

Readers on Abortion, Creation, Jewelry  
Kellogg Snaps, Crackles and Pops

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# SPECTRUM

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Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums

Volume 20, Number 3

## A BOLD PRECARIOUS FAITH

A Once and Future Adventism  
Call to the Dark Continents of Politics  
ABC's of Church Dissent

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## A Bold, Precarious Faith

Adventists approaching a General Conference Session naturally take stock of their church—where it has been and where it might go. In a sense, that has been the topic of each of the three national conferences of the Association of Adventist Forums, including the latest held October 12-15, 1989, in Seattle, Washington: “Progressive Adventism: Oxymoron or Wave of the Future?” Some of the stimulating suggestions made at that conference as to how the Adventist heritage provides resources for the church’s future comprise the special section of this issue of *Spectrum*. (Tapes of all the conference speakers can be obtained by writing to the *Spectrum* office.)

Richard Mouw, a distinguished theologian from the Calvinist Reformed tradition, calls Adventists to take up the daunting challenge of John’s Apocalypse—nothing less than working with the Lord to restore justice to his creation. Patricia Wismer draws on her feminist and

Catholic perspectives to suggest guidelines for constructive theological dissent. Three Adventist academics—Alvin Kwiram, Richard Rice, and Karla Walters—draw on their own pilgrimages to urge distinct but complementary visions of the Adventist future.

Half of this issue and the next is devoted to an important but largely overlooked document in our Adventist heritage. It is, in effect, the last testament of John Harvey Kellogg as a member of the Seventh-day Adventist church. At the time he made his remarks, Kellogg was arguably the best known Adventist in America. As his biographer and the editor of the printed excerpts, Richard Schwarz, points out, Kellogg’s comments must be balanced by those of his contemporaries. Still, it is both stimulating and sobering to realize that in the past, life-long Adventists have been willing, in effect, to risk their denominational lives for a vision of the Adventist church.

—The Editors

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### Responses

# Our Once and Future Church

by Alvin L. Kwiram

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The most dramatic peacetime political transformations of this century are taking place right before our eyes. In the Soviet Union, Secretary Gorbachev is trying valiantly to effect a midcourse correction on the Soviet ship of state. And although he has wrenched the wheel with all his might, the inertia of that political behemoth is enormous. Down in the hold, however, things are starting to bang around rather erratically. Thus we see significant shifts in the ballast, with Hungary dismantling the iron curtain and Poland rejecting the communist party as its ruling body. Azerbaijan seems to be sliding around out of control, and the Baltic states are straining at their moorings.

## *From Artistic Movements to Closed Societies*

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What is the force driving these stunning developments? In the early days of the socialist/Marxist movement, the people were inspired by the new vision (and in many ways a legitimate one); they were on the offensive—aggressive and free-wheeling. The movement derived its power from the convictions and the dedicated efforts of a large proportion of its members. They were believers in a cause; they had a sense of prophetic destiny. They fully believed that their system would be gloriously

triumphant. What happened to the great expectations of that movement? What happened to the artistic phase of the movement, that phase of vitality and incipient chaos that is characteristic of all prophetic movements?

In all movements throughout history the pattern is the same. In the early, artistic stage, new ideas that bubble up in the morning are being tried out in the afternoon, and a broad cross section of the citizens are excited and engaged in the process. But eventually the emphasis on order begins to take precedence. The vision dims, and the system begins its decline. In this stage, new ideas are not welcome and new experiments are frowned upon. Inexorably, there is a loss of purpose, and the system increasingly turns inward and assumes a defensive posture. Eventually the prophetic movement becomes a closed society.

The establishment of a closed society is not inevitable, but the enticement to create it is almost irresistible. The leadership of the Soviet Union, for over half a century, has successfully maintained a closed society, and has steadfastly controlled the flow of information. But the Soviets are poised precariously on the horns of a dilemma. Not only is it becoming increasingly difficult for them to control the many sources of information, given the dramatic advances in technology, but more importantly, they can no longer compete economically without being hooked into the global information network.

If the Soviet leaders increase the free exchange of information, they risk an eventual loss of control. But, if they continue to limit the information flow, the nation will fall farther and farther behind in the economic race. Their choice is both difficult and clear: either they pay now or they pay later.

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Alvin Kwiram, senior vice provost of the University of Washington, was the first president of the Association of Adventist Forums. This essay is taken from his more extensive remarks at the 1989 AAF National Conference in Seattle.

The situation I have just described has important parallels and lessons for the church. The similarity is that for nearly half a century both we, as Adventists, and the Soviets have been waging a defensive battle. We, like the Soviets, have many of the attributes of a closed society.

In the early days of the Adventist church, the members were intensely engaged in some of the great issues of the day: the abolition of slavery, the role of labor unions, the separation of church and state, the focus on health, and the commitment to missions. Over the years there has been a steady erosion of that intensity. Today we focus inward, and, at least in North America, we seem unable to inspire our young people with a sense of destiny. Like the Soviets, we have restricted the information flow and functioned defensively. We exhibit many of the characteristics of a closed society. Inevitably, such an inflexible organism will become frozen in time, like some great intellectual woolly mammoth.

Let me restate my central point. The role of the artist, the prophet, and the prophetic movement is to seek for understanding. But in all organizations, governments, and denominations, there are forces that seek to block the quest for change, for growth, and for renewal that is the essence of the human experience.

An example is the Adventist version of Lysenkoism. Lysenko was a Russian agronomist (plant “geneticist”) who did not believe in genes or plant hormones, and insisted that environmental factors be genetically transmitted. His views dominated Soviet research and scholarship in the field of biology, and essentially ensured that Soviet scientists were totally left out of discoveries in molecular biology, the greatest scientific revolution of the second half of the 20th century. Now, the Soviets are scrambling to catch up.

In the case of Adventism, the problem is not so much biological as geological. At a time when nine out of 10 Adventist scientists reject the 6,000-year model for the age of the earth, the church still seems to take its cues from the few remaining adherents of that anachronistic view.

Like the Soviets, we tried for years to control the flow of information to our members. Too often we merely served as defenders of dying

dogmas rather than active creators of an ever renewing and vibrant vision. We have become tiresome apologists rather than disquieting prophets. And sadly, for many of our young people, the church is no longer a credible guide to understanding. Today, the “cognitive dissonance” has become overpowering.

My comments should not be interpreted as a criticism of church leaders. Leaders assume the responsibilities we concede to them. Also, leaders in the church, like leaders in all organizations, have to make difficult decisions every day without adequate information. They often recognize that despite long agonizing they do not always make the best decisions. No, when I criticize the church I am speaking about you and me. And most importantly, I wish my criticism to be part of a constructive renewal of the church. How, then, can we recapture the confidence and vitality of Adventism’s earlier years?

I suggest that we consider two ways that parallel the two routes Gorbachev is pursuing in the Soviet Union: greater openness, including involvement with the world community (*glasnost*), and renewal of structure (*perestroika*).

## *Adventist Glasnost: Involvement in Society*

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First, how may Adventist *glasnost* be pursued? We can begin by asking what Adventism has to offer modern men and women. It is surely not the particulars of our 19th century world view. It is not turn-of-the-century applications of *The Great Controversy*. Instead, we need to rearticulate a vision that has relevance to society today. We have to build on the past, not live in it. Rather than parroting our comfortable rhetoric, we might do well to ask what the real thrust of the story in *The Great Controversy* is.

One of the more profound thinkers I know, a former colleague of mine who no longer participates in the Adventist community, once pointed out to me how ironic it was that Adventists tend to focus on the details of what Ellen White talked about in *The Great Controversy*, but tend to miss

the essential thrust of her message. She was trying to say that there are tremendous forces in society, corrupt powers that demean the human spirit. She used language that may be arcane, with specific examples chosen from her own time. But we must be smart enough to go beyond the particulars of her language and examples.

If you go back and read Newton's or Kepler's papers, you will find ideas and arguments in them that are wrong and some that look naive from our

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**We have to ask “What was the problem that the prophetic voice was trying to attack? How can we make the everlasting gospel meaningful to society? How can we help to transform a suffering world?”**

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lofty vantage point. Does that mean they were not great scientists? Of course not. We have to see their contributions in the context of the ongoing development of scientific understanding. We have to go back and sort out the lasting contributions and the new insights from the mundane or erroneous. We need to select the parts that contribute to our understanding and put aside those things that were part of the unformed context of the times. Likewise, in our own spiritual community, we have to ask “What was the problem that the prophetic voice was trying to attack? How do we understand that issue in our time? How can we make the everlasting gospel meaningful to society? How can we help to transform a suffering world?”

I would like to suggest that the church establish a National Center for the Study and Transmission of Values. We could bring together pastors, educators, psychologists, sociologists, theologians, philosophers, and social workers from the Adventist church as well as committed and informed individuals from other churches and organizations to propose a framework for Christian living in modern society.

Imagine the impact that such a center could have. It would be both theoretical and practical.

It would bring together scholars to provide the historical, theological, and philosophical context and rationale. It would bring together psychologists, sociologists, social workers, and pastors to devise programs for implementing Christian values in creative and systematic ways. Both phases could draw on the resources of foundations and government agencies to help fund both research and experimental programs.

The center could also establish a youth corps to provide a nondenominational vehicle for the kind of national service under discussion in Congress. It could serve as a resource for the media. The center would initiate experimental programs and publish major studies as well as practical guides. Local churches could serve as test centers for the ideas and could themselves devise programs and services for their communities. In short, the churches could serve as laboratories, not museums.

I, and many others, would be pleased to support such a center operated by the Adventist church. Such a center could serve to put Adventists in touch with fellow Christians in other denominations. It might even serve as an animating theme for our discussions in Sabbath school and provide a new and more legitimate basis for instruction in the children's and youth departments. Such an enterprise could help to reinvigorate the entire church and provide a new sense of mission and participation.

## *Adventist Perestroika: Encouragement of Pluralism*

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Let us turn to the second parallel to what is currently being attempted in the Soviet Union. How might we achieve an Adventist *perestroika*? In the Soviet Union as in Adventism, one factor is pluralism—pluralism of cultures, ideas, and governance.

Cultural pluralism must lead us to recognize that the mental framework of the early 20th century is no longer applicable. In the next century, persons of color will constitute roughly three-quarters of the world's population. Even in this

country, it is estimated that within a generation or two, half of the population will be persons of color. It is estimated that within the next 10 years, 85 percent of those coming into the U.S. labor force will be women and “minorities.” Steps need to be taken now to adjust church policies to these changing times. Women need to be welcomed into the pastorate, not just in the name of justice, but for the benefits a more pluralistic ministry would bring to the church.

Pluralism of ideas is equally important. One of the great strengths of the Catholic church has been its capacity to embrace a wide range of practices and ideologies. Time after time, as concerned individuals called for new ideas and reforms, the church made room for new orders—Dominicans, Franciscans, Cistercians, Jesuits, Nestorians, Beguines, and Trappists, with all their diverse outlooks. All became part of the church, their pluralism strengthening Catholicism.

Adventism needs more, not less, pluralism and ferment. We need more vigorous and informed contributions from conservatives. Conservatives are our “institutional engineers”; they tend to provide a context for continuity and stability. But we also need the liberal, “artistic” elements to bring to Adventism an even greater sensitivity to human needs, to issues of justice and mercy. We need an inclusive church that relishes a pluralism of viewpoints.

Pluralism in governance is perhaps where *perestroika* is most obviously overdue in Adventism. As in the Soviet Union, we have had, in practice, a hierarchical structure. However, this model of authority is inadequate. It tends to stifle initiative and kills the creative spirit. Such a system provides precious little incentive, no effective means of motivation. The result for the Soviet Union is, economically, a state of near paralysis.

Any hierarchical structure, in its conventional operation, places too great a burden on the shoulders of its leaders. If the leaders fail to have the necessary vision, the movement sputters. If their emphasis is misguided, momentum is lost, and progress can be set back for decades. In short, such a system is not capable of self-renewal, it is not dynamic, and it cannot be competitive if it relies only on the vision and ideas of leadership.

What is the connection with the church? Just as citizens are being activated to participate in the public life of the Soviet Union, the church must once again engage the minds, the hearts, and the imaginations of all its members. Some argue that a congregational model (the “secession” model) would accomplish that.

I personally do not favor a strict congregational model, and believe that a centralized structure is necessary if we are going to be able to mount

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**Let us not wait for the arrival of an Adventist Gorbachev to transform and renew the Adventist church. Let us, to use Vaclav Havel’s words, have a “velvet revolution” of Adventism, led by the members; and let it begin now.**

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global programs and have sufficient critical mass to engage the larger society. But we must develop a new partnership between the leadership and the membership. As modern management experience has shown, only those organizations that empower their members at all levels of the organization, and give them a sense of ownership and involvement, can achieve long-term success. True teamwork is essential. Thus, though they would continue as dedicated participants in the larger organization, local conferences, local pastors, and local congregations must have much more flexibility to experiment, and must assume greater responsibility for the future of the church.

In short, Adventist *perestroika* must encourage pluralism in a variety of forms: diversity of culture, diversity of ideas, and greater diversity of leadership.

As an old-timer of the Association of Adventist Forums, perhaps I may be permitted to encourage the Association to demonstrate what I am urging on the whole church. The Association should re-examine how it might implement greater *glasnost* and *perestroika* within itself.

The most dramatic peacetime political trans-

formations of this century are taking place right before our eyes. Let us not wait for the arrival of an Adventist Gorbachev to transform and renew

the Adventist church. Let us, to use Vaclav Havel's words, have a "velvet revolution" of Adventism, led by the members; and let it begin now.



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# Reaching for a Higher Ground

by Karla K. Walters

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Reading the Bible has become particularly meaningful to me since my professional training has introduced me to the reader-response theory of literary criticism. This approach suggests that there is no “truth” in the printed words on the page; the “truth” is created when the reader understands what the author wrote. What the reader can understand is determined by his or her wealth of experience. This means that each time an individual reads a particular work, his experience will change his understanding of that text.<sup>1</sup> Thus, every time I read the Bible, I see a new meaning—not the meaning dictated by church doctrine, not the meaning dictated by Bible teachers, not the meaning I saw yesterday—but a new meaning based on the experience I have had up to this moment of my life.

This theory supports a progressive reading of the Bible. It also harmonizes with the well-established precept of daily Bible study, which assumes that one gains new understandings by repeated reading of the Bible over time. The Apostle Paul also suggested that progressive understanding occurs when he wrote, “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things” (1 Corinthians 13:11). Further, no one would claim that once one reaches adulthood, one no longer grows or changes. I am not the same adult I was 20 years ago; the years of experience have had a cumula-

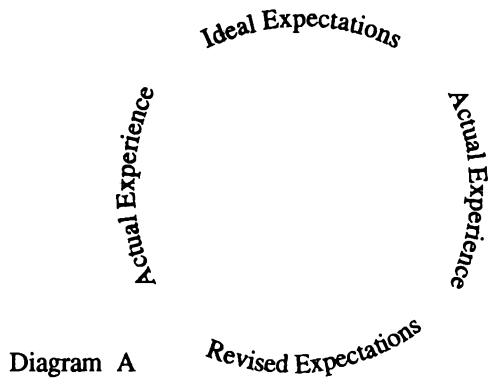
tive effect on my thinking and perceptions. My understanding of the Bible, as well as my faith, is constantly growing.

An example is my recent reading of those familiar Bible passages in which Paul exhorts Christian women not to adorn themselves with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly apparel, but rather to practice good works and foster a “hidden man of the heart,” ornamenting themselves with a “meek and quiet spirit” (1 Timothy 2:9; 1 Peter 3:3). Like many Adventists, I had in the past understood these texts to be, primarily, exhortations against wearing jewelry. Now that I have teenage daughters, I feel that the most important meaning of these passages is to teach young women to strive for moral substance and active achievement, rather than becoming frivolous, primping “airheads.”

My faith has developed in other ways as well. I believe my expectations of life and of God’s methods and power must be constantly open to revision. Our Adventist forebears experienced the need to revise their expectations when they encountered the Great Disappointment of 1844. They scurried back to their Bibles to search for a new view of the 2,300 days, the Second Coming, and the sanctuary doctrine. As I see it, this is the cycle of expectation and revision: We form expectations, usually founded on a sense of the ideal; when we encounter actual experience, we revise these expectations. These revised expectations are themselves subject to further actual experience, leading us to further revisions of our expectations. The process can be viewed as a circle, something like Diagram A, on the following page.

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Karla K. Walters, an assistant professor of English at California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo, received her Ph.D from the University of Oregon. This essay is adapted from her remarks at the 1989 National AAF Conference in Seattle.



I find that I must keep my definition of God open-ended, and that I constantly revise my views, both of doctrines and of people. As a child, I expected my parents to be perfect and infallible. When I became a teenager, I realized that my parents often made mistakes and that their words and actions were sometimes self-serving and manipulative. I had to change my expectations of my parents; I've learned to love them despite their imperfections.

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**For me, now, “present truth” is far more than merely waiting for the Second Coming. For me, the pursuit of excellence is present truth, as is fighting the evils of a vicious secular environment.**

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The same thing is true of my expectations of church leaders. At one time I admired them and expected them to be perfect and infallible. When I reached young adulthood, I could see that they made mistakes and that they could be self-serving and manipulative. I'm still working on revising my expectations of church leaders, yet I am convinced that in my relations with them I ought to show the same spirit of love and tolerance I show toward my parents.

My view of the Second Coming has changed since I was a teenager in academy. At that time the Second Coming seemed imminent. I was certain I would soon see the Lord coming in clouds of glory. In moments of furtive honesty, the young women in the dorm would talk about how they hoped Christ wouldn't come until they'd had a chance to get married and have

children, and/or get started on their careers. This was often stated as a hope that the Second Coming would not arrive for five years.

Now, more than 20 years later, having married, raised my children, and launched my career, I view life from the vantage point of middle age, looking toward old age, and I see the Second Coming differently. It has finally and forcefully dawned on me that every Adventist who has died since 1844 will experience the Second Coming at the resurrection. This is now what I, too, expect—my own death seems much more imminent than it did when I was a teenager. No one knows at what time death will come, just as no one can tell the hour or the day of the coming of the Lord. My new view of the Second Coming makes it seem much more imminent, much more probable, and much more comforting than my former belief that in my lifetime I would see Christ coming in the clouds.

In a sense, I am willing to accept a “slow” God, and have become more patient in practical, human affairs. Having left the days of impetuous youth behind, I no longer expect instant action. For example, I teach on a campus with 15,000 students in a state university system with 19 campuses. I know better than to expect immediate results within this bureaucracy. Two years ago, funding for a new business administration building was approved for my campus, but the ground breaking has yet to take place. So much of life requires this kind of patience that I believe it is rare to find instant results anywhere except at a computer terminal.

I was fortunate to attend Wisconsin Academy when it was under the guidance of Mildred Summerton, one of the outstanding women educators in the denomination. In her chapel talks Miss Summerton repeatedly spoke of “the quality of excellence”; she urged us to strive to do more, to be better, to make the world a better place, to do the best with whatever it was that God gave us. I still believe that unless we have this striving for excellence, we have nothing.

I believe this means concentrating on the big picture and leaving details, such as choice of clothing, to the individual. As long as one doesn't

go naked in public, whether one wears a saffron robe or black leather pants is a matter of choice.

For me, now, “present truth” is far more than merely waiting for the Second Coming. For me, the pursuit of excellence is present truth, as is fighting the evils of a vicious secular environment: greed, duplicity, dishonesty, power-grabbing, money-grabbing, injustice, bigotry, sexism, and racism. The message of the Bible has changed for me since I was an Adventist academy student, but it has not become less demanding. Pursuing

excellence and combating evil takes tremendous creativity and energy. Only faith in God provides the energy and the power to persist.

For me, the Adventist church is no longer an infallible parent demanding conformity to myriad rules of behavior. For me, the church is a community of caring believers nurturing and revitalizing one another for the challenging pursuit of excellence and the battle against the forces of evil. Finally, I firmly believe that our reach should exceed our group, or what’s a heaven for?<sup>2</sup>

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### NOTES AND REFERENCES

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1. Louise M. Rosenblatt is the primary author of reader response theory in her *Literature as Exploration*, third edition (New York: Modern Language Association, 1984) and *The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional*

*Theory of the Literary Work* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978).

