronologically arranged collection of journal articles published between 1862 and 1971, it provides no commentary or classification. Hodgen has accurately noted that *Reprints* is "bulky, expensive and in short supply." The 1936 collection has long been out of print as well as out of date and the Lee production is not generally available. *School Bells* is the first compilation to go beyond the stage of being a mere collection and is, therefore, the first

**"This may not be a book that the average reader will devour from cover to cover, but . . . it will serve a useful function as both a general source book on Adventist educational history and a reader on special topics."**

truly documentary history. It has an interpretive framework that gives genuine insight into denominational educational development.

Hodgen has, rather surprisingly, elected a topical rather than a chronological arrangement for his readings. *School Bells* is divided into eight nearly equal parts: the beginnings of Adventist education, the widening of educational concern, the training of teachers, Adventist educational theory, the curriculum, school administration and the relation of Adventist education to the larger social order. Each section has between 11 and 19 chronologically arranged readings. An introduction to each part provides context and

perspective for the various articles that follow. In addition to these introductions, each selection is prefaced with helpful information concerning the author and other pertinent data. The readings have nearly all been taken from public sources such as reports of important educational conventions, the journals of the church and school bulletins.

This documentary history indicates, on the part of the editor, a knowledgeable background of Adventist educational history and extensive reading in the source materials. Hodgen has resisted the temptation to focus on the development of higher education, and his collection shows balance between higher education and the elementary and secondary branches. Furthermore, his treatment of higher education unfolds for readers the evolution of both professional and liberal arts education within the church. Those interested in the continuing conflict in educational philosophy in Adventist circles will especially benefit from Part IV, which largely avoids selective bias in providing a wide spectrum of educational viewpoints. This section, along with its introductory comments, also highlights the dearth of serious thinking concerning educational philosophy among Seventh-day Adventists.

*School Bells* shares both the strengths and weaknesses of other documentary histories. It is strong in that it puts the reader into direct contact with historical documents. This helps him become involved in the pulse of the times, imbibe the power of the original arguments, and participate in differences of opinion through the eyes of historical figures who were at the center of action. On the other hand, documentary histories offer a scattering of viewpoints and gaps in time to readers who may need synthesis and interpretation before they are able to fully benefit from the original documents. Of course, the function of the introductory essays in documentary histories is to moderate this difficulty. In Hodgen's collection, however, the difficulty of gaining a chronological overview is compounded by the topical arrangement. The topical structure demands that the reader already have a good grasp of

the field, which is difficult when there is no published history of Adventist education by which a reader may get his bearings.

The problem of selection for the editor of a documentary history proves to be a major task as he sifts through a seemingly endless number of meaningful documents. Hodgen made a basic decision by not including readings from Ellen White because her most significant documents were already widely distributed among Adventists (114). This was undoubtedly a wise decision, but the usefulness of his book would have been broadened if he had cross-referenced his selections to Ellen White statements. Along this same line, it would have been helpful if additional suggested readings from other sources were listed at the end of each section. Another important selection decision was made when the editor ruled out the major writings of Edward Sutherland and the statements of educational philosophy by F. E. J. Harder on the ground that these were of easy access (114-15). However, these documents are not readily available to readers located outside

Adventist educational centers. Beyond this, a reader might desire to see more selections from personal documents such as letters or entries from the diaries of leading educators. Other topics that might have been included are documents concerning self-supporting educational work and excerpts from early Adventist textbooks. In addition, an index of authors would be helpful.

Of course, one must appreciate the limitations of space forced upon Hodgen by the hard facts of publishing costs. And despite all the previous suggestions, this reviewer wishes to express appreciation to Hodgen for his pioneering endeavor and to Adventist Heritage Publications for making this material available to the public. This may not be a book that the average reader will devour from cover to cover, but it is a significant source collection in a convenient form. It will serve a useful function as both a general source book on Adventist educational history and a reader on special topics. As such, it is a valuable addition to the historical literature of the Adventist Church.