2. A paraphrase of Robert Browning, “Andrea Del Sarto,” *Men and Women* (1855).

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# Missionaries to the Dark Continents of Politics

by Richard J. Mouw

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Progressive Christianity is the wave of the future. That is the basic thesis that I want to defend, and to expand upon. In doing so, however, I have no intention of defending everything that people might want to pass off as “progressive” Christian thought and action. The kind of progressive Christianity that can be thought of as conforming to God’s purposes in history must first and foremost be biblically grounded. For that reason I want to tie my comments closely to a biblical text, namely, the “new song” of Revelation 5:9,10:

Worthy art thou to take the scroll  
and to open its seals,  
for thou wast slain and by thy blood  
didst ransom men [and women] for God  
from every tribe and tongue and  
people and nation,  
and hast made them a kingdom  
and priests to our God,  
and they shall reign on earth (RSV).

The content of this biblical hymn contains three themes especially helpful to our reflections on the proper scope of progressive Christianity.

## *Christ and Culture*

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The first theme is this: the hymn that is sung in this text celebrates the cosmic authority of Jesus Christ. A truly progressive Christian will engage in creative interaction

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Richard J. Mouw, a Reformed theologian, is provost and professor of Christian philosophy and ethics at Fuller Theological Seminary. The author of *Holy Worldliness*, Mouw delivered these remarks as the Sabbath sermon at the 1989 National AAF Conference.

with our cultural situation, inspired by the hope that we can improve the conditions of human existence in our world. This requires, I suggest, that we operate with a very self-conscious grasp of the cosmic authority of the Lord whom we serve.

The immediate context of this hymn is very instructive in this regard. John has witnessed a scene in which a scroll has been presented. This scroll contains the secrets of history. If we could know the contents of this scroll we would no longer be in doubt about how things will turn out in the historical process.

The question goes forth, then: “‘Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?’ ” Who can teach us the meaning of the historical struggle?

A search committee has been assigned the task of finding someone who can open the scroll. But they come back without a candidate. No one in the whole cosmos, in heaven or earth or under the earth, has been found who is worthy to take the scroll and open its seals.

The regions mentioned here—heaven, the earth, and the underworld—were understood by John’s contemporaries to be the three levels of creaturely authority. The heavenly regions were the realm of angelic powers, the spiritual forces that influence human decision-making. The earthly level was the sphere inhabited by powerful human beings, the people who mold and shape our habits and values and preferences. In our day they would be people like Mr. Gorbachev and Mrs. Thatcher and Mr. de Klerk and the Sandinista cabinet, as well as the other folks who exercise very real authority over us—for example, Ann

Landers and Dan Rather and Bill Cosby and Madonna and Phil Donahue and Woody Allen. The underworld, the regions “under the earth,” is the realm of natural forces and departed spirits. This is the sphere of influence that is so important to the world of seances, witchcraft, and occult “science.”

The celestial search committee makes its report in Revelation 5. A thorough search of these regions has uncovered no one who is worthy to reveal to us the secrets of history. Angelic powers, the rulers in heavenly places, are not able to open the scroll. Nor can George Bush, David Letterman, or the editors of *Cosmopolitan*. Nor can any spirit of force in that region that is so fascinating to Shirley MacLaine and the New Age “channellers.”

So John weeps, because it appears that the secrets of history will forever remain hidden. But then a second opinion is announced. Someone has been found after all who is able to take the scroll and to open its seals. The one who can reveal the deepest mysteries of the cosmic struggle to us is Jesus, the Lamb who was slain.

Progressive Christianity must be undergirded by the conviction that we are in the service of a Lord who is the one, the only one, who has the authority to open the scroll. Furthermore, we can have the confidence that Jesus’ authority is no accident. He has access to the secrets of the cosmos because the cosmos *belongs* to him; he is the creator of all things.

Progressive Christianity, then, is inescapably creationist. It is unfortunate that the creationist label has been co-opted in recent years by Christian people who seem obsessed with biological and geological theory. Progressive Christianity needs to feature a creationism that has a strong ethical component. It is strange that people who call themselves creationists often seem to care more about what public school textbooks say about fossil records and ancient bones than they do about how those same schools treat little black and Hispanic children who are special creations of the God and Father of Jesus Christ. There is something odd about a creationism that requires us to believe that there was once a historical Eve, but seems to be completely indifferent to the

present-day oppression of Eve’s very historical daughters. Many of these daughters are even denied the right to exercise their God-given gifts fully within the Christian community!

The creationism that is embodied in a genuinely progressive Christianity will be very concerned about the well-being of the creation that has been brought into being by the hand of God. This kind of creationism will insist on the crucial importance of that noblest of creationist texts: “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein” (Psalm 24:1, RSV).

## *A Blood-Bought People*

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Now the second theme: this text points to the community of the Lamb as the necessary base of operations for progressive Christianity. The hymn in Revelation 5 celebrates the fact that the Lamb has shed his blood in order to bring a new kind of community into being.

The “blood of the Lamb” image is important in evangelical Christianity. It has certainly figured prominently in Adventist soteriology—and rightly so. The Bible makes it very clear that the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ is a crucial event in the redemptive drama.

We live in a world in which the notion of a “blood-identity” is still a very captivating one. The horrors of Nazism were inextricable connected to the promise of a “pure” ethnic blood—a promise that echoes loudly today in the blasphemous rantings of the Ku Klux Klan. Our national ceremonies also make much of the importance of blood-identity. Memorial Day oratory often celebrates the blood shed by American soldiers as the “supreme sacrifice” that has purchased our security as a people.

But what the hymn of Revelation 5 teaches us is that there is only one blood sacrifice that can provide us with a proper identity: the substitutionary work of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. By his death on the cross Jesus established a new kind of community, drawn—in the words of the celestial hymn—“from every tribe and tongue and

people and nation.” The blood of Christ has made all other claims to community and peoplehood ultimately irrelevant. Because we have been washed in the blood of the Lamb we may never again boast of a specific ethnic blood or of a particular national identity. As a blood-washed sinner, it no longer really matters that I have Dutch blood flowing in my veins, or that I am a

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**A crucial question, then, for progressive Christians is this: How do we behave during—to revive an old Adventist phrase—“the tarrying time”?**

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“red-blooded” American male. My true identity resides in the fact that the cross has provided me with a new kind of community, in which South African mine workers and Chilean peasants and Russian factory workers and Korean housewives are now “my own kind.” Because I am now a member of that multiethnic, multiracial, multi-linguistic peoplehood that is the blood-bought church of Jesus Christ.

This new communal identity is of crucial importance for our progressive Christian efforts. To be committed to the issues that bear directly upon, or flow directly from, our identity as the people of the Lamb is simply to align oneself with what the future is all about. For Jesus “had made us a kingdom and priests to our God” and we “shall reign on earth.” As people who are getting ready for the new heaven and the new earth, we are called here and now to show forth the rule of Christ in ways that are possible for us in the midst of brokenness.

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*“The Tarrying Time”*

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**T**he third theme has to do with the mystery of God’s purposes as they are being worked out in the historical process.

It is the Lamb, and not we ourselves, who has access to the secrets that are contained in the scroll; therefore, we progressive Christians

would do well to cultivate an appropriate spirit of humility as we pursue our tasks. This is no trivial matter to raise in the Adventist community.

I have been thinking lately about a possible connection between two teachings that have been common among Adventists: the emphasis on the importance of a “young earth” and the conviction that the return of Christ is imminent. At first glance these themes might seem quite unrelated; however, I think it is a mistake not to look for a virtual connection. That there is an important link can be seen by putting the case in this way: many Adventists believe both that God created the world quickly and recently and that God will end the world quickly and soon.

The underlying theological motif here should be obvious: *when God acts, he does so quickly*. And it is important, I think, to take a critical look at this motif. It certainly is not one that is central to other theological traditions. The God of Roman Catholicism, for example, seems to be much slower than the Adventist God. In Catholic thought, the Deity seems quite fond of gradual historical development—the notion of a “development of dogma” is a case in point in this regard. Similarly, my own Reformed tradition, with its strong emphasis on the gradual unfolding of the providential plan, seems to be quite comfortable with the idea of a rather relaxed divine pace.

Progressive Christians need to think about the divine slowness, about the ways in which God is in his own mysterious but wise way *preparing* the world for Christ’s return. This corresponds to the way, in my view, that he prepared for the appearance of human beings on the created scene by working through a gradual process that allowed earlier species to flourish and then disappear before our human ancestors made their appearance.

A crucial question, then, for progressive Christians is this: How do we behave during—to revive an old Adventist phrase—“the tarrying time”?

The story is told that during the 19th century a Polish rabbinical council in Warsaw hired a young rabbi, whose sole responsibility was to look for the Messiah. He was required to check out the births of boy babies in case any of them showed messianic possibilities. He was also ex-

pected to follow up on other reports of unusual activities. After a year of this sort of activity, he went to the chief rabbi. "I want to quit," he said. "My assignment is too tedious." But the chief rabbi replied: "Look at it this way. At least it's steady work!"

That's the way it is with us too, as we watch for the Lord's appearance. Waiting for the final victory is steady work. And it could go on for a long time. But there is much that we can do while we wait. The tarrying time is a good opportunity for us to make some progress in learning about ourselves, to work at developing the virtues of patience, modesty, and kindness.

The sociologist, John Murray Cuddihy, has written extensively in recent years about the phenomenon he describes as "the ordeal of civility." He points out that people with strong religious convictions have a difficult time being civil toward those who view things differently. For example, Cuddihy is convinced that people with genuinely Christian convictions will find it difficult to cultivate civility. But he thinks it is worth the effort to work at it.

Cuddihy strongly emphasizes the fact that we are presently living in the time of God's patience. This is the theme that he looks to as the most promising resource for coping with the ordeal of civility. He sees the proper resolution of this ordeal in the adoption of a kind of "ethic for the interim" that recognizes the need for patience as we await the future glory. Properly patient Christian discipleship, Cuddihy suggests,

puts a ban on all ostentation and triumphalism for the time being, before the Parousiatic return, at which time alone triumphalism becomes appropriate and fitting.

For Christians to insist upon trying to claim our glory here and now, says Cuddihy,

is precisely vainglory—it is vulgar, empty, and in bad theological taste. "Whoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matthew 23:12, KJV).

This is, I think, helpful guidance for all progressive believers who struggle with the relationship between conviction and civility. But I do have one reservation about Cuddihy's way of putting the case. I'm not sure that we conservative Protestants need to be encouraged to nurture a

humility that is merely a temporary struggle, a holding pattern that we abide as we wait for an eschatologically delayed triumphalism. My own guess is that the ultimate triumph of sanctifying grace in our lives will occur only when we have learned that a triumphalist spirit is not something to be grasped after at all. The triumph that we await is not our triumph, but the victory of the Lamb. Before him our knees will bow and our tongues will confess that he is Lord.

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**Adventist Christians are very familiar with the poignant words of the Millerite Hiram Edson: "We wept till the day dawned." Those tears now need to be transformed into a weeping on behalf of the poor, the oppressed, the brokenhearted, and the abused.**

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Practicing a calm and humble steadiness is not merely a way of biding our time until the end time arrives. It is itself a crucial way of anticipating the final chapter of the narrative that we are living out. The present dispensation of God's patience is a pedagogical necessity for the believing community—and perhaps especially for our kind of progressive believer.

Adventist Christians are very familiar with the sentiments expressed in the poignant words of the Millerite Hiram Edson, as he described his experience on the night of the Great Disappointment:

Our fondest hopes and expectations were blasted, and such a spirit of weeping came over us as I never experienced before. It seemed that the loss of all earthly friends could have been no comparison. We wept till the day dawned.

This wrenching experience was, I am convinced, an important and necessary one. It provided an essential purging of the tears that flow out of a heart caught in the grip of a triumphalism that longs for the quick solution. Those tears now need to be transformed into a weeping on behalf of the poor, the oppressed, the brokenhearted, and the abused. And they need to motivate us to action in a world in which the final triumph is not yet.

As we progressive Christians participate in the public dialogue, motivated by a concern to promote righteousness, justice, and peace, we must do so with a sense that we are ourselves human beings who have been deeply wounded by our own sin and rebellion. We have no right to claim moral or political superiority. We cannot claim to have yet arrived at purity. However, we *can* point to the ways in which God's sanctifying grace has made us sensitive to the weeping of the poor and the disadvantaged, to the loneliness and rebellion of those who have not responded in obedience to God's gracious offer of salvation; we will be sensitized to the ravages that greed, superstition, false doctrine, godless ideologies, racism, sexism, nationalism, sloth, and sexual infidelity have inflicted on the human race. And we can pray that our willingness to testify to the hope—including the political and economic hope—that has come to reside in our hearts will draw others to the same cross of Jesus to which we have fled as broken sinners, crying out in desperation,

naked, come to thee for dress;  
helpless, come to thee for grace;  
foul, I to the fountain fly,  
help me, Savior, or I die.

In Christ we have found the faith and courage to begin to explore new paths of obedience.

**T**his assignment—this call to a civil but convicted progressive Christianity—is no easy one to take up. When John Wesley observed that the whole world was his parish, he was making a very profound point. But the world in which we are called to served today certainly doesn't *feel* like a parish. Parishes are usually familiar and friendly places. That is not exactly the way in which we would choose to describe the corporations, organizations, and institutions that loom large on the horizons of our world. The arena wherein we are called to manifest a holy worldliness is more like a mission field than a parish.

And the missionary analogy is, I think, a helpful one for progressive Christians to keep in mind. It is both helpful and important to look at the

corporations and organizations and institutions of public life as mission fields. This is true not only in the sense that they are places where we must do the evangelizing that we are—I hope, strongly—inclined to engage in, but also in the sense that we must bring the concerns of the gospel of justice and righteousness and peace to bear on the patterns and structures of life in the public sector.

Again, this is not an easy task to take up. But neither was that *missionary* enterprise that our Christian forebears engaged in during the past century or so, and which we are called to continue. They looked out over great stretches of territory that were for them dark continents. They could summon up the courage to enter, often without chart or compass, into those unknown places. They did so because they knew that there were no cattle on any of a thousand hills in those territories that were not put there by the hand of the God of the Scriptures. They knew that there was no human being whom they would ever encounter in any jungle village or in any oasis in the desert or in any igloo or teepee or treetop shelter or urban slum or rescue mission soup line who was not created in the image of the God of the Bible.

Just so, their daughters and sons can enter into what are today the dark continents of politics and business and the medical and legal and financial and teaching and writing and entertainment professions. They, too, can know that there is no murky corner of any stock brokering firm, no smoke-filled room of any political party, no law school library or medical convention, no psychologist's couch or university classroom, no artist's studio or architect's workroom, no theater, concert hall, monastery, seminary, gymnasium, kitchen, restaurant, or motel room—that there is, in the memorable phrase of Abraham Kuyper, “no single square inch in the entire creation about which Jesus Christ does not cry out, ‘This is mine! This, too, belongs to me!’ ”

To hear that cry today, not as the crusading call to arms of an imperial commander, nor as the proud boast of a cosmic entrepreneur, but as a sign of love that arises out of the very depths of the divine heart—this is to hear the call to a biblically grounded progressive Christianity.



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# Parameters of a Progressive Faith

by Patricia L. Wismer

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**M**artin Marty's day began ordinarily enough. The prominent church historian and lively editor of *The Christian Century* boarded a 7 a.m. plane at O'Hare Airport, headed for his next speaking engagement. After takeoff, he and his seatmate, another professional person, simultaneously reached for their briefcases. The other man smiled at Marty and inquired about his line of work. Marty said simply, "I'm a theologian."

His questioner, noticeably unimpressed, responded, "Bah! Why do you bother with all that stuff? All you need to know about religion is 'Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.'"

Marty didn't reply, so the other man, counting himself the victor in the exchange, settled into his own paperwork. They worked silently side by side until breakfast appeared. As they were clearing their trays, Marty cheerfully reopened the conversation with, "And what do you do?"

"I'm an astronomer," the other boasted.

Without skipping a beat, Marty replied, "Why do you bother with all that stuff? After all, all you really need to know is 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star.'"

With due apologies to Robert Fulghum,<sup>1</sup> I submit that there is much we need to know in life that goes beyond what was dreamt of in our kindergarten curriculum. This is as true of faith as of scientific knowledge. Our secular culture, like Marty's astronomer, readily accepts this as true of science, but is unwilling to extend the favor

to religious faith. And, having restricted the scope of faith to a five-year-old's level, our culture then either romanticizes the beauty of a "childlike faith," or summarily rejects that faith as being too juvenile. In either case, faith can be ignored as a serious conversation partner in any discussion of important issues.

Unfortunately, our secular culture is not the only force blocking the development of an adult faith. Too often, it finds a ready accomplice in religion itself. For entirely different motives (some laudable, if misguided, others more self-serving), our churches encourage their members to accept unquestioningly the beliefs they were taught as children. At least half the students in my college classrooms (and I have taught in both Catholic and Protestant institutions) enter my courses with the assumption that questioning and doubt are antithetical to the life of faith. Some of this group continue to hold onto their faith, being willing to sacrifice part of their brain for the love of God and the hope of heaven. Others have already given up their faith because they can't give up their intellect. My message to both sub-groups is the same: "Back up a minute. There's another way. It's called progressive faith."

My assignment is not to describe or argue for a progressive faith (though I have been known to speak passionately on both topics). Rather, I see my task as that of a line-painter on a highway, delineating where the safety of the paved road ends and the dangerous soft shoulder begins. A clear, bright white line can make the pilgrimage of progressive believers not only less anxious but also much more meaningful. Since they don't need to worry every minute about falling into some Slough of Despond, our progressive pil-

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grims are freed to engage more deeply in theological conversation as they travel. My intention in this discussion is to suggest some guidelines for the pilgrimage, and a process for following them on the journey.

## *Guidelines Marking Off the Road*

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One fruitful topic of conversation for our pilgrims would be to ponder together the meaning of the phrase “faithful dissent.” In his book of the same name, Fr. Charles Curran, a well-respected Roman Catholic ethicist from the United States, tells the story of his seven-year investigation by the Vatican.<sup>2</sup> The “verdict” of the Vatican was that Curran could no longer be considered a Roman Catholic theologian, because he disagreed with some noninfallible official church teachings. Apparently, Rome has decided that “faithful dissent” is an oxymoron. Curran thinks otherwise, and so do I.

Although not constituting an oxymoron, the two parts of the phrase exist in a healthy, dynamic tension. The phrase itself gives no set formula for determining just how much tension is necessary to avoid stasis and just how much goes past the breaking point, sundering the two parts of the phrase. It encourages us to engage in honest soul-searching and in critical dialogue with each other as we travel together in pilgrimage.

But Curran does not leave us stranded, awash in this healthy tension. Instead, he proceeds to set forth four guidelines for faithful dissent. (The first three guidelines he suggests were originally put forward by the U.S. bishops in their 1968 pastoral letter, “Human Life in Our Day.”) In exploring these guidelines, I will restate and develop them in ways appropriate to any progressive faith.

*GUIDELINE No. 1: The reasons to move beyond an established belief or custom must be serious and well-founded.* Change simply for its own sake is more dangerous than holding onto the past. Past practices usually had a validity when they were introduced—they fit into their cultural con-

text and met people’s spiritual needs—which is why they were adopted in the first place. Often these practices have become deeply rooted in people’s spiritual psyches. Even after they have outlived their apparent meaningfulness, believers find ways of making them “work,” since they have to do them anyway. The example that comes to mind from my own tradition is the Latin Mass.

Believers, even though they couldn’t understand the words the priest was saying, found a sense of mystery in the ritual, which drew them closer to God. Many of them wanted to hang on to that experience, not realizing that one could have mystery as well as meaningful participation in the liturgy. In the long run, most Catholics have come to appreciate the liturgical revisions that simplified the ritual and brought it into their own language, but initially the change was very difficult for many. A believer’s faith life lies at the center of his or her identity, so every change is of great moment and must be initiated with care.

With this caution in mind, we still need to consider what constitutes a serious and well-founded reason. Studying the history of one’s own tradition provides an important clue. What was the origin of the beliefs and practices that are now part of the faith life? They didn’t just drop down from heaven. As I said earlier, they fit in the context of their culture. (“Fit” doesn’t mean they were carbon copies of what the larger culture was doing. Often they were in opposition to aspects of that culture. However, that very opposition was appropriate, for it met people’s needs for a fully human—and therefore fully spiritual—life.) The clue, then, is this. Our faith life should make sense in light of our culture. Cultures change and develop. Therefore, our faith life must change and develop as well. In order to convey the same or similar meaning in a different culture, it is often necessary to change the words.

Let me summarize what I am saying about this first guideline. A reason for change is serious and well-founded if it is in continuity with the basic teachings and values of a particular faith tradition and is required by changes in contemporary experience and culture. Both dimensions must be fulfilled to legitimate the change.

*GUIDELINE No. 2: The manner of dissent from*

*the status quo must not question or impugn the teaching authority of the church.* In Catholicism this “teaching authority” has a very specific meaning, which need not concern us here. In a more general sense, applicable to any progressive believer in a not-so-progressive denomination, it is necessary to give due respect to the leadership of one’s church. Respect does not always entail agreement, but it never allows mudslinging.

One makes one’s case, bringing forth serious and well-founded reasons (some of which are based firmly inside the tradition). As more and more believers become convinced of the validity of the progressive option, the leadership might finally begin to listen. This won’t happen tomorrow, or next week, or perhaps even next year. If this fails to happen over a period of years, the progressive believer can still take comfort in the fact that eventually those leaders will be called to their heavenly reward. Then new leaders will arise and with them the hope for institutionalizing a more progressive faith.

Working for change in a church structure is never speedy or easy. But Christ has promised that the Spirit will be present with us, so we have reason for hope. We must approach our task of working for a progressive faith somewhat like the builders of the great medieval cathedrals. The architects and those who dug the foundation realized that they would never live to see the spire completed or the stained glass windows in place. However, they knew that they were part of a much larger enterprise and that their labor would bear fruit long after they were gone. We progressive believers have one advantage over the cathedral builders; we can begin to live our progressive faith, even as we wait and hope for the larger community of believers to join with us.

*GUIDELINE No. 3: The change must not cause scandal.* This term deserves some comment. First we must differentiate between “good” and “bad” scandal. “Good” scandal, “Christian” scandal, is what St. Paul holds up to the Corinthian church: “Christ crucified,” he said, “is a scandal to the Jews and a folly to the Gentiles” (1 Corinthians 1:23). Christians *should* cause this type of scandal, simply by being Christians. This is that aspect of necessary opposition to the larger cul-

ture I mentioned before. This guideline cannot be warning against “good” scandal.

Paul may be giving us a hint about the “bad” scandal in discussing when Christians could eat meat that had been sacrificed to the Roman gods. Paul’s major point here is that Christians should not hurt their brothers or sisters because of their food, for then they are no longer walking according to love (Romans 14:15). Our actions should not give scandal to those who are “weak in faith” (vs. 1, RSV). If we have followed the first two guidelines, this should not be too difficult. For

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**If the issue one wishes to change lies at the very heart of the tradition, constituting its very identity, then perhaps one should leave that particular faith tradition and join (or create) another, rather than trying to make it into something it is not.**

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then our reasons would be public, our intent to be faithful to our tradition would be understood, and our respect for our leaders would be obvious.

In his own reflection on this third guideline, Curran brings up an additional wrinkle on the notion of scandal, by pointing out that dissent is sometimes necessary precisely in order not to give scandal.<sup>3</sup> As more and more believers become better educated, they notice contradictions between certain traditional beliefs and truth as defined by the secular disciplines.

This kind of scandal is not merely an intellectual matter, but may be a matter of justice as well. Many strong-minded Catholics (both men and women) who have come to affirm the equality of women in all other areas of life are scandalized when Rome continues to refuse even to discuss the ordination of women. This intractability seems to them inconsistent with the Jesus who associated with many whom religion and polite society considered to be pariahs. In particular it is inconsistent with the Jesus who had women friends and disciples. This scandal guideline not only helps us determine where the “outer limits”

lie, but also urges us forward in our pilgrimage.

*GUIDELINE No. 4: The issues being challenged should not be “core and central.”* This is connected to what we said above about keeping continuity with the tradition in advocating change. However, this guideline makes an important additional point. If the issue one wishes to change lies at the very heart of the tradition, constituting its very identity, then perhaps one should leave that particular faith tradition and join (or create) another, rather than trying to make it into something it is not. Applying this guideline in the concrete is not always easy. What is central to one

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**Although their critique of traditional Christianity and the church’s status quo is often quite radical, reformist feminists always call on some “true Christian principle” to establish the legitimacy of their position.**

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believer can appear rather peripheral to another.

Some examples might help us proceed. One is the origin of Christianity itself. Initially, the earliest “Christians” were good Jews who wanted to convince the rest of their brothers and sisters that Jesus, as the Messiah, was the fulfillment of Judaism. Some were convinced, but the majority resisted. This majority could not agree that their prophecies about the Messiah pointed toward someone who died on a cross. God would not let that happen to the one chosen to redeem God’s people. Something core and central about Judaism was being changed by the followers of Christ. As a result, a new religion was born.

Another example is a more contemporary one. It picks up a thread I have dangled before you once or twice and will be further weaving into the fabric of my discussion. It concerns the experience of many women in Christianity, an experience that gave birth to a new form of theology (feminist theology) and indeed to a new kind of progressive faith (a faith that begins with the premise that women’s faith experience is as valuable as men’s).

Two main branches of feminist theology illustrate the issues involved in our fourth criterion.<sup>4</sup> The first group of feminists, often referred to as the reformist feminists, believe that Christianity is not intrinsically and inextricably patriarchal. While they do not minimize the extent to which sexism and patriarchy plague the Christian tradition, they believe that the “heart” of Christianity asserts God’s equal love for all persons—male or female. Jesus’ life and death, they argue, manifests God’s will that all persons be liberated from whatever form of oppression they are experiencing. Therefore, they conclude, their project as Christians should be to work from within to call the church to a feminist conversion.

The second group, often described as revolutionary feminists, disagree with this analysis. In their view, the “heart” of Christianity is as irredeemably patriarchal as much of its exterior. Nothing can be salvaged; there is no place for women within Christianity. Therefore, these feminists have left the church, many turning to Goddess worship as their central form of religious experience.

The point of introducing these two groups here is not to debate the merits of either position. Rather, it illustrates our fourth criterion. The revolutionary feminists reject something that is core and central to Christianity: its understanding of God and Jesus. Therefore, they rightly view their position not as a “progressive” form of Christian faith, but rather as a non-Christian faith. The reformists, however, retain the “heart” of Christianity—recognizing the God of love and the salvific work of Jesus. Although their critique of traditional Christianity and the church’s status quo is often quite radical, reformist feminists always call on some “true Christian principle” to establish the legitimacy of their position. In this way they seek to fulfill our fourth guideline, and to be counted a legitimate form of progressive Christian faith. So far we have examined four guidelines for determining the outer limits of progressive faith: serious reasons, respect for church leadership, no “bad” scandal, and no core and central disagreements. Together these guidelines distinguish between the paved road and the soft shoulders stretching before our pilgrims.

However, our pilgrims still do not know which direction to travel on the road stretching before them or exactly how to proceed. What I would like to suggest now is a process, a series of steps, that might be used while journeying toward a progressive faith.

## *A Process for the Journey*

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This sequence of steps is, in fact, the basic method worked out by the reformist feminist theologians. Although not all progressive pilgrims need feel comfortable with their particular agenda, the process these feminist theologians propose can fit a variety of perspectives. In discussing each step of their process, I will highlight a few examples of the feminist journey. Remember, however, that these steps have a much wider applicability as well.

*FIRST STEP: CRITIQUE.* The process begins with a thoroughgoing critique of the patriarchy and androcentrism (male-centeredness) within the traditional position. This is necessary because women have so internalized the prevailing view of themselves that they often fail to notice their own oppression, exclusion, and second-class status. (This situation is not specific to women. Every oppressed group has its own examples, especially in the early stages of its move toward liberation: Latin American peasants who think their oppression is God's will for them; some African Americans who still see their poverty as a result of laziness and inferiority; abused children and women who think they deserve the abuse they receive, because this is "easier" than believing that the source of their security—parent, spouse—is cruel and abusive.)

One example from my own experience of this internalization might prove helpful. Ten years ago, at my first college job interview, one student asked me if I felt excluded when prayers employed only male images of God. At the time I gave her the reasons some feminists give for this reaction, but indicated that I did not feel personally excluded by this language. About a year later, the feeling hit me—and hit me hard. Then I really saw and felt the effects of this male monopoly on

God-language. God is like men, but not like me. Nothing of my specific femaleness is affirmed in the divine sphere. I am, at an ultimate level, excluded. Now, I have become a confirmed word-changer and image-transformer in public prayer and hymn-singing.

The thoroughgoing critique, then, is necessary because we don't always immediately see the extent of the problem facing us in the established faith tradition. And, as psychology attests, what we don't know *can* hurt us—often more than the problems we do recognize. So, while naming the problem is not the full solution, it is a necessary beginning. This critique can be internal (challenging one element of the tradition with another) or external (challenging the faith tradition from the perspective of contemporary experience or culture). Perhaps more frequently, it involves both.

*SECOND STEP: RECOVERY.* New insight into liberating dimensions of the tradition follows this critique. For feminists, this step brought a powerful upsurge of hope. They discovered, for example, that there was some feminine imagery for

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God in the Bible—not a majority to be sure, but a surprising amount given the patriarchal culture in which it originated. In fact, the Hebrew word for *compassion*—a central characteristic of God—comes from the same root as the word "womb." One biblical scholar argues that the term could better be translated as "womb-tenderness." Feminist theologians also discovered at this second step that the problem with some of the problematic biblical passages was not the passages themselves but rather scholars' patriarchal interpretations of them. In addition, a careful reading of the New Testament reveals some prominent women disciples, such as Mary Magdalene (who,

by the way, is never described anywhere in the Gospels as a prostitute), some significant stories about Jesus' encounters with women during his ministry, as well as some important women leaders in the early church.<sup>5</sup> This second step uncovers resources in the tradition that provide invaluable material for the final stage of the journey.

*THIRD STEP: RE-CREATION (OR REINTERPRETATION).* Here feminists put together what they have learned in the earlier stages and produce a statement of their progressive faith. One example, having to do with God-language, will suffice.<sup>6</sup> God should be imaged, they argue, in a variety of metaphors: Mother as well as Father, Liberator, Friend or Beloved, River of Life, et cetera. What this symphony of images achieves cannot be accomplished in any other way. Each individual image prevents the other from being taken literally, from being made into an idol.

If only male images are used for God, then God is perceived, even if only unconsciously, as male. More than half my students are convinced that God, according to traditional Christian doctrine, is male. No important Christian theologian has ever made such a claim; the official Christian teaching is that God transcends sexuality. Our images and pronouns, however, speak more powerfully than our concepts.

Further, if God is only Parent, whether Father or Mother, then we as believers are condemned to remain in some sense children. Thus, the need for images coming from adult-adult relationships, like Liberator, Friend, Beloved. If only personal images are used, then God is ultimately perceived as a person. Thus, the need for natural images—used quite exquisitely in both biblical and mystical literature. The end result of this feminist pilgrimage is, I would argue, a much fuller, richer, and ultimately more theologically adequate interpretation of God than the traditional one.

Our main concern here, however, is not with the specifics of the feminist pilgrimage—which I

have been able to paint only with a very broad brush, leaving out most of the nuances necessary to such a complex issue. Rather, our concern is with the sequence of critique, recovery, and re-creation. Let me now quickly summarize the wider applicability of this threefold process to any kind of progressive pilgrim. The critique is necessary to determine the problem, the exact point or points where the “progress” is needed in one's faith tradition. At this stage, one must be open to finding unsuspected and unwelcome aspects of the problem, aspects that we have previously glossed over, because they are, after all, part of our tradition.

The recovery step is necessary to highlight unexpected riches that are also present in the tradition, but have previously gone unnoticed because we weren't looking for them or hadn't yet developed the tools to unearth them. This step is crucial in arguing that the proposed progress is actually in continuity with the tradition, even if this is not obvious at first glance. Re-creation is the culmination of the journey, the point where the developed progressive faith becomes visible in its fullness. It is at this stage that one can best apply the two guidelines already discussed. It is at this stage that one can rest from one's long journey. But only temporarily.

For if all Christians are called to be forever pilgrims while on this earth, then this is even more true for Christians of a progressive faith. We who would be progressive pilgrims can never be too sure of ourselves. Each formulation of our progressive faith will have its own weaknesses. We must always challenge one another and ourselves to a purer faith. We must always listen carefully and caringly to the objections of our less-progressive sister and brother pilgrims, lest we discard something vital in our faith tradition. And last, but certainly not least, we must always place our trust, not in ourselves or in our progressive faith, but in God.

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2. Charles E. Curran, *Faithful Dissent* (Kansas City, Missouri: Sheed and Ward, 1989).
3. Curran himself does not use this specific terminology, but the idea is present; see pp. 64, 65.
4. See, for example, the now-classic discussion in Carol Christ and Judith Plaskow, eds., *Womanspirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979), pp. 1-11.
5. The best examples of feminist biblical "recovery" are Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978) for the Hebrew Bible; and Elisabeth Shüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983) for the New Testament. Two very useful anthologies of feminist approaches to biblical interpretation are Letty Russell, ed., *The Liberation Word: A Guide to Nonsexist Interpretation of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976); and Letty Russell, ed., *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985).
6. See, for example, the discussions by Sallie McFague in *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), especially chapters 1 and 5; and her more recent *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).

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# Believing, Behaving, Belonging— Exploring a Larger View of Faith

by Richard Rice

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As one of Tom Stoppard's characters puts it, "There is presumably a calendar date—a moment—when the onus of proof passed from the atheist to the believer, when, quite suddenly, secretly, the noes had it."<sup>1</sup>

Progressive faith is faith under pressure—pressure that originates both internally and externally. Furthermore, such faith is a precarious faith. The effects of pressure on faith can be either positive or negative. Happily, the nature of these effects is something over which we have a good deal of control.<sup>2</sup> I will expand on these three basic points about faith.

## *Progressive Faith Is Faith Under Pressure*

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The pressures that generate change come to bear on faith from a variety of sources. We are probably most vividly aware of the pressures on faith that arise from our contemporary cultural climate.

One is a general shift in the outlook of the West during the past hundred years or so toward skepticism and doubt in matters of religious belief. From very early in the history of the church, Christians—particularly in the West—felt the

force of two obligations. One was to think, or to reason; the other was to trust, or have faith. For much of Christian history, people found believing to be more natural and more important than understanding. The validity of faith was taken for granted, the status of reason was problematic. This view prevailed during what is variously referred to as the Middle Ages, the Age of Faith, or the Dark Ages, depending on your perspective.<sup>3</sup> In that era most people accepted religious claims as a matter of course, and the burden of proof lay on figures like Thomas Aquinas who had a high regard for reason and sought to make use of philosophy within Christian thought.

At some point in time, however, the burden of proof shifted to the other side. In the prevailing attitude of people today, the importance of rational inquiry is unquestioned; the status of faith is problematic. Faith must give account at the bar of reason, not the other way around; and if tension between the two becomes intolerable, it is faith, not reason, that has to go. In the modern world, supporters and critics of religion agree that the most pressing obligation Christians face is to show that they are intellectually responsible.

What is sometimes called the "ethic of belief" that prevails in the modern world gives forceful expression to this commitment to rationality. We see this ethic in statements like these. John Locke states that the mark of those who love truth for truth's sake alone is not to entertain "any proposition with greater assurance, than the proofs it is built upon."<sup>4</sup> David Hume declares, "A wise man . . . proportions his belief to the evidence."<sup>5</sup> A 20th century philosopher says, "Give to any hy-

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pothesis that is worth your while to consider just that degree of credence which the evidence warrants.”<sup>6</sup> According to such statements, people who are intellectually responsible always insist on adequate evidence for their beliefs, and until they get it, they suspend judgment.

The effects of this “ethic of belief” on faith are not hard to see. In the area of religious beliefs, supporting evidence is notoriously scarce. Unlike scientific proposals, which rest on carefully developed empirical evidence open to public examination, people do not come to religious faith through a process of rational investigation, and religious convictions are peculiarly resistant to public inquiry. As a result, many people question their validity.

Some take religious claims seriously but cannot find evidence to support them. This was the view of Bertrand Russell, the great agnostic. Someone asked him once what he would do if he died and found out that God existed after all. What would he say when God asked him why he had never believed in him? Russell answered, “Not enough evidence! Not enough evidence!” Others conclude that religious beliefs do not deserve serious considerations at all. At best, they are matters of private preference or personal opinion, but they do not belong among the settled beliefs of thinking people.

Along with the ethic of belief that pervades the modern intellectual atmosphere, certain religious beliefs, or fundamental articles of faith, have been singled out for particular criticism. The most important is no doubt belief in God. There have always been individuals here and there who denied the reality of God. But contemporary atheism is different from its historic precedents “both in its extent and its cultural establishment.” Atheism is a widespread and respected intellectual position today—something that was never the case prior to the 19th century. And even more significantly, it is a pervasive social phenomenon as well. According to Schubert Ogden, the reality of God is now expressly denied on an unprecedented scale.<sup>7</sup> Another scholar observes, “the rise of a radical godlessness” is “as much a part of the consciousness of millions of ordinary human beings as it is the persuasion of the intellectual.”<sup>8</sup>

Another distinctive feature of our time is the radical nature of the atheistic challenge to faith. It consists in the view that language about God is, quite literally, non-sense. It does not satisfy the minimal criteria of cognitive meaning. The secularist response to Christian faith is not to say, “I

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disagree with you,” but, “I don’t understand you. It is not that your affirmations of God are erroneous. They are meaningless.”

In the human sciences, scholars generally accept naturalistic accounts of religion. They interpret religious beliefs as the product of various psychological and social influences; they do not point to the presence of a supernatural or divine reality. Indeed, it is safe to generalize that God does not serve as an explanatory factor in any scientific enterprise today. If asked about the function of God in his scientific work, a modern scientist would undoubtedly offer a version of LaPlace’s famous statement: “I have no need of that hypothesis.”

In addition to skepticism about the ability to believe, traditional interpretations of numerous biblical passages are now highly problematic. The accepted views among various academic disciplines concerning matters such as the origins of life and the age of the earth conflict with the way in which Christians, particularly Seventh-day Adventists, have traditionally interpreted important biblical passages like Genesis 1-3. Scholars in the natural sciences such as biology, zoology, and geology generally believe that life has existed on the earth for millions of years rather than several thousand, and that higher forms of life gradually evolved from lower ones.

Scholarly approaches to other issues also exert pressure on a faith nurtured in an Adventist context. A careful exegesis of various texts in the

books of Daniel and Hebrews raises questions about the biblical support for the traditional denominational position on the sanctuary. Historical inquiry into Adventist origins challenges traditional denominational accounts and refuses to confirm the familiar pious portraits of our pioneers. As evidence continues to accumulate, the story of early Adventism becomes much more complicated and more earthy than the versions we heard at camp meetings and in academy religion

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**Faith is a living, dynamic reality, and change is a characteristic of all life. . . . Religious commitment involves the whole person and affects people in their concrete social and cultural relationships.**

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classes. Early Adventist figures now seem at once strangely different from and strangely like ourselves—both in disturbing ways.

While external sources of pressure on faith are readily apparent, internal sources are often overlooked. Yet besides the various factors in our intellectual environment that make religious change unavoidable, there is an impetus to change that inheres in the nature of faith itself.