# Vespers

by Steven G. Spruill

Margaret went to Vespers just before her father died. She slipped into one of the back pews beneath the balcony, where it was darkest, and let the old church seep into her. Twilight sank through stained glass. The scent of polished oak, the murmuring organ, the elders propped, somnolent, in cocoons of light on the platform touched old hurts; prodded and then soothed. But why had she come *here*? This was not a place of objectivity. Her father would ask her about the church. He would ask her if she had returned yet, back to the fold. She would have to tell him something, and now here she was, on impulse, at Vespers.

Vespers had been her favorite service. She thought about it now; wondered. Had it been the delicious last squeeze of piety before the release of sundown? No, that was too cynical, surely. Perhaps a part, but only a part. Maybe it was that they never asked for money at Vespers. *Oh, Margaret, give them a break.* The quiet, the music, the sense of peace

and contemplation, those had all come at Vespers as in no other service, and it had been *real*, and part of her still wanted it. Especially now, when she needed to think calmly, to decide.

Mrs. Jacobs turned stiffly in the pew two rows ahead and smiled at her, and she smiled back, stabbed with love, a giddy excess, because her father's cancer had made her vulnerable and because the old piano teacher had always smiled at her that same way in the Vespers of fifteen years ago when life was simpler and death hardly existed at all. Mrs. Jacobs' smile said, *it's all the same, like you never left us.* And, in a way, she never had. Her name was still on the books of this church, still on the books after many letters, one or two from each new pastor. The pastors came and went, and some were full of administrative zeal. There were always two boxes on the letters and would she please check one:  I am faithfully living the Advent message and attending services and would like to transfer my membership to the following church\_\_\_\_\_.  I am not now living as a Seventh-day Adventist and request that my name be removed from the church records for the present. No middle ground. No *I'm not living a message, I'm*

Steven Spruill, a graduate of Andrews University, is the author of *Keepers of the Gate* and *The Psychopath Plague*.

*living my life and I still love the people of my church, my culture, the thousand intangibles upon which I have, for good or ill, built my life. . . .*

Margaret realized that her hands were clenching the pew beside her legs, that the front edge of the seat was digging into her fingers. She forced her hands to relax. The letters were fair, as fair as the people who wrote them could be. You were either in or you were out, as if the only thing that existed was the doctrine, the words written down on paper somewhere. It was their idea of integrity. Black and white. There was even a text they like to quote, about being *lukewarm*. In her thirty-five years, Margaret had felt many things toward her church, but never *lukewarm*. She no longer tried to explain it. They couldn't believe she was following her conscience — not and believe they were following theirs. She understood that. She understood it and she hated it, because it seemed so arrogant, and because it cut them off from each other.

But there were other reasons for the letters, too; other reasons than having to know if she was in or out. There were General Conference Ingathering quotas based on church membership. Tithes, offerings, other financial expectations. How many times she had fantasized writing them a check for ten thousand dollars to go to the local academy supported by the church. She loved the academy too, where she'd gone to school, but her fantasies were unworthy, because in them she always imagined herself handing them the check and watching their faces and thinking, *now will you leave me alone; stop asking if I'm in or out?* She didn't have ten thousand dollars. Her art shop back in New York was just breaking even, and maybe they wouldn't want money from paintings like the copy of Renoir's "Bather Arranging Her Hair" sold last Sabbath.

Last Saturday.

Yes, and maybe they'd find a way to accept the ten thousand dollars — money wasn't dirty, just people, *oh, stop, Margaret*. The church *did* need money, and she was hardly the one to judge from the temple shadows

whether the moneychangers had sneaked back.

The organist was playing "The Lord Bless You and Keep You," softly. The organ was behind the pulpit, at the front of the choir loft, and the top of the organist's head, the white hair, shone brilliantly, haloed in the single cone of light which poured down on the pulpit.

Margaret left quickly, getting out the back door of the sanctuary and through the lobby, with its floor of ancient glazed tiles, and onto the broad steps which led down to the street. It was dark, cold; snow fell in great wet flakes which melted and ran down her cheeks, and she was glad for the snow.

Her mother and her younger brother, Paul, hurried out of her father's hospital room, meeting her with wordless hugs. Paul stepped back, still holding her shoulders. His eyes lingered, oddly, just above her own, and then she realized he was inspecting her eye shadow. A muscle in his jaw rose and delivered its speech and sat down again.