For example, various passages of Scripture describe growth in knowledge as an important element in the Christian life. The New Testament letter of 2 Peter, for example, exhorts its readers to “make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge,” and so on.<sup>9</sup> In Philippians, Paul prays that his readers’ love “may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment.”<sup>10</sup> The letter to the Colossians contains the similar prayer that its readers will “be filled with the knowledge of [God’s] will, . . . bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”<sup>11</sup>

There are also passages that take Christians to task for inadequate development. The letter of Hebrews, for example, bemoans its readers’ apparent failure to advance beyond a rudimentary grasp of the principles of God’s Word, and urges them to go on to maturity.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, Paul refers to Christians in Corinth as “babes in Christ,” be-

cause they are still of the flesh, and therefore unready for solid food.<sup>13</sup>

The New Testament also contains several indications of what the role of understanding should be in the Christian life. Understanding leads to fruitful activity, contributes to the general upbuilding of the Christian community, and strengthens faith. Intellectual activity increases comprehension, and increased comprehension deepens religious commitment. Colossians 2:2 links together the ideas of knowledge, understanding, and confidence, expressing the author’s hope that his reader may, as the New English Bible translates it, “come to the full wealth of conviction which understanding brings.”

Ellen White also described faith in dynamic terms. She insisted that personal religious development is the only way to keep pace with the advancement of truth itself. “We must not think,” she admonished, “‘Well, we have all the truth, we understand the main pillars of our faith, and we may rest on this knowledge.’ The truth is an advancing truth, and we must walk in the increasing light.”<sup>14</sup> She speaks of heaven as a school where education will continue for eternity, with “new truths to comprehend”<sup>15</sup> always arising.

Faith is under pressure to change, then, fundamentally because faith is a living, dynamic reality, and change is a characteristic of all life. Furthermore, the impetus for faith to change is both internal and external. Faith develops in harmony with its own nature and in response to its external environment. In the nature of the case, religious commitment seeks to become more than it is, to increase and to develop. In addition, faith always exists in an environment. Because religious commitment involves the whole person, it affects people in the concrete social and cultural relationships in which they live.

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### *Progressive Faith Is Precarious Faith*

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**T**his brings us to our second point. A progressive faith is a precarious faith. Its future is open and its destiny is undeter-

mined. Change of one sort or another is inevitable, but which direction change will follow is uncertain.

As we noted earlier, the secularist outlook of the modern world puts enormous pressure on faith. It may be more difficult now than ever before in history for people to maintain a religious commitment. No one has captured the tenuous situation of religion in the modern world more effectively than the British poet Matthew Arnold. In the somber verses of "Dover Beach," Arnold surveys the "Sea of Faith" and hears its "melancholy, long, withdrawing roar." What Arnold foresaw on the broad scale in Victorian society repeats itself in the experience of many Christians on an individual level. Little by little, like the ebbing of the tide, personal faith seeps away. And what may once have been a surging religious commitment eventually gives way to barren strands of unbelief.

The faith of educated people seems to be particularly at risk. I don't know if this is because religious belief is less typical of educated people than of the general population, or because their clearly expressed unbelief is simply more conspicuous. But the perceived frequency of this experience among educated people leads some to conclude that a loss of faith is the inevitable consequence of advanced intellectual activity. They feel that it is virtually impossible to combine rigorous inquiry with genuine religious commitment; a person has to choose between serious scholarship and a positive relationship to God. One or the other has to go.

This is an exaggeration, of course. But it is true that higher education can place considerable pressure on religious commitment. People react to these challenges to faith in a variety of ways. Some capitulate to it, some defy it, and some just try to ignore it. The first response is rationalism. The rationalist insists on the highest standards of evidence for everything he believes. Religious beliefs do not meet these standards in the thinking of many people, so the rationalist dismisses them as untenable, and religion ceases to be relevant to him.

The opposite response to intellectual pressures on faith is fideism. Fideists react to the challenge

of reason by refusing to submit their religious beliefs to rational arbitration. They simply withdraw them from intellectual scrutiny. According to fideism, religious beliefs are self-authenticating; they contain their own reasons for being believed. Fideists often minimize the significance of the challenge. Sometimes they ridicule it. But they never try to formulate an answer to it. The fideist's position is roughly this: God said it, I believe it, and that settles it.

A third response to rational pressures on faith is more social than intellectual. Many Christians have serious reservations about the religious beliefs they grew up with; nevertheless, they maintain strong ties to the church. For a number of reasons they are unwilling to sever their connections to the religious community of their early years. We might call such people "communal Christians." Communal Christians participate in church activities, support the church financially, and often serve the church in various positions of leadership. But their religious experience contains a strong element of nostalgia. A vibrant personal faith, deep religious conviction, is something they may recall from the past, but it is not a present possession. They have nagging reservations about religious beliefs, but they try to ignore them.

Each reaction is unique, but they all share the view that faith and reason are inherently opposed to each other. They assume that you have to give up either faith or reason, or try to keep the opposition between them from disrupting your life. But there is no way to reconcile the two.

These responses all seem to focus on the external pressure that impinges on faith, and they seem to assume that its results are consistently negative, so the best we can hope for is to hold this pressure in check. However, such a perspective is simple-minded. It ignores the fact that there is an impulse or impetus for change within faith itself—what we have called internal pressure on faith. At the same time, it would be just as simple-minded to assume that all change in religious experience is positive as it is to assume that all change is negative, that the best we can do is put matters of faith under some form of intellectual quarantine.

In describing progressive faith as "precarious,"

I do not mean that change automatically threatens to bring religious experience to an end. I mean that religious commitment is capable of changing in more than one direction. So, we should not assume when change is apparent that things are necessarily getting either better or worse. We can only assume that both are possible. Consequently, a progressive faith admits of two possible characterizations.

One is the view that progressive faith is faith at risk, if not in retreat or decline. A progressive

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**The history of dogma reveals that over the centuries heresy has been the single most important stimulus to the growth of doctrine within the Christian church.**

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faith represents an attempt to pull off a compromise that is doomed to eventual failure between traditional religious commitment and modern ideas. From a contrasting perspective, progressive faith is robust faith, a faith willing to accept challenges and run risks. It is not timid, retreating. It is expansive rather than defensive. It views the possibility of change as an opportunity for growth rather than a threat to security. One sees change as an expression of uncertainty; the other, as a manifestation of confidence. My point is that either characterization of progressive faith may be accurate. Which one applies to our experience is something for us to determine.

## *We Can Give Our Faith Direction*

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This brings us to our third and final point. To a significant extent, we can control, or at least influence, the effects of pressure on our religious experience. In brief, we can give our faith direction. To ensure that the changes that comprise our religious development are constructive and positive, there are several things we should keep in mind.

The first is the fact that Christian faith at its

most authentic has always been progressive. The history of the church at its best is one of interaction with its socio-cultural environment in constructive and creative ways. The original, and originating, documents of Christianity emerged from the confrontation between Palestinian messianism and the Hellenistic world. Jesus expressed his message in the language and concepts of first-century Palestinian Judaism. But the New Testament is a collection of documents in the Greek language. It represents the attempt of Jesus' earliest followers to express the Good News within the social and cultural environment of the Hellenistic world.

People sometimes think of this process as one of simple translation, but it was much more complicated than that. There was transformation, too. And although this is often thought of as something negative, there were positive aspects as well. The familiar view is that the use of Greek language and concepts resulted in the Hellenization of Christianity. But there are also those who believe that it represents the Christianization of Hellenism. The early theologians of the East used Greek terms but they did so in distinctive ways and thereby created a new and profound conceptual framework.

Of course, not all change is progress. Certain transformations threaten the essence of faith. But the history of dogma reveals that over the centuries heresy has been the single most important stimulus to the growth of doctrine within the Christian church.

As we confront the most forceful external pressures on faith in our own intellectual environment, it will be helpful to develop a response to the ethic of belief that prevails today. According to this ethic, as we noticed earlier, any claim to knowledge should be directly proportional to the strength of the supporting evidence. A famous expression of this "rational ideal" appears in an essay entitled, "The Ethics of Belief," by W. K. Clifford, a 19th-century Englishman. "It is wrong," Clifford insists, "always, everywhere, and for anyone, to believe anything upon insufficient evidence."<sup>16</sup>

Clifford supports his thesis with a memorable illustration. He describes a ship owner who per-

suaded himself that a passenger vessel was seaworthy without examining her sufficiently before a voyage. Reluctant to pay for the ship to be overhauled, he assured himself that her past successes and the protection of divine Providence would insure her safety. Consequently, he watched her departure with a light heart, and collected his insurance money when she went down in mid-ocean.

Even though he sincerely believed that the ship was sound, Clifford asserts, the owner was “verily guilty of the death of those men,” because he had no right to his belief on the basis of the evidence before him. He acquired his belief, not by careful investigation, but by stifling his doubts. According to Clifford, we have no right to say “I know” without sufficient evidence. Otherwise, our “pleasure is . . . stolen in defiance of our duty to mankind.”<sup>17</sup> Clifford’s central point is clear: you are not entitled to beliefs that you can’t support. Responsible people believe nothing on insufficient evidence.

If this is the model of intellectual responsibility that critical thinking involves, then the task for believers who wish to be intellectually responsible seems clear. We need to accumulate evidence to support our religious beliefs. We need to construct proofs for things like the existence of God. But this is exactly where traditional attempts to bolster religious faith have run aground. Proving religious beliefs is notoriously difficult to do. For one thing, the evidence is always ambiguous. It is very difficult to show that the evidence for clearly outweighs the evidence against. For another, the “god” that proofs always seem to wind up with is a pale imitation of the real thing. People like Pascal insist that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is not the God of the philosophers.

In addition, the whole business of constructing arguments and proofs seems out of harmony with the experience of personal trust in God. In the thinking of many Christians, not only do proofs for God’s existence fail, but faith would be even worse off if they succeeded. Finally, the whole endeavor of accumulating evidence and constructing arguments is ineffective in producing personal conviction. At times, in fact, it seems

downright counterproductive. It leaves us less confident than ever of our beliefs. One religious apologist declared that his sense of truth was never so weak as when he had successfully vindicated it.<sup>18</sup>

Consequently, the best way to show that faith is intellectually responsible may not be to prove and argue for what we believe. A better way would be to show that discursive thinking is not an adequate model for the general process of belief. The experience of coming to belief is more subtle and complicated than the rational ideal implies. This ideal is attractive because it upholds the importance of intellectual responsibility and because it emphasizes the importance of evidence for knowledge, but as a practical account of belief it is inadequate. It overlooks the important role that nonrational factors inevitably and appropriately play in our knowledge.

A well-known account of this role appears in William James’s essay “The Will to Believe,” in which he responds to W. K. Clifford. As we have seen, Clifford insists that “it is wrong always, everywhere, and for anyone, to believe anything upon insufficient evidence.”<sup>19</sup> James admits that it is important to avoid falling into error. But he

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insists that we also have an equally important obligation to know the truth. As Roderick Chisholm observes, we could fulfill either obligation by itself quite easily, either by doubting everything or believing everything.<sup>20</sup> The trick is to balance the two. As James sees it, Clifford fails to do so. His ethics of belief protect us from error, but the price is too high. In certain situations it is preferable to run the risk of embracing error than to miss all chance at truth. According to James, “worse things than being duped may happen to a man in this world.”<sup>21</sup>

According to James, it is appropriate in special circumstances for us to let our “passional nature” influence belief when intellect alone leaves an

issue undecided.<sup>22</sup> This is true when the option before us exhibits three important characteristics. It must be living, momentous, and forced.<sup>23</sup> When these three conditions obtain, James argues, we are rationally justified in allowing our passionate nature to influence our beliefs.

James's observations have great significance for the relation between rational inquiry and

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Christian faith. Is religious belief intellectually responsible? Can thinking people believe in God? Not if you set the standard of reasonable belief too high. The history of Western philosophy is strewn with the wreckage of ill-fated attempts to construct arguments for the contents of faith that would satisfy an impossible standard of intellectual responsibility. A better approach is to expand the category of responsible belief. A reasonable belief is not necessarily rational in the narrow sense of the word. It is unrealistic to insist that we are only entitled to beliefs that we can fully establish to everyone's satisfaction by formally valid arguments on the basis of publicly accessible evidence.

**W**e can also help to give the progress of faith positive direction by paying careful attention to the "configuration of belief." This refers to the way in which we perceive and arrange the contents of faith, and it involves two somewhat contrasting activities. One is to differentiate between central and peripheral, or primary and secondary, aspects of our faith. The other is to affirm and appreciate the full scope of our religious tradition.

Faith under pressure is precarious to start with, but it is erroneously jeopardized by the view that every item of belief has exactly the same signifi-

cance. If everything we believe has exactly the same importance to us, we are in trouble. In that case, questions about any elements of belief undermine the entire body of faith. A threat to anything becomes a threat to everything. I once heard a mother argue against a minor change in a junior academy dress code on the grounds that it would destroy her daughter's confidence in the teachings of the church. If what she had been led to believe about sleeveless dresses was wrong, then how could she be sure of the other things her teachers told her? The existence of God, the divinity of Christ, the possibility of life after death—it could all be a mistake if this rule changed.

We need to make some distinctions about what we believe. People do not tear a house down if there is a leak in the roof, or junk the car just because it gets a flat tire. It is not necessary to abandon our faith because a question comes up here or there. But this is exactly what can happen unless we give careful thought to the configuration of our beliefs.

Not long ago the graduate of an Adventist university described some of his classmates who had been devoutly religious during their college days. Now they are in the professional world, practicing medicine and law, or pursuing careers in business, education, and so on. But they have given up religion entirely. According to his account, this change resulted from the questions that arose several years ago about the way Ellen White used sources in some of her writings. His classmates could not reconcile what they were hearing with what they had always believed, so they abandoned their religious heritage. Unless we can distinguish between what is central and what is peripheral to our faith, we are candidates for similar disillusionment.

On the other hand, knowing what is bedrock about what we believe can provide tremendous spiritual confidence. For several years a good friend of mine went through great difficulties. But during a recent visit he told me about a remarkable shift in his outlook. "Several months ago I was in terrible shape," he said. "Everything was bleak and depressing. I was angry at God. I blamed him for my problems. I wanted to know why he hadn't

treated me better. But recently," he continued, "everything has changed. I have gained new confidence in the basic, fundamental truths of Christianity. I am more certain than ever of God's love for me." His spiritual life turned a corner when he caught a new vision of what was absolutely basic to faith.

My friend's experience reminds me of what the apostle Paul said in summing up the course of his eventful life. In his last letter he exclaimed, "I know who it is in whom I have trusted, and am confident of his power. . . ." <sup>24</sup> Paul's ministry was difficult and his theology is complicated. But when he reached the point where he had to put it all together and face the end of his life, he did not recount the controversy over circumcision, or review his position on meat offered to idols. He talked about the indispensable significance of Christ, about Jesus and what he meant. He was clear and confident about the center of his faith.

While it helps us in dealing with the pressures on faith to differentiate between central and peripheral aspects of belief, it is also helpful to affirm the full range of our religious heritage. As we noted, it is important to identify the interrelations of our various beliefs, and to fit together the different parts of the theological system so the relative significance of each element is clearly perceptible. At the same time, we must not commit ourselves to a purely mechanical model of belief, or to the notion that our beliefs are so tightly connected that they have no degree of independence. Distinctions between center and periphery are helpful. But they should not lead us to adopt a rigid, foundationalist view of religion in which the entire edifice of religious experience stands or falls on the validity of certain basic affirmations. In the complexity of religious communities, different elements often take on a life of their own. They may operate in relative independence of each other. And, most important, their capacity to speak to us is not necessarily dependent on any one intellectual rationale for their existence.

The best example of what I have in mind is the fresh approach to the Sabbath many Seventh-day Adventists have taken in recent years—a development that may be traceable to a visit by Abra-

ham Joshua Heschel to the Claremont Adventist Church in the early 1960s and one that is reflected in a number of articles and books since that time. This revisionary perspective on the Sabbath, that emphasizes its potential as a resource for modern human beings, reveals that we can affirm a traditional element in Adventism in nontraditional ways and for reasons that may never have occurred to our denominational forebears. New data often make it necessary to revise traditional beliefs, but they can also give us new reasons for making time-honored affirmations.

Finally, to give religious experience a positive direction, we need to appreciate the role of nonrational factors in the experience of faith. This is true both of faith in the narrower sense of giving assent to certain affirmations and in the broader sense of religious experience generally. Faith is never the matter-of-fact result of an investigation, or the only logical conclusion to an argu-

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**Even though reason can contribute to faith in important ways, faith is never the product of rational inquiry. No matter how much evidence there is, in the last analysis people are always free to decide whether or not they will trust in God.**

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ment. So, even though reason can contribute to faith in important ways, faith is never the product of rational inquiry. No matter how much evidence there is, in the last analysis people are always free to decide whether or not they will trust in God. Faith can never be an automatic response to the right stimulus.

It is well known that very few people come to faith as the result of rational investigation. In contrast to logical exercises, the most influential factors in establishing faith are largely nonrational in nature. They include the subtle influences of other persons, emotions that accompany certain experiences, or vague impressions we are not fully aware of. As Jesus said, "The wind

blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes, or whither it goes; so it is with every one who is born of the Spirit.”<sup>25</sup> The origins of faith, or the precise manner of its arrival, are inscrutable.

If this raises the specter of intellectual irresponsibility, it is important to remember that there is an element of risk in every significant undertaking. We all have to make life’s major decisions with-

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**I suggest that we give believing somewhat less emphasis and, in our concept of what it means to be an Adventist, we give much greater emphasis to belonging.**

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out guarantees. And there is also an element of mystery in every important relationship, including our relationship with God. So it should not surprise us to discover an element of doubt in even the strongest religious experience.

It is also helpful to remember that satisfying answers to religious questions often come from action rather than reflection. The ultimate test of Christian faith is not intellectual but practical. It is not whether or not our beliefs make perfect rational sense, but whether or not we can live them, that really counts.

In an essay entitled, “Is Life Worth Living?” William James makes this illuminating statement: “Believe that life *is* worth living, and your belief will help create the fact.” There is a place for serious thinking in the Christian life, but reflection can only accomplish so much. The time comes when we must act. Careful investigation can show that faith is a reasonable choice, but it cannot prove that it is the right choice. Only the exercise of faith, the act of commitment itself, gives us the answer to this question.

Besides revitalizing the role of reason in relation to belief, it is also helpful to remember that belief is only a part of religious experience in its entirety. In the summer of 1988, during a study tour that a colleague and I regularly lead to the Middle East and southern Europe, I had a memorable conversation in Jerusalem with a Jewish rabbi who was also visiting Israel and who co-

pastors with his wife a thousand-member Conservative Jewish congregation in a large Midwestern city. His own religious orientation, he said, was Reconstructionist Judaism, which he described as more liberal theologically than Reformed Judaism and more conservative in practice and observance than Conservative Judaism. To say the least, I was intrigued with this combination, since I unreflectively assumed that theological and practical liberalism went together, as did theological and practical conservatism. For him, obviously, these did not exhaust the possibilities.

My interest in his insights deepened when we broached the topic of communicating a religious heritage to young people—a major challenge to adherents of every tradition, and one that I feel keenly as a college religion teacher and the father of two teen-age children. The rabbi indicated that he identifies a triad of elements in Judaism when he describes what it means to be a Jew, especially to an audience of young people. They are *believing, behaving, and belonging*. Participating in Judaism involves all three factors, but belonging takes priority. To be a Jew is to become a part of the Jewish community, to appropriate the community’s tradition as central to one’s self-understanding. On a secondary level, it involves observing the community’s forms of ritual and worship, and then, perhaps on a tertiary level, it involves believing—giving intellectual assent.

As he talked I could not help contrasting his description of these three elements in Judaism with the places I would instinctively assign them in Adventism. For Adventists, surely, believing traditionally occupies a position far ahead of any other element in our experience. To be an Adventist is first and foremost to affirm the truth of various propositions, or fundamental beliefs. Doctrinal orthodoxy occupies a place of paramount importance in our conception of religious experience. Behaving, in the sense of following various guidelines for diet, dress, and such things would no doubt be second. Traditionally, belonging would come in a distant third, if it figured in the picture at all.

And yet recently, when I asked one of my honors students in a world religion class about her



own religious situation, she described herself as “searching.” She said she did not have any particular problems with the doctrines of the Adventist church; that was not the area of her concern. What she sought was a community or a worship experience that met her needs on a personal level. Her concerns were clearly related to belonging rather than believing.

As a theologian, the last thing I would like to see is an attempt to downgrade the importance of belief. But there are other, complementary, aspects of religious experience that richly deserve our attention. I suggest that we give believing somewhat less emphasis and, in our concept of what it means to be an Adventist, we give much greater emphasis to belonging.

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## NOTES AND REFERENCES

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1. Tom Stoppard, *Jumpers* (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1972), p. 25.

2. By the way, in the following discussion I shall use the word *faith* in a very generous sense, as roughly synonymous with “religious experience.”

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5. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Section x, Part 1 (*The English Philosophers From Bacon to Mill*, p. 653).

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8. Michael J. Buckley, *At the Origins of Modern Atheism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 28.

9. 2 Peter 1:5-7, RSV.

10. Philippians 1:9, RSV.

11. Colossians 1:9, 10, RSV.

12. Hebrews 5:11-13; 6:1, RSV.

13. 1 Corinthians 3:1, 2, RSV.

14. Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Writers and Editors* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1946), p. 33.

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16. William Kingdom Clifford, “The Ethics of Belief,” in *Lectures and Essays*, Leslie Stephen and Frederick Pollock, ed. (Vol. 2, p. 186; London: Macmillan and Co., 1879).

17. *Ibid.*, p. 184.

18. Austin Farrar, *Faith and Speculation* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1967), p. 156.

19. W. K. Clifford, “The Ethics of Belief,” p. 186.

20. *Theory of Knowledge* (2d ed.; Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1977), p. 15.

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22. In James's words, “not only as a matter of fact do we find our passional nature influencing us in our opinions, but . . . there are some options between opinions in which this influence must be regarded both as an inevitable and as a lawful determinant of our choice” (*Ibid.*). This is the thesis of his essay: “Our passional nature not only lawfully may, but must, decide an option between propositions, whenever it is a genuine option that cannot by its nature be decided on intellectual grounds” (*Ibid.*, p. 11).

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 4.

24. 2 Timothy 1:12, NEB.

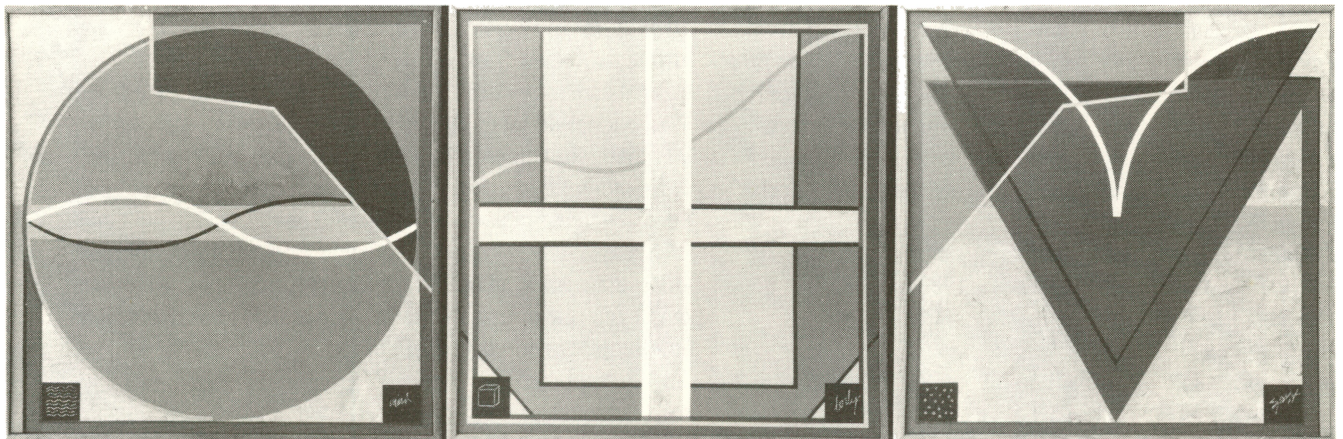
25. John 3:8, RSV.

# To the Power of Three: “Trinity”

## A Triptych by Thomas Morphis

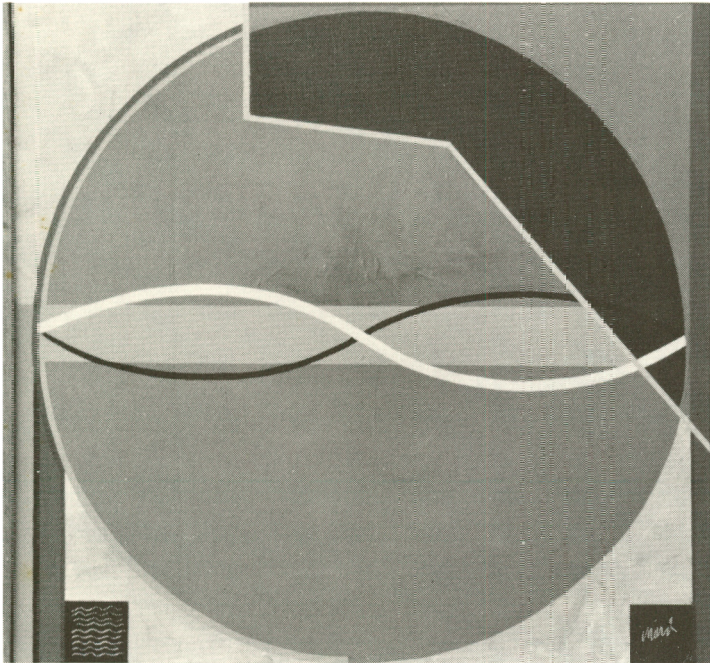
This piece of art is based on the idea that all Creation reflects the nature of the Creator. God’s tripartite existence is mirrored by the three-part character of the most basic elements of existence on this earth: the division of matter into solid, liquid, or gas; the recognition of humankind as mind, body, and spirit; the origination of all colors from varying combinations of three primary colors—red, yellow, and blue; and the composition of all shapes from variations on the circle, square, or triangle.

All of these aspects can be correlated to the three members of the Trinity. The Father is represented by a circle and the figure-eight shape—symbols for eternity and infinity. The Son is represented by a cross; and the Holy Ghost is symbolized by a wing-like shape. The artwork itself, in its triptych format, reflects the Trinity. Its three panels, each artistically complete, fit together to form a larger integrated and unified whole.



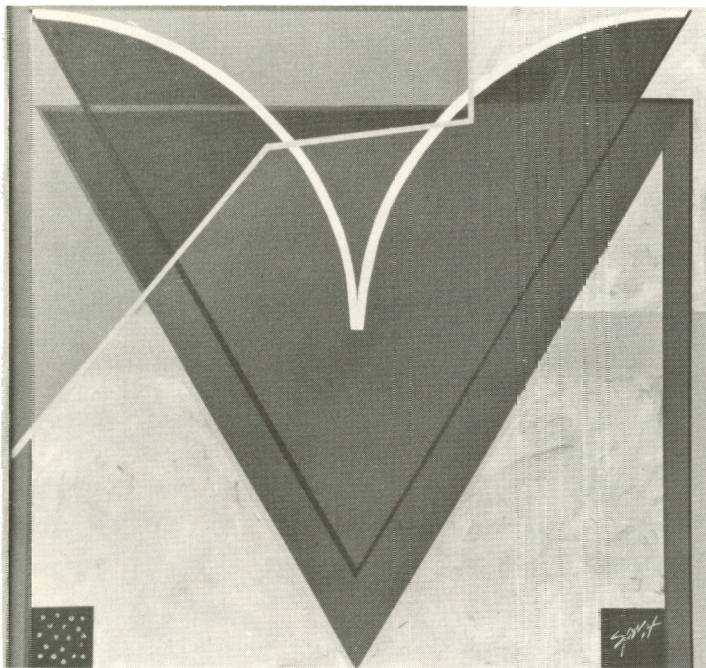
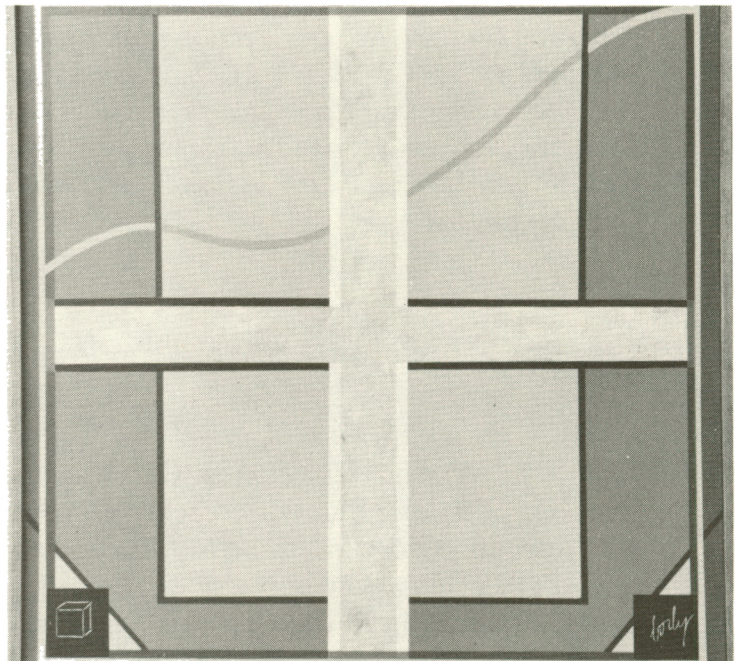
*“Before we look for our image of the Trinity in that wisdom whereby the mind contemplates things eternal, we have to consider the likeness which may be traced in our knowledge of the temporal.”*

— St. Augustine



*"The Father glorifies the Son through his resurrection and exaltation."*

*"The Son glorifies the Father through his obedience."*



*"The Spirit glorifies the Son and the Father in creation."*

Thomas Morphis is an assistant professor of art at Pacific Union College in Angwin, California, and is director of the college's Rasmussen Art Gallery. He received his Master of Fine Arts degree from Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan.

Morphis has had eight one-man exhibitions in the past eight years. He received two awards in 1989: a Purchase Award at the Religious Art Exhibition in Sacramento, California, and the George Cooke Memorial Award for Excellence in Composition at the Spring Art Exhibition in St. Helena, California.

His works are in many public, private, and corporate collections in California, Oregon, Washington, Texas, New Mexico, and Illinois.

All quotes on this page from Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*. All photos by C. Tom Turner.

## Adventist Town Meeting on Jewelry, Abortion, and Creation

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Some topics we feature in *Spectrum* generate passionate and informed responses. During the past few months we have published essays on abortion (Vol. 19, No. 4), Creation (Vol. 20, No. 1), and jewelry (Vol. 20, No. 2). Since then, readers have sent us long letters and short essays. As we have occasionally done before, we here publish several of these edited responses as a readers' symposium.

— The Editors

### Jewelry

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I read with interest Gary Land's article in your recent *Spectrum* on "Adventists in Plain Dress." My great-great-grandfather, Jonah Lewis, was one of the original 10 families in Battle Creek, in fact lived next door to the Whites. I have photographs of him and his wife, their children, grandchildren, et cetera, all church members, and many with jewelry. I am enclosing copies of the ones that come readily to hand.

The first is the wedding picture of Jonah's youngest son, Thomas Ogden Lewis, called Od, when he married Letta Sterling in 1886. Definitely a chunky necklace. She wrote for the *Little Friend* for many years, and told of meeting Od, who sang in the choir and lived next door to the Whites.

Jonah's youngest son, Theodore Bogardus Lewis, was my great-grandfather. When a young man, he worked for J. P. Kellogg's broom factory, and later had his own. He was a custodian for the Dime Tabernacle for many years,

and we have his diaries, one in 1864, the year he married, and then 1880 through 1923, when he died.

The second is a childhood picture of his oldest daughter, Nellie Gertrude Lewis. The third picture is of one of his two baby daughters, Carrie Eunice, who died. The picture was taken in about 1870. A necklace with a pendant of some kind.

The fourth picture is of Nellie, who married Oscar Beuchel, manager of the Sanitarium Laundry for years. This was taken before she married, I believe, in about 1883.

My mother, Eleanor Lewis Bossert, graduated from the eighth grade at Battle Creek



Wedding portrait, Thomas Ogden Lewis and Letta Sterling Lewis, 1886.

Academy in 1919, and she has a beaded chain on in the pictures [not shown] taken at the farm. She can't remember if she wore the chain to graduation, but it is there in the pictures.

Also, Jonah Lewis's diaries mention riding bicycles all over—sometimes taking the train back if it was too far—recording how far they rode, and how long it took them, et cetera. And they [the bicycles] couldn't have cost as much as all that, because Theodore made my grandfather one from parts or something.

My personal belief, after reading how much fun they had, how far they rode, and how often they went out, is that perhaps bicycling wasn't "sinful" per se, but the time spent was the considering factor. Time they could have spent in church? Or they enjoyed it too much?

Lila Jo Peck  
Marshall, Michigan

### *Tasteful Jewelry*

**H**urrah for the photos of Ellen G. White in the last issue of *Spectrum* evidencing that she felt more comfortable



*Nellie Gertrude Lewis, circa 1883. She later married Oscar Beuchel, manager of the Battle Creek Sanitarium Laundry.*



*Left: Nellie Gertrude Lewis; right: Carrie Eunice Lewis, circa 1870.*

with jewelry than most Adventist church leaders today.

On more than one occasion I was asked to remove my wedding ring when playing the church organ, or was taken as an "outsider" when meeting a new minister and yet I was one of those church members who went about "doing good."

Tasteful and simple jewelry does not need to be costly and yet adds to the overall attractiveness of an ensemble. There is no need today to invest extravagantly in gold and precious stones as in the 1800s.

Perhaps the unpretentious attitude of my former boss, Barbara Bush, who proudly wears fake pearls, does not color her grey hair, and repeats her wardrobe on state occasions, will be a real example of what elegant and feminine simplicity is all about.

Best regards to AAF from Mexico.

Virginia Murray Mendoza  
Guadalajara, Mexico

### *The Double Standard*

**I** will remember my confusion as a new Adventist to find the pearl cuff links of my pastor being most acceptable, while the same attached to a woman's dress was a "no-no."

While at the seminary, I quietly discarded all my cuff links (even the one with a watch on it!) in aggravation that it discriminated against women.

I commend you for the sense and balance in the four articles on "Jewelry." I only wish they could have appeared in the *Review*. Would that they were reprinted in pamphlet form for the church at large to read.

Thank you for your continued nurture ministry.

Dr. Charles Mitchell  
Palm Springs, California

### *Cocaine and Pearls*

It was with a heavy heart that I concluded perusing the December 1989 issue of *Spectrum*. It would appear that basically you are saying that it is OK to wear jewelry and that we should abandon our traditional stand against it.

Gary Land writes, "It appears that Seventh-day Adventists have inherited, particularly through Ellen G. White, a 'plain tradition' rooted in earlier Christian movements." The fact of the matter is that the Lord, through the Holy Spirit, revealed to us what should be our stand on this issue.

In the article by Charles Scriven I find these questions: "Can a pearl be intrinsically evil? Can a vein of gold?" I ask, "Can cocaine be intrinsically evil?" It is an excellent anesthetic that ENT specialists use regularly. "Can nicotine be intrinsically evil?" It makes an excellent insecticide. It is the misuse of these things that makes them evil.

And then there was the article by Madelyn Jones-Haldeman. In my opinion this was a hodgepodge of misapplication of principles and misinterpretation of the Scriptures. Simply because we do not promote the lack of adornment in our homes, cars, or property does not mean we should throw in the sponge. Rather, what we need to have is a reformation that includes, among other things, instruction in simplicity in every phase of our lives because we love Jesus and want to see his work completed.

I challenge the editors of *Spectrum* to print the instruction on this subject given to the

church by the Holy Spirit through Ellen G. White. This is found in *Evangelism*, pages 269-273.

Donald Casebolt  
Farmington, New Mexico

### *Fellowship vs. Jewelry?*

Recently we had a non-Adventist couple with several children who came faithfully to our church for several years. In spite of the wife's jewelry, our church welcomed them to take active parts in Sabbath school, and Home and School; and we were glad to have their children in our church school. They became one of our church's most active and admired families. Then they moved away, and within one year had stopped all activity with the Adventist church. Why? Their children kept coming home from their new church school telling their mom that their classmates said she would never go to heaven because she wore earrings.

Some people who wear jewelry may not make it to heaven. But I don't want to be put in the place of their judge. That's God's place. My part is to welcome them with open arms and not criticize anyone who wants to join with me in worship of a loving and fair God.

Jackie Hamilton  
Cumming, Georgia

### *Abortion*

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Of all the articles in the "Abortion" issue of *Spectrum* magazine, I found Michael Pearson's to be the most disturbing.

I can most clearly identify with the first illustration that he gave of the student "without much prospect of support" who opted for abortion. I too had an abortion at the age of 18, when I found myself unexpectedly pregnant. I thought the easy way out was not to consult my

parents—or anyone else—and obtain a suction abortion. I continued on a destructive path of promiscuity and broken relationships until, 10 years later, a religious renewal led me to reexamine the source of my problems. I questioned the abortion decision I had made years ago. After the facts became clear, I realized what I had destroyed was, in fact, a child. Months of remorse and grief followed. I began to recover from anger and frustration by seeking avenues to prevent this tragedy from occurring in the lives of others.

I first became a volunteer counselor at the Crisis Pregnancy Center in Richmond, Virginia and then organized and became president of “Women Exploited By Abortion—Virginia,” which is affiliated with the National Right To Life of Washington, D.C. I’ve testified before the Virginia State Senate, conducted frequent workshops and appeared on numerous TV talk shows including “The Pastor’s Study” with Dr. Jerry Falwell.

One point that may particularly interest you is that my religious renewal took place within a Seventh-day Adventist church. I was a zealous new baby Christian and was baffled by the general lukewarmness within the church. No one seemed to care much about the abortion issue that was stirring up the “religious right.” So I positioned myself with the church leaders whom I trusted and labeled myself “pro-choice.” However, when my best friend, Patti McKinney, came to my church with some slides of what a 10-week fetus looks like, the facts suddenly collided with what I had been led to believe. The picture of a tiny fetus with its tapering fingers and toes (photographed incidentally, by a Seventh-day Adventist) was enough to cause me to wonder if this might in fact be a human being. My realization that this little being not only looked human, but also functioned like a person, with brain waves, heartbeat, and reaction to stimuli, together with my new-found faith in a God who created all humans with a purpose, left me no room for doubt. Even with the difficult personal and social situation I had been in, my abortion was taking the life of my innocent child. It had been

wrong, yes, even sin.

As weighty as that realization was, there was an element of relief. Finally, there was no more confusion. I knew that what I had done was not pleasing to God and had caused a rift of separation between us. But then, the Good News of the gospel manifested itself in a way more real than I’d ever imagined. Out of the pit that David spoke of, I found that my Saviour had died to make a way for my acceptance unto his kingdom. What amazing grace! For the past eight years, along with raising two small daughters and working a 40-hour week as an x-ray

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**Since we do not “receive” a soul,  
but rather we “are” a soul,  
whatever is sacred about us is  
always with us from the moment  
we exist until we die. . . . We, having  
souls (however mortal) that can be  
saved, are of inestimable value to  
our Lord who died to save us.**

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technologist, I have been active in supporting post-abortion women through W.E.B.A.

My husband and I also left the SDA church. We had been active in children’s ministry, music, and literature evangelism. But we could not continue to fellowship with a church that cared more about wearing a wedding band than aborting babies. We also began to realize that the presence of the Holy Spirit was severely lacking in our worship experience and that this accounted for both a lack of conviction about the abortion issue and positive action in helping women in crisis pregnancies.

I am shamed and disheartened, Dr. Pearson, to hear of your wife’s postnatal depression. Where were the “caring” brothers and sisters of the church? My family now associates with a group of believers whose mission is to minister to one another in ways I *never* found in the Seventh-day Adventist church. In “desperate” situations, we are called to surround one another with confident prayer for deliverance, from a God who is faithful to do just that! I

have found that it is a Spirit-filled church's job to impart God's strength by being his vessels during such situations—none of which is too “desperate” for him.