"Where were you, Sis? We've been expecting you for over an hour. Did you have trouble getting a cab at the airport? I would have picked you up, but Dad. . ." Paul stopped. His face was there, behind the deadpan with which he met all things; miserable, eyes rimmed in red. Impulsively, she touched his cheek and he drew away just that fraction, because her makeup made her unfit for the morally superior role of comforter. The electric clock on the wall of the waiting room hissed softly.

"I was at Vespers," she said.

"Vespers. Really?"

"Really. How is he?"

Paul glanced at their mother. "He's. . . getting along fine. He's been asking for you."

*Asking for his prodigal daughter, right, Paul?*

When they stepped into the room, Margaret knew that her father would die soon. The knowledge was there in the sickly sweet smell, in the waxen face, in the head angled back so that her father's eyes glared up at the top of the iron bedstead. He rolled his head to look at her, and he smiled. There was a white

stubble on his chin, and Margaret remembered when the stubble had been brown and when her father had picked her up and hugged her, and had tickled her cheek with that stubble, mornings, before he treated it with soap that smelled like pine trees, and with flourishes of the safety razor. She took his hand and blooded the inside of her lip, because there's a time when physical pain can stop tears.

"Dad, Margaret just got here," Paul said. "From Vespers." He emphasized the last word. "She went to Vespers and then she came straight here."

"Vespers?" Her father's voice was surprisingly strong, but hoarse, as though the vocal cords had begun to fray, to come unraveled. "Are you coming to church again?" he asked.

She hesitated. She sensed her mother and her brother behind her, gelled, even their lungs stopped. The pressure of their fear seemed to swell against her back.

"I'm coming home, Dad," she said. "Home. Back to the fold."

He smiled and closed his eyes, and squeezed her hand, and she noticed that only the thumb and forefinger had any strength left. He went to sleep after that, and the nurse shooed them out just as if he were going to wake up again. In the waiting room, her mother hugged her and Paul grabbed her hand and said, "That's wonderful, Maggie. Just wonderful. You're coming back to us, to the church."

"No," she said. "It was what Dad wanted to hear. I wanted him to be happy." She didn't say the rest of it; didn't say *there are lots of ways I've never left the church, could never leave it, no matter what the books say*, because to Paul she was either in or out.

Paul's mouth dropped open and two spots of color appeared at the tops of his cheekbones. "You lied? You *lied* to him? How could you do it?"

She stared at him. The clock made fizzling noises, as though the second hand was fretting that it couldn't choose a single black line or white space and stay there.

# Responses from Readers

## On 1919 Conference

**T**o the Editors: The material in the issue of SPECTRUM (Vol. 10, No. 1) relating to the 1919 Bible Conference was of substantive significance. Beyond the superficial conversations of the participants in the conference, there are clues to issues and answers that should be of profound interest to this generation of the church. Arthur G. Daniells appears to be a champion of theological integrity and spiritual insight with a clear understanding of the ministry of Ellen White.

Subsequent thinking appears to have veered away from the course he was suggesting, with what I view as unfortunate theological consequences within the church.

While reading the SPECTRUM article, I couldn't help but wonder how many of the thousands of young people who have become discouraged and abandoned the church in the years since 1919 would have remained as loyal members if the Daniells view had prevailed.

Warren L. Johns  
Washington, D.C.

**T**o the Editors: Your report of the 1919 Bible Conference (Vol. 10, No. 1) is most timely, if not long overdue. Seventh-day Adventists have always been proud of a heritage that supposedly offered to all believers a "solid foundation" to which they could look

with confidence and assurance. What that foundation is has never been satisfactorily defined by the leadership, for even though some seem to insist that the Bible and the Bible alone is the base from which our doctrinal views are derived, it seems that the laity at large have never been convinced.

How can Seventh-day Adventists claim that we hold the Bible above the writings of Ellen G. White when our Sabbath School quarterlies never present Ellen White's writings in the light of the Bible, but the Bible in the light of Ellen White's writings?