You also made a theological point about the Adventist doctrine of death. Many pro-choice advocates use the argument that we can't be sure when a developing fetus becomes a human or “a living soul.” Therefore, it is acceptable to abort in the interim—assuming that no one knows exactly when this occurs. I am sure, however, that Adventists *do* believe that humans are endowed with a soul—albeit not an

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**I can only say that I have met hundreds of handicapped children (my firstborn is one of them) who were blessings to others in mystical ways that the casual observer can never know.**

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inherently immortal one—and that is what differentiates us from the lower forms of life. This leads me to the opposite conclusion from those who are pro-choice. Since we do not “receive” a soul, but rather we “are” a soul, whatever is sacred about us is always with us from the moment we exist until we die. This does not diminish my respect for life; instead, it enhances it and makes life less expendable. We, having souls (however mortal) that can be saved, are of inestimable value to our Lord who died to save us.

The most distressing of all your assertions, Dr. Pearson, was your comment that the handicapped child who “moaned” and “jerked” during church should not have been born. First of all, no one—including physicians—can predict such things. Also, we cannot know all the ramifications of the life and death of a less-than-perfect child. I was born with severe deformities of the hands, but learned how to play the piano and sing to God's glory. I see beyond the obvious tragic birth of this child to a “haggard couple” who were not being ministered to by the Body of Christ, but were given impatient glances because their child disturbed the serv-

ice. This is *deplorable!* I pray with all my heart that this couple eventually found the Christian love and support they so deserve.

As to whether the child should have been born, I can only say that I have met hundreds of handicapped children (my firstborn is one of them) who were blessings to others in mystical ways that the casual observer can never know. This is to say nothing of how we grow as individuals when we step outside ourselves to serve the helpless who cannot return service. I am reminded of Mother Teresa who devotes her life to serving those who can never repay. It brings out the very best in us when we act in this way.

Let me close by saying that in my counseling experience, although I am totally convicted of my own pro-life position, I do not tell a woman or couple what to do. Interestingly enough, given all the facts *and* sufficient support, the majority choose to carry their babies to term. Most who abort do so not by “choice” but from the lack of choices. After that choice is made, it is my duty and privilege to stand by them and to impart God's unconditional love without judgment. He takes care of the outcome. But it is very gratifying to find that once women and couples find that we are willing to love sacrificially, many find enough hope and enough love to make the decision to give their children life.

Candace Banks  
Richmond, Virginia

### *Redefining the Topic*

**A**nother phone call from a “Right to Life” group, this time regarding their screening of the film “The Silent Scream,” and once again I am thrown into a mental quandary over the issue of abortion. My gut feeling disturbs me. Why do I cringe when I hear the slogans—read of the films, lectures, walks—being conducted by the right-to-life people? Am I, inwardly, a “baby killer,” condoning mass murder of innocents, believing that the quickest way to solve the problem of unwanted birth is the best, even if, in all its



graphic detail, it is merciless, even grotesque?

But no, there is something else that disturbs me about this whole “right to life” emphasis. It is the focus, the attempt to stop action by piously inflicting guilt, which I find disquieting. Who has the authority to decide which individuals in today’s society are deserving of an added dosage of guilt? Whose job is it to ladle out shame?

It is not as if all of those who have had abortions need someone from the outside to prompt the feelings of remorse, despair, and helplessness. As a pastor’s wife, I am well acquainted with several women who have had abortions—women whom you would never select out of an average congregation as having aborted a child, women who attend church, struggle with their Christianity, live with the throbbing realization through darkened nights that they, at a time when alternatives narrowed and closed in on them menacingly, took the very life that drew its sustenance from their body. Are these women who need to be told, reminded? These women would do anything to abort from their minds, their spirits, the memory of the desperation that led to the killing of a very part of themselves.

So—where does that leave us? Do we just drop the whole issue of abortion, remaining mum whenever the word is mentioned?

We should start, I believe, by redefining the topic. The topic, in my mind, is not abortion. By making that the topic we limit ourselves to talking about morality versus immorality, medical definitions of life, saline solutions, and small vacuums. The topic, at its essence, is unwanted pregnancy, the seizing panic of a young girl heaving in the high school lavatory, the tightening fear of another mouth to feed.

Seen in this light, we can talk about alternatives. And the primary one, glossed over lightly in the majority of opinion pieces, new documentaries, and commentaries, is adoption. At a camp meeting recently I was shocked to hear a “family life” speaker insist that children who do not bond with their parents within the first five minutes of birth will never be able to experience a quality relationship with them.

When I raised the issue of adoptive children, I was told: “As far as adoption is concerned, don’t. . . . Unless, of course, you have to.” Not satisfied with the response, I pursued the point with the speaker after the close of the meeting. He recited a horror story about an adopted child he knew, inferring that adoptive children might come with “defective genes.”

Such misinformation about inability of infants to bond can cause young women to mistakenly fear adoption—women who find themselves in the unfortunate situation of being pregnant and unable to support a child emotionally, financially, or for whatever reason. Potential adoptive couples may back down, fearing genetically defective children.

A blatant letter which appeared in “Dear Abby” expresses the viewpoint which puts to rest this idea of “defective genes.” It reads as follows:

*Dear Abby:*

*The vasectomized husband of “Loves Children,” who refused to adopt because he was afraid of “bad genes,” is using that as a cop-out.*

*We have three children. The first two were adopted, and the third natural child—an unexpected “surprise” after 17 years of marriage!*

*Our two adopted children are grown now and caused us very few problems.*

*The child of our flesh and blood is a high school dropout, has been busted twice for drugs, has had three automobile accidents, been fired from two jobs, and quit three because two were “too dirty,” and the other one was on Sunday.*

*Now he lies in bed until 2 p.m. and watches TV all night. I am going to kick him out as soon as he is 19.*

*All for Adoption in Virginia*

Fern Ringering, director of Adventist Adoption and Family Services in Portland, Oregon, says: “I have talked to thousands of adoptive families, and the idea that an adopted child can never have as close a relationship to an adoptive parent as to a birth parent would be dis-

credited by the majority, I am sure.”

With all of our money, time, and energy being channeled into “combating abortion,” few, it seems, have time to talk about the option of adoption, a living parable of our relationship to the Father. “But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” (Galatians 4:4, 5, NKJV).

Sandra Doran  
Bridgeport, Connecticut

### *A Working Definition of Life*

A life within a life

One life becoming two lives.  
The stirring that is me, but not me,  
Self and other both.  
Wonder.

Paradox.

Mystery.

Am I me? Am I we?  
What holy confusion!

I wonder if woman, life-bearing woman, has ever been considered as a source for the definition of life? Science analyzes her. Psychology ignores her. Theology instructs her. Literature praises her. Art adulates her form. Philosophy puzzles about her. Who listens to her? Who credits her with being a responsible source of information about life, the life she bears?

In the abortion dilemma, it seems that the drive to define life does not emerge for its own sake, but rather for the sake of creating the context, or evidence, for sanctity or sacredness of life. How can we declare it sacred if we don't know what “it” is? People who are trying to create policies about abortion need at least a working definition of life. A working definition thus becomes one of those things that profoundly affects life—sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse.

I offer woman, life-bearing woman, as a primary source for the working definition of life that is used by those who feel compelled to

write abortion policies. Woman is a primary source for a profoundly rich definition of life. It is she who can show us that life is more sacred than theories or propositions have ever described. She can tell us, like no branch of science or humanities can, that life comes from God and leads to God.

Woman, the bearer of life, that I am referring to, is the wisdom/experience of womanhood. She is two. Just as man is two. She is woman glorious; she is also woman infamous. The voice of every woman echoes woman glorious. The voice of every woman also, tragically, echoes woman infamous. The voice of

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**Listening to woman, the bearer of life, can lead us to understand the tragedy of abortion more in terms of suicide than homicide.**

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every woman is an echo of both. None is only either. Every woman is both woman glorious and woman infamous.

Every pregnant woman (on some level, and to some degree) senses that life is God's doing and that it comes from God and leads to God. She also knows this “holy confusion” she experiences is both her self and not her self. “I” means “we” to her as often as “I” means “me.” When “I” means we, the death of the other is death of her self. That makes abortion a matter of suicide.

We hear a lot about abortion as murder. But what if it's suicide? How does—or should—the church respond to suicide, epidemic proportions of suicide? Shall we try to determine whether the suicides are legal? Shall we refuse to allow them in Adventist institutions? Listening to woman, the bearer of life, can lead us to understand the tragedy of abortion more in terms of suicide than homicide. If we, as a church, set about “dealing with” an epidemic of suicide, I wonder if our primary concern would be preparing a policy to forbid or control it?

I believe we, as an Adventist community,

can come up with a concrete, specific, redemptive response if we will apply ourselves as much to that purpose as we do to policy-making.

Diane Forsyth  
Loma Linda, California

Diane Forsyth, an associate pastor of the Loma Linda University Church, is writing an expanded version of this piece for the book: *Feminine Dimensions of Adventist Belief*, edited by Dr. Lourdes Morales Gudmundsson, a professor at the University of Connecticut at Stamford.

## Creation

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In your Volume 20, Number 1 issue you have an article written by Dr. Fritz Guy entitled "Negotiating the Creation-Evolution Wars," which intrigues me more than anything else in that particular issue. I am submitting my reaction to it.

Dr. Guy describes five main responses exhibited by Christians in dealing with this problem. While reading this scholarly article I could not avoid reflecting on the fact that Adventist intellectuals are slowly drifting away from a literal reading of Genesis. In his description of the first approach he states that for Adventists to ignore the findings of geology would be a symptom of "intellectual schizophrenia," since we do accept the findings of scientific research in the field of medicine. I personally think that his mistake is based on the fact that he is trying to "put together Genesis and geology," which is equivalent to attempting to mix oil and water.

Guy makes reference to four basic questions related to the origin dilemma: Who? Why? When? and How? The basic question that we need to answer *a priori* is Who? Our answer to this fundamental question will determine everything that follows. It will become the cornerstone of the entire logical edifice. We have only two choices at our disposal: God or chance. There is no third alternative.

*Logical Consequences of Choosing Chance.* Since Darwin, intellectuals have been opting

for chance as their basic postulate or axiom. Let us briefly analyze the evolutionists' basic premise. If chance is, in effect, responsible for what exists, then it follows that even our thinking is the result of chance. My thoughts, and your thoughts, and the thoughts of all research scientists, are the result of chance. If that is the case, then why should I trust anybody else's conclusions more than mine? Any attempt at dialogue becomes fruitless. As we can see, geology is impossible under the evolutionary umbrella, since the end results of geological research must, of course, be the result of chance.

In addition, we need to consider that evolution contradicts one of the basic scientific laws. The second law of thermodynamics states that, in a closed system, order will decrease with time. Evolution's survival of the fittest or natural selection affirms exactly the opposite. Evolution has been desperately searching for the missing link between primates and man without acknowledging the awesome fact that

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**Evolution, as far as I am concerned, is totally bankrupt, unable to produce solid scientific data to support its crumbling theory . . . or to explain the incredibly numerous mechanisms of nature designed to preserve life on planet Earth.**

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in order to establish their theory on solid scientific data they have to produce billions of missing links between diverse life forms. What has their research produced? The fossil record shows that as far as we can dig, cats have been cats, and dogs, dogs. This is why scientists are now talking about punctuated evolution where gaps are bridged all of a sudden. What else can they say in the absence of countless missing links between species? Evolution, as far as I am concerned, is totally bankrupt, unable to produce solid scientific data to support its crumbling theory, unable to explain the complexity of the genetic code, bisexual reproduction, the

incredible immune system, and the incredibly numerous mechanisms of nature designed to preserve life on planet Earth. If chance can produce order and design, then we had better admit that we are not dealing with blind chance but with supernatural intelligence capable of counteracting the inexorable and fatal workings of the second law of thermodynamics, which slowly but surely creates disorder and chaos.

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**The supernatural manifestations of the divine activity will not yield themselves to scientific verification. You do not expect a scientist to explain the resurrection of Lazarus, or . . . any of the numerous instances of divine intervention recorded throughout the pages of sacred history.**

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*Logical Consequences of Choosing God.* If, on the other hand, our basic response to the first question is God, then we make room for both science and geology. The supernatural manifestations of the divine activity will not yield themselves to scientific verification. You do not expect a scientist to explain the resurrection of Lazarus, or the turning of water into wine, or any of the numerous instances of divine intervention recorded throughout the pages of sacred history. A Christian scientist will be wise to keep clear in his mind the chasm that exists between the natural and the supernatural. He will continue to pray for divine guidance, realizing that, naturally speaking, prayer is scientifically an impossibility.

*The "When" Question.* Regarding the "When" question, I do not think geology is equipped to deal with it in an effective way. We know nothing of the process utilized by God when creating this earth and shaping it for human habitation. Neither is theology prepared to give a reliable answer to said question for many reasons. There is no direct reference

in the biblical record to the age of the earth. Biblical chronology is full of gaps; it does not contain an exhaustive list of individuals. The Bible was intended to provide a practical guide to repentant sinners in search for forgiveness and hope in the middle of loss and despair. The first chapters of Genesis represent an ode to Creation, and like the book of Job, are literary works of art. They cannot be taken literally in every detail.

*The "How" Question.* Both geology and theology are least equipped to deal with the "How" question. Asking geology to explain this would be equivalent to calling a scientist to explain how Jesus managed to turn water into wine, or how he succeeded in bringing Lazarus back to life. Those were supernatural events akin to Creation and totally unexplainable in the natural realm. The Bible was never designed to be a scientific description of God's supernatural interventions in human affairs.

If we start with God, we end with God. If we start with chance, we end with meaningless chance, which makes dialogue devoid of any significance.

Nic Samojluk  
Loma Linda, California

### *Testing the Beliefs*

**D**r. Guy made much mention of science. It may be presumptuous for a lawyer to write on science, but there are advantages in viewing a subject from outside.

In this case I see that the word "science" and its derivatives are complements. Its opposites, such as "unscientific," are criticisms. This fact has some natural consequences. Those who wish to boost their opinions call them scientific, while calling those who disagree with them unscientific. As a result, we have a Church of Religious Science, a Church of Scientology, and a Christian Science church. Just to show that I can look at the opposite side of thought, when I was young I heard much of Marxian scientific socialism, so called, no

doubt, to distinguish it from the unscientific socialism of others.

These people are obviously not using the term “science” in the same way as most people do. There are many meanings to the term. Let me take up two of them. Science is:

1. A method of thought whereby every idea is tested as rigorously as possible and only tentatively accepted until further means of testing are available.

2. An organized philosophy, usually materialistic in its assumptions.

I personally prefer the first of these two definitions. But I know people to whom the idea of testing their beliefs seems to be entirely foreign. Some are in the church; there are plenty outside of religion.

Dating systems can be tested. The method is simple. If there are two methods that can be applied to a given sample, perform them both and ask if they agree. More than that, there are tests that can be applied to the age of the earth as a whole. One of them once used as a method of figuring the age of the earth is the “salt” method. The amount of salt in the oceans can be measured, and so can the amount entering them from rivers. By dividing the annual addition to the salt in the oceans into the total there we get an age of 50 million years. This is about one percent of the generally accepted age of the earth.

Another test of the earth’s age is the slowing of the rotation of the earth on its axis. Because of tidal friction its rotation is slowing. As the change is very small we don’t notice it, although the Naval Observatory in Washington, D. C. occasionally sends word out that we need to adjust our clocks by a second that has accumulated. The earth rotated faster in former times, and in a mere fraction of the five billion years that is given as its age it would have rotated so fast that the equator would have been moving faster than the “escape velocity” required to leave the earth.

I am all for testing our beliefs. They can stand honest examination. If not, it is time we found it out. One statement I have very much liked in the writings of Ellen White is found in

*Steps to Christ*, at the beginning of the chapter entitled, “What to Do With Doubt.” It is that “God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence on which to base our faith.” Further, this evidence “appeals to our reason.”

Kenneth H. Hopp  
Yucaipa, California

### *Can an Adventist Believe in Evolution?*

As a chemist, the issues of *Spectrum* that discuss creationism have interested me as far back as I can remember. The latest was no exception.

Fritz Guy’s clarification of five approaches to the “Creation-Evolution Wars” was helpful. It appeared that Guy’s sympathies lie with what he terms “dimensionalism,” as do mine. He alluded to the challenges of that position, however. These include having to rethink the Sabbath, Adam and Eve, and the relation of death to sin. He might have added the nature of man, eschatology (Is our world getting better or worse?), and biblical and Ellen G. White inspiration.

These challenges appear so insurmountable that in a May 19, 1988, editorial in the *Adventist Review*, William Johnson flatly stated that “evolution isn’t an option for Adventists.” Thus, while Guy reaffirmed the possibility of believing in both Creation and evolution, he didn’t address the possibility of being an Adventist and accepting the evolutionary model.

Assuming that Fritz Guy—a trained theologian—has already struggled with these issues and finds dimensionalism to be consistent with Adventism, I hope that in the near future he might address this question in *Spectrum* for the benefit of us laypeople by discussing the implications of an evolutionary interpretation of Genesis for Adventist theology. Perhaps in the interim he would be kind enough to supply a bibliography of readable books discussing these issues.

Robert T. Johnston  
Lake Jackson, Texas

### *A Point of Clarification*

I enjoyed the five approaches to an understanding of the first two chapters of Genesis as outlined and discussed by Fritz Guy in “Negotiating the Creation-Evolution Wars” (Vol. 20, No. 1).

I feel constrained, however, to take issue with his contention that “biochemistry and neurophysiology,” which sciences undergird Adventist study and practice of medicine, obligate us to accept “geology and paleontology” as equally contributing to an understanding of the topic of origins. He goes on to say that “a commitment to medical science means that an understanding of Creation and earth history must take advantage of the earth sciences; otherwise there is intellectual schizophrenia.” Unfortunately, geology and paleontology are not experimental sciences in the same sense as are biochemistry and neurophysiology.

It should be a source of satisfaction to all of us that Loma Linda School of Medicine is willing to remain “schizophrenic” in its insistence on using the experimental sciences as a basis for clinical and instructional functions.

Neil W. Rowland  
Lincoln, Nebraska

### *To Be Human Is to Be Spiritual*

I enjoyed reading the October issue of *Spectrum*. The Creation/evolution articles were enlightened, dealing as they did with two clashing world views: 19th-century (static universe, young fossils) versus 20th-century (expanding universe, ancient fossils). Those who struggle thus could do worse for company. At first, even Albert Einstein couldn't accept the conclusion—that the universe was expanding—required by his own equations. He went so far as to introduce a spurious “term” into his equations to keep the galaxies fixed forever in their places. After Hubble's experiments using the 200-inch telescope at Mt. Palomar proved the earlier Einstein correct, Albert opined that his failure to

accept this implication of his own theory was the “worst mistake” of his life!

In addition to the “world view” struggle, Delmer Johnson and Fritz Guy grappled with the thornier issue of the spiritual import of the clash. Johnson has Pastor Ralph remarking, “If the universe is going to end in such a way that life as we know it cannot survive, it becomes difficult to believe in eternal life”—cleverly exposing this pastor's *literal-but-not-spiritual* understanding of eternal life. I got a tickle out of that one.

A certain attitude prevails in the Adventist and other churches which are literalistic in interpreting the Bible. This attitude presupposes that anyone who holds the 20th-century world view is a “secular humanist,” a prodigal son, or a lost sheep or coin. My observations tell me that there are few, if any, truly secular people around. To be human is to be spiritual. To the extent that one is human, one is spiritual. And to be fully human is to be fully spiritual. This is the reason “secular humanist” is a contradiction in terms.

In “Negotiating the Creation-Evolution Wars,” Fritz Guy instructs us: “Genesis is saying that God is the source of everything. Everything is created by God and dependent on God. What God creates is real and good, so nothing is intrinsically evil. This is not ‘scientific’; it is far more important than science.” If Adventist writers want to communicate with those non-Adventists who are thoughtful, who are educated, and who take the 20th-century world view seriously, they would be well informed to do so according to the example of this rare illumination.

Max Phillips  
Sunnyvale, California

### *Ready for a Rehearing on Gentry's Halos*

The review of Gentry's book appearing in Volume 20, Number 1, presented such a different physical explanation and impression than mine, that I would

like to add a different perspective. At the outset, I should state that my first acquaintance with Gentry's work left a very negative impression because an attempted explanation came from a well-known evangelist who only confused me along with the other scientists present. I was then a doctoral student in physics at the University of Toronto in Canada. After reading Gentry's book, however, and seeing comments on his work in open scientific journals, where some evolutionists admit that he presents a really puzzling scientific case for Creation, I have a more open mind on the subject.

The reason why alpha particles develop halos, which electrons do not, is that heavy charged particles demonstrate a phenomenon known as the Bragg Peak, which is not demonstrated by light particles. The alpha particle is more than 7,000 times heavier than the electron, and has twice the electric charge of the opposite sign. This Bragg Peak results from a rapid loss of energy toward the end of the particle's path. Therefore, if a single alpha particle of sufficient energy were released at a point on the surface of a sheet of photographic film, a light linear smear with a dense spot toward the end of its path would be seen on the developed film. When several alpha particles are emitted in all directions from the same source, therefore, the dense spots would form a ring. Hence the halos.

The point Gentry is making, as I understand it, is that there had to be very rapid cooling of the granite from the liquid to the solid state to maintain the integrity of these rings so sharply.

Had the cooling taken place over very long periods of time as normally postulated, the rings should have lost their shape and appear as irregular smears in the rock.

I do not know enough about these halos to say if Gentry is correct, but, having read the book myself, I do not share the views of the reviewers and would prefer to wait and see the final reaction to his work by the secular scientific community, who do not seem to have ready explanations, at present, to fit their evolutionary models.

E. Theo Agard, Ph.D.  
Dayton, Ohio

### *No Faith in Evolution*

The articles about Genesis evoked my recollections of H. M. S. Richards' story of the two ants watching the launch of a rocket. An ant says, "Let's go to the moon; we will jump really high!"

We *homo sapiens* (and perhaps the writer of Genesis) may not be any closer to understanding God, origins, and the universe, than are those ants close to comprehending computer complexities.

Richards' story makes me very humble. I can muster enough faith to believe that there may be some intelligent source-God. I don't have enough faith to believe that it all just happened to evolve.

Robert Lee Marsh, M.D.  
Glendale, California

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# Kellogg vs. The Brethren: His Last Interview as an Adventist — October 7, 1907

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*We here publish John Harvey Kellogg's remarkable valedictory statement as a Seventh-day Adventist. In this installment, and the equally extensive one appearing in the next issue, readers of Spectrum will be able to hear Kellogg's comments on all the topics he discusses, from the beginning of this interview to the end. The type-written transcript extends through more than 100 single-spaced pages. What appears in Spectrum's two installments constitutes over half the complete manuscript. In the second and final installment, Kellogg expands his recollections of life with James and Ellen White, his first-hand accounts of the beginnings of Adventist medical institutions, his difference with the church's ministerial leadership, and his shifting views of Ellen White's authority.*

*We are fortunate that the editor of what appears in Spectrum is Kellogg's biographer, Richard W. Schwarz, emeritus professor of history at Andrews University. A former vice-president for academic administration at Andrews, Schwarz wrote both John Harvey Kellogg, M.D. (Southern, 1970), drawn from his University of Michigan dissertation, and the standard college text on Adventist history, Lightbearers to the Remnant (Pacific Press, 1979).*

—The Editors

## *The Introduction*

For more than 30 years, Dr. John Harvey Kellogg played a key role in the

Seventh-day Adventist church. No one was as closely identified as he with Adventist teachings on healthful living and the rapidly developing Adventist health care institutions. Few could match his enthusiasm for ministering to the orphans, the unemployed, the homeless, or the captives of "Demon Rum." Kellogg helped shape Adventist educational policy, organized the church's first medical school, and built the Battle Creek Sanitarium into an institution with an international reputation. His search for more healthful foods spawned the prepared breakfast food industry, provided vegetarians with the earliest meat analogs, and led Adventists to be known in some quarters as "peanut eaters." He was an active member of the General Conference Committee, but also found time to serve on the Michigan State Board of Health and as an adviser to the Women's Christian Temperance Union.

Perhaps it was his early contacts with leading European physicians such as Mortimer

Granville in London, Pietre-Sante in Paris, and Billroth in Vienna that led Kellogg to move freely among captains of industry, government leaders and national and international figures. He cultivated opportunities to spread Adventist health concepts in lecture halls as diverse as big city Y.M.C.A.'s, university campuses, Salt Lake City's Mormon Tabernacle (where he addressed 7,000 at the request of Mormon church President William Woodruff in 1898), and Toledo's municipal park



*Dr. J. H. Kellogg, 1852-1943, the most famous Adventist of his time, was a strong promoter of exercise and rode his bicycle well into his 90th year.*



where he was the guest of the city's reform mayor, "Golden Rule" Jones.

The Battle Creek Sanitarium drew men like Wall Street genius C. W. Barron, perennial presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan, and conservationist Gifford Pinchot. In 1938, a local newspaper indicated that grape juice producer Edgar Welch had visited the "San" 32 times, textile manufacturer Joseph Cannon and U.S. Treasurer W. A. Julian 22 times each. Montgomery Ward, J. C. Penney, and S. S. Kresge also journeyed to Battle Creek. Nor did Kellogg's contacts with fellow doctors and scientists decrease. He exchanged visits with the Mayo brothers and the very year of the Amadon-Bourdeau interview spent several days observing Pavlov's experiments in St. Petersburg.

In spite of, or perhaps because of, his prominence and enthusiasm, Kellogg's relationships with many Adventist leaders were not very harmonious. At the start he had been regarded, with irritation by some, as a protégé of James and Ellen White. At the end he would be accused of undercutting Mrs. White's teachings and subtly seeking to discredit her prophetic role. Many in conference administration believed that he tried to lure the most promising Adventist youth and ministers into medical vocations. They felt he was unbalanced in his devotion and promotion of the Three Angels' Messages, and also guilty of trying to introduce pantheistic concepts into Adventist theology.

For his part, Kellogg was annoyed at many Adventist preachers' less-than-complete dedication to health reform. Their fondness for flesh foods particularly irked him. And when he broke into the circle of popular camp-meeting lecturers, he found conference presidents most likely to assign him the 5 a.m. service, when only the most dedicated campers turned out. Kellogg became convinced that Adventist ministers were poorly educated (many were), narrow-minded, and too parsimonious in committing church funds to medical and welfare work. He saw them as scheming to manage and profit from

Adventist medical institutions and infant health-food factories. His long-time antipathy toward W. C. White led him to assume that "Willie" was poisoning his mother's mind concerning Kellogg. The doctor developed an almost pathologic suspicion and mistrust of strong Adventist leaders like Arthur Daniells and W. W. Prescott.

From 1902 on, Kellogg was involved in a series of running battles with the General Conference leadership. He particularly objected to President Daniels' more conservative financial policies and to what Kellogg saw as Daniels' determination to control all aspects of the denomination's medical work. Prescott led the attack against Kellogg's book, *The Living Temple*, which he believed contained dangerous theological heresies. Since church leaders had earlier agreed to enlist all Adventists in an effort to sell *The Living Temple* (all profits were to help fund the rebuilding of the Battle Creek Sanitarium destroyed by fire in 1902), Prescott's criticisms seemed doubly vindictive to the doctor. It came to the place that these men refused to talk directly to Kellogg, preferring to treat with him instead through Adventism's most prominent lawyer at the time—Judge Jesse Arthur. The Battle Creek Tabernacle's new pastor, M. N. Campbell, also led a move to have Kellogg disfellowshipped by his local congregation. In those days, however, such a move was not made without directly inviting repentance and a change of heart and attitude on the part of the member to be disciplined.

It is in this setting that the interview excerpted below took place. Having decided that the Tabernacle members would consider in business session Kellogg's continued membership in the group, the Tabernacle board of elders dispatched two members to labor with Dr. Kellogg. Astutely, they chose men who had not been embroiled in public controversy with him, but were also long-standing and respected church leaders. George Amadon had been a veteran *Review and Herald* worker. At 70, he was too old when the publishing

plant was destroyed by fire in 1902 to consider moving elsewhere. Instead he was employed as a visitation pastor for the Tabernacle. Augustin Bourdeau had been an Adventist minister, missionary, and local conference official for more than 50 years. Now, in 1907, at age 73 and in declining health, he resided in Battle Creek. Kellogg was 55 at the time of the interview.

Before proceeding to an edited transcript of the interview, a few words concerning its history must be said. Kellogg regularly employed stenographers

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**Anyone who has experience with legal trials . . . knows that witnesses frequently disagree, not only over minor events, but over major ones as well.**

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to record important meetings exactly. He was prepared in this way for the interview he had agreed upon with Amadon and Bourdeau. When a staunch member of the Tabernacle was employed to transcribe the interview, she immediately alerted her pastor, Elder Campbell. Sensing the importance of the transcript, Campbell recruited several stenographers to aid in getting the material transcribed quickly. Copies were dispatched to General Conference headquarters. For years they lay in the church's unorganized archives and in the papers of the Ellen G. White Estate. Copies found their way to some denominational college libraries. Serious scholars have long been familiar with this famous interview. It provides probably the single best picture of Dr. Kellogg's side of his controversy with denominational leaders. All the major points at issue were covered, some of them repeatedly. Kellogg clearly dominated the interview. It was not, however, until 1986 when the Omega Historical Research Society of Tempe, Arizona, published the complete transcript of the interview under the title *The Kellogg File: Closed 1907, Reopened 1986* that a larger

number of Adventists had access to this historical document.

There is little question as to the genuineness and accuracy of the document. The same is not necessarily true of all the statements made therein. Kellogg undoubtedly expressed his understanding of events, but it must always be remembered that this was the way he viewed things. His brother, Will Keith Kellogg (who developed one of his older brother's ideas into the breakfast food industry) provided an evaluation that should also be kept in mind. Just eight years after this interview, Will wrote the doctor, "I notice that for some things you have a very unusual memory. Sometimes I think you have a memory for details of things that really never happen" (W. K. Kellogg to J. H. Kellogg, September 23, 1915).

Anyone who has experience with legal trials or in attempting to correlate historical documents, knows that witnesses frequently disagree, not only over minor events, but over major ones as well. This is particularly true where self-interest and/or the interpretation of motives may be involved. Outside corroboration is needed in areas of dispute, but not always available. With this caveat the interview still provides a fascinating picture, both of Kellogg's personality, and the troubled events that plagued the church in the last decade of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th.

The length of the interview, its repetitions and irrelevancies, made an edited version seem preferable to *Spectrum's* editorial board. Although I

would have preferred deleting less of the interview, I have yielded to *Spectrum's* judgment on available space while attempting to preserve the overall flavor of the exchange and insure that all of the principal issues as Kellogg saw them are included. The explanatory footnotes and the subheadings, not part of the original document, have been inserted in an effort to help modern readers better follow the discussion.

Readers who wish to explore further this period of Adventist history can find a very different perspective from John Harvey Kellogg's by reading the fifth volume of Arthur White's biography of his grandmother, *Ellen G. White: the Early Elmshaven Years (1900-1905)*, published by the Review and Herald Publishing Association in 1981. My own biography, *John Harvey Kellogg, M. D.*, and the chapter entitled "The Kellogg Crisis, 1901-1907" in *Lightbearers to the Remnant*, may also be helpful.

—Richard W. Schwarz

## The Interview

(J. T. Case present taking notes from 8:20 to 9:00 a.m., when Mr. Ashley arrived and continued reporting.)

**G. W. Amadon:** Good morning Doctor. It may seem rather early in the morning for a couple of old gentlemen like us to wake you up.

**J. H. Kellogg:** I stopped my work soon after one o'clock, I got three hour's sleep, then I was awake and working. . . .<sup>1</sup>

### *Kellogg's Attitude Toward Disfellowshipment*

**A.C. Bourdeau:** We came in to see you this morning, and we are quite anxious to know just exactly where you stand. . . . I thought I would have Brother Amadon, who has known you for many years, come with me. We are here together. The situation is rather peculiar at the present time. We do not know

what is coming, and yet we are anxious that the Lord will manage everything right and help us to move right all round.

**Amadon:** . . . in regard to your connection with the church here, with the congregation. . . . He [Brother Foy]<sup>2</sup> reported to us that you said you should not withdraw from the church. Others have withdrawn from the church—your brother, Gibson, Moses Kellogg, and others. He did not intimate that you referred to those cases, but he said you stated you would be glad if the church would just remove your name from the list. . . .

. . . He said if you were disconnected you would not find fault, and that is one object of our early visit this morning. We thought, Brother Bourdeau and I, that having known you so long, and having been intimately connected with you in the direct work, so that it was a kind of proper thing, he being a minister and I being an elder of the church, to come and find that out.

**Kellogg:** I might say that this is the first official visit I have ever had from anybody connected with the Battle Creek Church. This is the first time that the church officers have ever called upon me with reference to my standing in the church. . . .<sup>3</sup>

. . . I was going to remark concerning what I said to Brother Foy with reference to being connected with the church. Brother Foy said, "I do not have any confidence in your position." "Well," I said, "Brother Foy, . . . What is there about my position with which you disagree?" "Well," he said, "I do not know." I asked, "What is there about my belief that you disagree with?" He replied, "Well, I do not know, but you are not in harmony with the conference." I said, "I do not know why the conference should disagree with my belief. If they would sit down and talk with me I presume they would find out there is no occasion for disagreement at all. I have long invited them to come and have a talk with me but they have never come." "Well, but the Lord has said it," he replied. Now there it is, I said I have done all I could

#### Explanatory Footnotes

1. An omitted opening interchange touches briefly on Kellogg's adopted children and on a tubercular patient being cared for in Bourdeau's home.

2. Foy had been a member of the Sanitarium Chaplain staff. His wife was the long-time matron of the Battle Creek Sanitarium.

3. In an omitted section Kellogg tells of an early case of church discipline during which virtually the entire Battle Creek congregation was disbanded. He claims to have been, as a boy, the clerk of this business session.

4. At the Lake Union Session in 1904.

do that the Lord has asked me to do, that Sister White has said the Lord has asked me to do. What I meant by that remark was this: In the first place, at Berrien Springs,<sup>4</sup> Brother Daniells, Prescott, and others who were in a hostile attitude towards me received a letter from Sister White in which they were instructed to come to me and hold out the right hand of fellowship to me and to W. K. Kellogg, and to make no conditions. They never came. I waited on the ground for several days until I was compelled to go home to perform surgical operations, and I waited until the very last minute and the very last train and then hired a conveyance to hurry me to the depot, to give them every opportunity. They never came. . . . They made no overtures of any sort whatever. I then thought that possibly in light of what Sister White had written, it was my duty to go to them, and felt that possibly I ought to have done so before leaving the ground. So I went to the telephone and spent about two hours . . . telephoning the brethren, to Brother Butler, to Sister Druillard, and to others there begging that they would come down here and let us sit down and talk our differences all over; and I sent them the message that if they would come, I believed we could settle all our difficulties in half an hour; that we were ready to make every concession that could possibly be made. And they declined to come. . . .

Prof. Prescott, however, dropped off on his way through going east and came up with Elder Evans and sat down and had a little talk with me; and in talking matters over he made several statements which I felt were not true, which I knew were untrue, which I proved right on the spot were untrue; and I told him how I looked at it, and I felt that they were not only untrue but that he was consciously telling what was not true, for it was so preposterous, so absurd that it could not be true.

**Amadon:** You mean to say he knew what he was telling?

### **Problems Over the Living Temple**

**Kellogg:** I mean to say he knew he

was not telling the truth, and when I put it straight to him he was completely dumbfounded; he could not say a word; he could not raise a question. And I am willing to tell you what that was because that concerns the very first thing that I am charged with doing—when the *Living Temple* was published in the first place.

**Bourdeau:** I read every word of that *Living Temple* and some parts of it several times over.

**Kellogg:** Well, it has been read quite a little, I expect, some parts of it particularly. Now in preparing that *Living Temple* I did it in harmony with a plan prepared by Prof. Prescott and myself, in harmony with Sister White—to prepare an educational campaign for Seventh-day Adventists on questions of health, and I had not given very much attention to the Biblical point of it, but Prof. Prescott had been up here teaching. . . . This book was to be the textbook of the campaign, so I did my best to write that book as I thought in harmony with the teachings that Prof. Prescott was giving here at the Sanitarium and in the *Review*. I introduced here and there a suggestion by one of my assistants who was helping me. She would suggest a text here and there and tell me what Prof. Prescott had taught with reference to that, show me the reference, show me what he was writing about it. . . . although I did not go quite to the extreme length that he did. He was teaching here—for instance, he took a piece of bread and held it up. “Do you believe that this is the body of Christ? This is the body of Christ. This is the body of Christ, I say, this is the body of Christ.” Now, Dr. Case, you heard him say that?

**Dr. Case:** He said every meal should be a sacrament; we were eating the body of Christ and drinking His blood.

**Kellogg:** Yes.

**Bourdeau:** That is the way the Catholics teach, too.

**Kellogg:** He held that and you can read it in the *Review*.

**Bourdeau:** Does he hold to those views now?

**Kellogg:** He never had said he did

not. . . . in the *Review* or in public. . . . [H]e had preached it at that very conference of 1901 and Sister White was there and there was no dissent from it.

The views I put into the book I gave right at the conference and they were published in the *Bulletin*<sup>5</sup> and I preached around at camp-meetings . . . We had a meeting there [Sanitarium Chapel] on the question of healing the sick, and I presented my views with reference to the . . . *Living Temple*. Afterwards Sister White read the report of what I said there, and she said, “That is right.”

. . . The view that I gave there was that whenever a man was sick and gets well, it is God that heals him; there is no power to heal but Divine power; and the healing of the sick is always Divine healing; that God may work quickly, or He may work slowly; the healing power is creative power; and nothing less than creative power can heal the sick man. . . . I might state further that Prof. Prescott was one of the committee who was to look over the book, and he went over it and gave me his written report on it. . . .

**Case:** It was six-and-a-half pages of typewritten manuscript.

**Kellogg:** It was six-and-a-half pages of typewritten manuscript, and not a word said about anything in it for which the book is now denounced. . . .<sup>6</sup>

### **Denominational Financial Policies**

Then, after I came home from Europe, I found I was under condemnation, and I was condemned at that time because I did not endorse the financial policy of the General Conference. They had adopted a financial policy that no

5. This would be more true of Kellogg's presentations at the 1897 General Conference at which time Ellen White was in Australia.

6. This is not in harmony with a Prescott evaluation of *Living Temple* in the General Conference Archives. If this evaluation was given to Kellogg at the time he refers to, he would have known that Prescott had serious theological problems with *Living Temple*.

7. Sarah McEnterfer, Ellen White's nurse/companion.

institution should go in debt. They had gone further and said it was wicked for a man to go into debt, and that that text of the Apostle, "Owe no man anything" referred to money, and they took that stand very strongly, . . . and held me under condemnation because I could not—would not endorse that financial policy. I said to them, "You cannot stick to it a year if you try; it is impossible, and it is not right. If you can get some of the devil's money and save somebody's life, it is a proper thing to do. . . ." I told them what I thought about it—that it was fanaticism, unsound, and they never would follow it out if they adopted it; but they did not endorse this [my view] and they started the campaign [against me] on that basis.

Of course, since that time they have entirely departed from it [the financial policy]. I saw a notice in the last report of the Washington Sanitarium, of \$2,500 interest, which means a \$50,000 debt. They are making new debts, and through the *Review* are calling upon the brethren to loan them money; and it is well enough known by everybody that they abandoned that policy although for a long time they did it in a very still kind of way.

### ***More Problems With the Living Temple***

When I found the book was condemned, as soon as the book was printed, or later as soon as it was set up ready to print, I held it in the plates for a year nearly, waiting to see what would come out of all this discussion; and when the book was finally condemned by Prescott and others openly. . . I sent . . . two copies, one to Sarah<sup>7</sup> and one to Sister White. I sent them both to Sarah to give one to Sister White; and Sarah wrote back after that about six weeks—this was in the spring just after the Oakland (1903) conference—she said, "I put a copy of the book on the table in Sister White's room. For several days she did not look at it. For the last two or three weeks she has been reading it, and she tells me that she is going to read it through, and that she finds it a very

different book from what she supposed it was. . . ."