On page 30 of SPECTRUM, A. G. Daniells is quoted as having said, "It is not our position and it is not right that the spirit of prophecy is the only safe interpreter of the Bible. That is a false doctrine, a false view. It will not stand." He then labels such a doctrine as "heathenish." How much impact did that statement have on the preparation of church publications during the ensuing 50 years? This is one example of the inconsistencies that are causing the laity to question the role of leadership.

I believe that openness, honesty, and, above all, confidence in the basic loyalty of the membership would cause the General Conference leaders to bring all their skeletons out of the closet, expose them to the light of day, and if necessary reevaluate our historical and doctrinal positions. Rather than discouraging the people, such a course would be received as a fresh wind from heaven providing renewed purpose and direction.

Most noteworthy is the concept developed by A. G. Daniells regarding the place and use of the gift of prophecy in the church. Referring to the publication of some of Ellen G. White's testimonies to the church, he stated a fundamental principle that has been ignored for too long. He said, "I do not think proper caution was used in putting out some of these things, and I have told Sister White so" (p. 41). On the next page he further states, "That is the way a lot of things get into the *Testimonies*. They were many of them written for individuals in various states of health, and then they were hurried into the *Testimonies* without proper modification."

It would seem that Elder Daniells was not implying that what Mrs. White wrote was not true, or that he questioned whether her revelations were from God, for he believed they were. He was simply agreeing with Paul's admonition in 1 Corinthians 14:29 that all prophecies are to be judged or evaluated by the body of believers. Paul knew that God's perfect revelations are given through imperfect earthen vessels, and that the human channel's background, or religious views, or personal convictions may taint or flavor the message of the Holy Spirit. As a safeguard, lest any residue from the earthen vessel enter into and contaminate the divine flow, the church was charged with the responsibility of evaluating all the prophecies according to the Word. It may not be too late even now to remove the artificial aura of infallibility from one who so faithfully served the church. This would also aid in clarifying the church's position in the Christian community regarding the foundation for its faith.

Sam Pestes  
Winfield, British Columbia

**T**o the Editor: I just wanted to let you know how much I appreciated your publication in SPECTRUM of the 1919 Bible Conference transcripts (Vol. 10, No. 1). I was fascinated with the issues they discussed, and some of the parallels with our own difficulties today. It almost seems that times have hardly changed.

I do hope that they will help balance those who seem to use Ellen White as a higher authority than that of the Bible, who seem to study her writings more than the Bible in their theology and discussions. I would also wish that our teachers would heed the challenge to lead our students to dig into the Bible, instead of finding apparently "easy" answers through Ellen White. I have found that we cannot really appreciate Ellen White's ministry in its fullness until we are immersed in Scripture as she was.

There was one thing that concerned me in your issue. I feel that Molleurus Couperus' introduction was distorted, to say the least. He seemed to want to parallel Ellen White's ministry as God's messenger to Luther's role as a reformer. In spite of the fact that some may have called Luther a prophet, this does not mean that his messages carry any more weight than other interpreters of Scripture. He may have been a special instrument of God to bring changes in His church, but that does not mean he was in the same role as Ellen White. She bore messages directly from God just as John the Revelator did (both received testimonies from Jesus through an angel for His church). And her testimonies bear the authority of God's Spirit as a special revelation from God to us.

Not that she then becomes the final arbiter of Scripture. No single prophet has that role. But her messages are from God, and are to be accepted accordingly. Not to heed her counsels would be tantamount to turning ourselves off from one channel of the Holy Spirit. Such can be done only at great peril.

But still, his article does not greatly detract from the impact of the 1919 Bible Conference transcripts. And thank you again for publishing them.

Marcus C. Siqueira  
Pastor  
Olathe, Kansas

## On Creationism

**T**o the Editors: It is unfortunate that Dr. Ross Barnes (Vol. 10, No. 1) has employed an oversimplified version of the "ecological



zonation” model in his evaluation of creation concepts. Had he consulted the original comprehensive description given by H. W. Clark in *The New Diluvialism* (1946, *Science Publications*, pp. 37-93), he would have found his five specific objections answered. Most individuals try to equate pre-flood ecology to present ecology, while the ecological zonation model proposes a different ecology before the flood than at present. It is expected that an event such as the flood as described in Genesis would modify the ecology. The ecological zonation model proposes a pre-flood ecological sequence similar to the fossil sequence now found; hence it is based on that data. The model also proposes marine seas at different levels. These two major departures from present ecology answer the objections regarding the fossil sequence and marine deposits at various levels raised in Dr. Barnes’s article.

In view of the above, Dr. Barnes’s statement that “in other words, we have no viable ‘Flood model’ or apparently even beginnings of a model after many years of effort by a number of creationists” does not appear to be based on a careful evaluation of the available data.

The standard model of random evolutionary mutations and of changing sea levels, and the ecological zonation model of a different pre-flood ecology and varied pre-flood sea levels both suffer from the fact that almost any directly related data one comes up with can be fitted into either model; as such, they are difficult models to evaluate scientifically. More specific issues than the broad generalizations that these models allow will have to be used for good scientific verification.

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**T**o the Editors: On page three of *SPECTRUM* Vol. 10, No. 1, Ross Barnes states that the third distinctive feature of the “Literal Creationist Model” is the expectation that “the available historical clues should indicate that the appearance and history of life and the deposition of the rock strata that

enclose their remains are relatively recent events. . . .”

I submit that it is incorrect to basically characterize literal (biblical) creationism by the expectations of *some* of the individuals who identify with this model. The model would be characterized better by its distinctive specifications, and the reasons for them. Accordingly, I recommend that item III of the “Literal Creationist Model” read: “Time. On the basis of biblical testimony, the original creation of the various groups of organisms, and the deposition of the rock strata that enclose fossils of these organisms are understood to be relatively recent events, on the order of thousands of years.”

With appropriate respect to the illustrious series of exegetes who have promoted the view that Genesis 1:1 alludes to a primordial creation prior to the creative activity described in Genesis 1:3-2:4a, I would like to emphasize that, independent of any coercion by radiometric age and other planetary science data, there is a sound basis for understanding Genesis 1:1 as merely an introductory, topic-sentence-style, statement to a creation account that treats only the observations that might have been made by an observer based on the surface of planet Earth, and that reveals nothing about the prior history of the universe, other than that sun, moon and stars were also made by the same God whose immediate activities Moses is describing.<sup>1</sup> Within such an understanding, Genesis 1:1 is neutral with respect to the gap theories that have been promoted by creationists.

The assumption of a direct correspondence between the time fossils have been associated with host rocks and a radiometric age of the host rock can be described as a “graveyard hoax.” Radiometric age characteristics of minerals in a graveyard may suggest much about the history of these minerals, but not give the times various bodies were interred there. The professional literature contains examples of radiometric ages greater than, equal to, and less than the expected geologic age of the site from which samples were obtained.<sup>2</sup> Reference 8 cited by Dr. Barnes<sup>3</sup> treats several examples of excess radiometric age, and should be consulted by anyone who

wishes to reach his own conclusions concerning the popularly presumed one-to-one correspondence between radiometric age and the formation time of sedimentary or igneous rock.

R. H. Brown  
Geoscience Research Institute

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Robert H. Brown, "Moses' Creation Account," *Ministry*, Sept. 1978, pp. 23-25.

2. A good example is provided by a region of the Azores Islands for which the lead-lead age is zero years, the rubidium-strontium age is about 500 million years, and the samarium-neodymium age is close to two billion years. C. J. Hawkesworth, *et al.*, " $^{143}\text{Nd}/^{144}\text{Nd}$  and  $^{87}\text{Sr}/^{86}\text{Sr}$  ratios from the Azores and their significance in LIL-element enriched mantel," *Nature*, 280 (1979), 28-31.

3. R. H. Brown, "Radiometric Age and the Traditional Hebrew-Christian View of Time," *Origins*, 4 (1977), 68-75. (Through an unfortunate oversight, Table 1 in this reference contains two rubidium-strontium age anomalies which are *not* of Tertiary material, as indicated, viz., items 6 and 9.)

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