I waited then for Sister White to have a chance to finish reading the book, and to see what her criticism would be; so I held the book in and did not set it in circulation until fall. And at that time, along in October, some months after I sent her the book, I sent out copies to the presidents of Union Conferences and asked them to look the book over and see what they thought of it, and if they wanted to use it to help us

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**I arose before that Council and the whole Conference, and with tears running down my face, I said, "I receive what has been said about this thing as from the Lord, and I will withdraw the book from circulation at once."**

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in paying the Sanitarium, paying off our debts, and helping along other Sanitarium enterprises. And I had back several very favorable letters.

. . . I never received one line from Sister White condemning the book or giving me any hint against it—never received one line from her hinting to me that I was teaching wrong doctrines, although I had been teaching those doctrines for 15 years or more. . . I never got any private reproof from her about it, or any letter at all; and about the first thing that appeared was this article in the *Review*.

Now I saw that article a day or two before it was printed in the *Review*. It was not sent to me, but I happened to be in Washington, and some of the brethren there had a copy of it, and let me read it. . . . But she [Ellen White] did not intend to have it printed in the *Review*. I know that. It was done by a trick. . . . She only sent it for the private information of those brethren, and it would not have been printed in the *Review* if it had not been for a trick on the part of Prof.

Prescott. They telegraphed Sister White that there was a great crisis, and it must be published. They sent her a telegram, and she consented to it on that.

Now there was no great crisis at all; it was an absolute falsehood. This paper was read before the Council in Washington. I arose before that Council and the whole Conference, and with tears running down my face, I said, "I receive what has been said about this thing as from the Lord, and I will withdraw the book from circulation at once. . . ." I telegraphed for the books to be boxed up and put in the basement of the College, and there they are now. . . . But this is a very different story from what is being circulated about the thing. I am telling you these facts because I want you to know them.

. . . I might say that at the council held here the fall before,<sup>8</sup> I asked the chairman to appoint a committee and let the committee revise this book, and whatever they found in it that was wrong, we would take it out. I said, "Anything, that is not in harmony with the Bible and with the teaching of the denomination, I will take out of the book if you will point it out to me." Now that is on record. You can find it there. I offered to do it at the very beginning, before the book was printed and after it was printed; and sent it to Mrs. White for her consideration, but did not get a word of fault found with it.

After it was printed and condemned, I said, "Very well, I will withdraw it from circulation, and pack it up." I saw Prof. Prescott, and I said, "What is the matter with the book? . . . "This life that is in me and in all living things, if that is not Divine life, what is it? Can there be one life for one thing and another life for another thing?" He said, "Of course, there is only one life; it is God's life." I said, "Of course, all life is God's life, and it is the only life there is." "Well," he said, "it is the method of teaching it; it is the teaching of it." I said, "Tell me how to teach it, then, if I have not taught it right; I am willing to be instructed." He said, "I do not know whether I could tell you how to teach it, but I can teach

it myself.”

Then I said, “Prof. Prescott, you take this book of mine and revise it; go through it from one end to the other . . . anything you think is wrong in this book, and I will take it out. . . . We need to use that book, because it is part of our means of raising money, and we need \$50,000 before the first of the year, and do not have any other means of getting it that I know of, and I want to fix this thing up as quick as I can and get it out.” Prof. Prescott said, “I do not want to be a censor.” “Well,” I said, “I request you to do it, and you do not need to make any argument about it. . . . Finally his lips quivering and he turned his face away. . . . [H]e said, “I will do it.” And he said, “There ought to be somebody else to look it over also.” “Whom do you suggest?” He said, “I think Elder Haskell will be a good man.” I said, “All right, I will go and see him.”

I said, “When can you send it?” He said, “I will mail it to you Sunday” . . . I said, “Here is a dollar bill; you send it by letter postage with special delivery, for I want to get it as quickly as possible, and here is a dollar to pay the postage.” He declined to take the dollar bill. He said, “No, you make it all the harder for me.” So I put the dollar bill back into my pocket.

I went up to see Elder Haskell, and he agreed to do the same thing. Now Prof. Magan remained behind in Washington, and he afterwards told me, “Prof. Prescott . . . is not going to revise that book and send it to you.” I said, “He said he would.” “Well, but,” he said, “He won’t because I heard he told Elder Daniells he was going to do it, and I heard Elder Daniells say at once, ‘You ought not to do that.’”

. . . I waited until Sunday and it did not come; and Monday came a postal card saying, “I did not get it finished, and was not able to get it off;” and the next day I got a letter saying that he was not going to do it at all. He advised that the book should not be printed. The next thing I noticed was the article in the *Review*.

Of course, when I got home I announced to our friends that everything

was going to be settled up, that Prof. Prescott was going to revise the book, take out all the bad doctrine in it. . . . I told them we had accepted the testimonies that had come; and surrendered the things, and we were going to do the best we could, and going on in harmony. I told them down there that I was willing to work under the smallest conference in the world, that they might put any doctor over me they wanted to. I made up my mind I would trust the Lord to take care of me and I would do anything they said.

**Bourdeau:** You had revised the book as well, had you?

**Kellogg:** . . . After a few days I got a letter from Haskell saying he would send a few suggestions. I guess he sent a few suggestions. Then I wrote to Will, told Will White the story, and I said, “I propose to take out of the book certain pages which contain the matter which has been objected to, and to change the name of it to ‘The Miracle of Life,’ and now I want to know what your mother thinks of that.” And I wrote her a letter and told her that I accepted what she had written with reference to the book as a message from the Lord, and had stopped the sale of the book.

Will wrote me back that what I suggested to him seemed to him to be all right, and he said, “I will speak to Mother about it, and if you do not hear anything to the contrary, go ahead.” I never heard a word to the contrary. So I went ahead. . . .

Now with reference to Prof. Prescott, the situation was this: that I got out and around that Prof. Prescott was going to revise the book just as he said he would, and Elder Daniells came in and talked to him, and told him he must not do it; so he was in a tight fix, so he had to say something . . . The last thing in the world they wanted to have done was to have the thing healed up because they wanted to keep this thing going until the Sanitarium was crushed, so that they might bring the medical work into subjection to them. That is what their whole campaign was planned for. Elder Daniells told Prof.

Sutherland after the first council meeting we had here, “We made a mistake in attacking the theology of the book.” It was evident that they thought they made a mistake in doing that thing. Now Prof. Prescott came out with an article in the *Review* saying it had been rumored the General Conference was going to revise the book; that no such thing was going to be done, and no such thing had been contemplated. He put it in stronger terms than that. Now I said to Prof. Prescott, “How could you publish such a thing as that in the *Review*

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**The last thing in the world they wanted to have done was to have the thing healed up because they wanted to keep this thing going until the Sanitarium was crushed, so that they might bring the medical work into subjection to them.**

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when it was not the truth; when you promised me you would do it?” He said, “I never agreed to revise the book; I only agreed to make a report on it.” I said, “Prof. Prescott, was it necessary for me to offer you a dollar bill to pay the two cent postage on a letter? You remember I offered you a dollar bill?” “Yes.” . . . He was confounded. He could not say a word. . . . I might say, Elder Evans was present at that interview. . . . Dr. Reed was there, and I think Brother Butler [H.G.] . . .

8. If this occurred in 1902, as would appear from the context, Kellogg evidently knew this early in the controversy of theological objections to his book.

9. In the following omitted section, Kellogg indicates that W. C. White finally agreed to attempt to get the General Conference Committee to come to Battle Creek for a discussion of the issues in the controversy.

## ***Reconciliation Attempts in 1904***

Now I begged them to come here; but they did not come; but W. C. White stayed a day or two behind at Berrien Springs. I wrote him and begged him to come over here so I could have a talk with him. He came over. "Now," I said, "Will, what is the use in fermenting this thing, this warfare? . . . I am not a pantheist; and I don't believe in pantheism. . . . [I]f anything I had written . . . was an error, I would retract and denounce it. I am not a pantheist, and you know it. If I were a pantheist, I would be out worshipping the morning sun."<sup>9</sup>

## ***Rebuilding After the Fire***

. . . Sister White intimated after we got our building up to the fourth story that we should not have built here in Battle Creek, and I wrote her, "What shall we do then? Here we are up to the fourth story." She wrote back, "Finish it up as cheap as you can; and make expenses as little as you can. . . . So we finished it according to instructions.

**Bourdeau:** You had made a start before.

**Kellogg:** We were up to the fourth story before we had a hint we ought not to have built here. These statements that have been published do not present things in a straight light at all. There is a document dated two days after the fire (February 20, 1902) . . . intimating that we ought not to build, . . . [it was never] sent to us . . . and none of us ever knew it existed, never saw it until we saw it in that published document a year ago last Christmas (1905). . . .<sup>10</sup>

. . . At the General Conference at Oakland [1903], I told the brethren . . . "The Sanitarium is not occupied yet; it has not been dedicated, and if we have made a mistake; if it is not the Lord's will that the Sanitarium shall be there at Battle Creek, let the Sanitarium be sold, and have the Sanitarium wherever the Lord wants it." . . . Sister White said, "No, let not the Sanitarium be sold; let not the light of the Sanitarium go out at Battle Creek. Let all take hold to make that enterprise a success. . . ."

. . . She said, "If the Battle Creek Sanitarium had been moved to a salubrious locality it would have been pleasing to the Lord." She never had any testimony for us that we should have built a smaller institution. . . . It

was simply the removal of the institution entirely to some other place. That was the only thing we ever had.

## ***Kellogg's Attitude Toward Disfellowshipment***

. . . [S]o as far as my connection with the church was concerned, I said, "I expected to be turned out of the church, but I shall make no protest against it." I said I will not on any account withdraw from the church; and I will not ask to have my name dropped; I will do nothing of the kind, because if I do, that will immediately be used as a pretense and published everywhere as proof that I have withdrawn from the church, withdrawn from the truth which I have believed in for all these years, which I have been raised in—that I have repudiated it; and it will be said everywhere that I have done it when I have not done it, and it is not the truth.

I said, "I believe just what I have believed for the last 40 years and I am standing by everything I have stood by; and I have not changed." The Conference have changed their attitude toward me and toward this institution for campaign purposes and for the purpose of subjugating us; but so far as I am concerned, I have not changed. I believe in the Sabbath, I keep the Sabbath; I believe in the Lord as I always did believe in Him; I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; I believe in the unconscious state of the mind (in death). I believe that the end of things mundane cannot be very far away, must be near at hand. I believe the general principles of the Seventh-day Adventist faith as it has been taught and as I was taught it.

## ***Kellogg on Certain SDA Teachings***

**Bourdeau:** About the sanctuary question, the 2300 days—are your views about the same as they were?

**Kellogg:** I believe exactly the same as I have been teaching for the last 15 years about that thing—just the same; I have made no change at all in that thing.

**Bourdeau:** You remember it was stated by Elder Jones at that meeting we



*All that remained of the 1878 Battle Creek Sanitarium after the fire of 1902.*

had here, that he did not believe that the sanctuary was a limited place, a real location that is limited—

**Kellogg:** He never told me that and I never told him that; I never had any conversation with him about it. I believe the Bible; I will just simply state I believe that. Now there are a whole lot of things that in my busy life I have not had time to study into all the details, so that I can define my belief. I do not know, I do not pretend to know. I believe just what the Bible says.

A brother asked me the question a while ago, “Do you believe the Lord is coming in this generation?” “Now,” I said, “The text that says those that see these things—this generation shall not pass until all things be fulfilled. The Bible says it. I believe the Bible and I believe that.” If anybody should ask me to explain it, to limit it and tell exactly what it means, I do not know whether I could; but I believe that whatever it means is true. I said, “Do you know exactly what it means?” He said, “No I know what I think it means, but whether anybody else believes that or not I don’t know.”

I have heard quite a number of different interpretations of it. . . . When I was a boy, “this generation” meant 30 years. When I got older, got to be about 18 or 20 years old, then it meant 60 years. A little later it meant the persons who saw the sun darkened (1780), that there would still be some of them alive when the Lord came. Time has kept going on and those people have died off . . . [B]ut Prof. Prescott has discovered a new meaning—that “this generation shall not pass” means the generation which recognizes those signs as being signs of the coming of the Lord; the generation that recognizes the signs as fulfilled prophecy, indicating that the end is near. That seems kind of a reasonable proposition. . . .

I don’t want to you to misunderstand me. You might get up and state what you believe to be Seventh-day Adventism, and I might not agree with everything you said; and Brother Amadon might do the same thing and I might not agree with everything he said; but I

don’t agree at all with this policy that is being carried on of persecution against the Sanitarium and of condemnation without a trial. . . .

**Bourdeau:** . . . I wanted to have an interview about . . . your views of the personality of God, the angels, and the home of the righteous—have an interview on that.

**Amadon:** Doctor, have you changed your views in regard to the atonement of the Savior?

**Kellogg:** Christ died for sinners. I believe all I ever believed.

**Amadon:** Just as you always have, as we believe?

**Kellogg:** What do you believe?

**Amadon:** I don’t ask that question to draw you out, to get something out that I may repeat sometime; I simply ask the question. Now, that is a very vital thing about the atonement, as vital as the reception of the Bible.

**Kellogg:** I will tell you what I believe about that. I believe Christ died for sinners; that He is the lamb slain from the foundation of the world; and that there is no other salvation except through Christ.

**Amadon:** I don’t know—

**Kellogg:** These charges that have been made against me, that Prof. Prescott has made, has charged against me, that I denied the atonement in conversation with him, are absolutely false. I never had such conversation with him in the world. And knowing that such stories were carried to Sister White through others, I took particular pains in the last interview I had with her to say to her that I believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as I always had believed in Him; that I prayed to the Lord every day of my life and many times a day, and that I was doing my best to hold up all the principles that I ever have held up. The foundation of all this campaign against us is not the truths that they tell, but it is the falsehoods that they tell.

**Bourdeau:** About our views since Christ entered into the second part of the heavenly sanctuary, and the atonement from that standpoint, and the judgment, for instance, and the end of the “2300 days” and the “tarrying time” in

which we have been living since then, and what has been going on.

**Kellogg:** The prophetic argument seems perfectly clear; I do not see anything to upset it or anything to shake my faith in it. . . .

About Ballenger, I do not know what his views of that are; I haven’t any connection with him at all . . .<sup>11</sup>

**Amadon:** Brother Kellogg, I don’t believe there is a man on the face of the Lord’s earth that has had so many letters and counsels and instructions and admonitions and encouragements from the Great God as you have. I don’t believe Elder James White had a tithe of them.

**Kellogg:** I have the largest collection of personal things<sup>12</sup> that anybody in the world has; and if you can show us wherein we are at the present time going contrary to any principle that has been contained in any of those letters, if you can show that thing, we will be glad to have you do it. . . .

## *Leadership “Conspiracy”*

Elder Evans<sup>13</sup> came to my house when he got back [from a meeting in College View in 1905] and said, “Prof. Prescott, W. C. White, and Elder Daniells have bound themselves together in a conspiracy to ruin you, and I have letters which I think will prove it.” Elder Evans came here, into this very room and voluntarily said that to me. . . . Now, that was true, Brother Amadon. You know Elder Haskell very well, don’t you?

**Amadon:** I rather think I do.

**Kellogg:** . . . [O]ne morning I got a very urgent telephone call from Lin-

10. The omitted section repeats the story of the unsent E. G. White letter relative to rebuilding the Sanitarium after the 1902 fire.

11. A. F. Ballenger was at this time teaching that Christ’s ministry in the second apartment of the Heavenly Sanctuary had begun immediately following His ascension rather than in 1844 as Adventists hold.

12. Probably personal testimonies from Ellen White.

13. I. H. Evans, at this time President and General Manager of the Review and Herald Publishing Association and Treasurer of the General Conference.

coln. . . . Elder Haskell telephoned to me and said, "I want to see you." So I arranged to meet him in St. Louis, and he came down to St. Louis to meet me.

The first thing he said to me was, "Doctor, these men, Daniells and Prescott, have come to the end of their rope. Sister White has been out to Battle Creek, and she has seen that they have not told her the truth about things." He said, "Sister White told me and told the people there, 'Why, Dr. Kellogg is just the same as he always was. Dr. Kellogg is not fighting me. Dr. Kellogg treated me just as he always did. . . . They told her I had a book written to expose the "Testimonies," to show up the weak side of the things, and she believed it was true; but she came here and found there wasn't a word of it true. . . .

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**I propose to hang onto all the truth that I know, and all that I have ever known, and keep right straight along the track I have been traveling all these years, just as near as I can; and let these men go and do their wicked work; and let the whole denomination condemn me and cast me out, if they want to.**

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They went to her and told her, "Sister White, it cannot be stopped; it will be ruin, it will be ruin;" so they insisted on going on; but Elder Haskell said to me, "They have come to the end of their rope, and now they are coming to Battle Creek to try to get some new point against you, and I wanted to see you and put you on your guard." That is the solemn truth, Brother Amadon. . . . They came before I did and they got hold of something that changed her mind again, got her to believe I was a forger. . . .

. . . [T]hese men . . . came to her with my name signed to a document; my signature was there, and I had denied in

writing that I had ever signed that document, and I never did sign it. And yet my own signature was there. They told her that I denied having signed that, that I had forged. It was a \$1,000 note that I had "forged," and they got things mixed up so that she thought I had forged \$50,000 and they found out . . . that the bonds<sup>14</sup> were fraudulent. . . . And although she came here on purpose to see me, sent word to me to St. Louis to meet her, when I got here, she would not talk to me at all, would not speak to me only to say, "How do you do?" She told several people it had been discovered at last I was a forger and had defrauded, and the bonds were fraudulent, and she stuck to it and believes it until this day.

The truth of the matter was this: I had signed a note in blank, "J. H. Kellogg, President," to be used for the International Medical Missionary and Benevolent Association, to be used for them, but in my absence, Dr. Thomason, who was secretary, by mistake had filled out above my name, "Mexican Medical and Benevolent Association," instead of "International Medical Missionary and Benevolent Association," in renewing a note that had come back. But I was authorized to sign notes for the Mexican Association, but I was only agent; I was not president; so the forgery was in the termination, "President," you see. Now, I paid that note. The money was sent down there to Mexico. I never misappropriated the money. That was done and I did not know it. I could not explain it because I did not know anything about it. I signed it to be used to the International Association, but the note was sent out during my absence, for the Mexican Medical and Benevolent Association; so when they wrote me about it, I told them I never signed such a note, because I was agent, you know, and this was signed as President, and I told them I was not president—I had never signed it. You see, I signed the first note all right, but in my absence the note came back to be renewed, and Dr. Thomason wrote that on. Miss Steinel who kept the books was away from home. When

she got back, Judge Arthur wrote out a full explanation and sent it down to Elder Daniells and those men, but they never corrected it; so Sister White still labors under that impression. At the last General Conference, Sister White made the statement that I was a forger, and Daniells got a shorthand report of that, and when I was in Europe last spring, I found he had been showing it all around over Europe to prove I was a forger, and that the Lord had sent it.

You see I cannot have any particular sympathy with that sort of doings; so I am perfectly frank to tell you that if you endorse that action on the part of the General Conference Committee, and if this Church endorses the campaign of the General Conference on behalf of fraud, deceit and misrepresentation, when they get ready to drop my name from the book I shall accept it as a release that the Lord has given me from any further responsibility in that thing. . . . Certainly I ought to be turned out of the church if I have committed robberies; . . . but it should be pointed out wherein I have done these things, and I should be given opportunity to make restitution. . . .

With reference to Dr. Stewart and those documents Daniells circulated when he came here and undertook to crush us—among other things was this statement—that I had never allowed my colleagues to read the things that had been sent to me, the *Testimonies*. . . . Now, Brother Amadon, before the Lord, I am obliged to tell you that although Sister White wrote that, it is not the truth. It is not the truth although it is over her signature—it is absolutely untrue. My colleagues have seen everything I have ever received from her, private letters and all, the whole business. Certainly I have never held back one single line that she has written me, never in the world.

. . . When I got a letter from Sister White, I laid it before the Board. . . . The only thing in the world I never read to them were things she said about me complimentary, and I did not want to read them. . . .

Sister White said some things about



my being the Lord's physician. You never heard me making any use of that. I never banked on that—never did. I never believed the Lord made me His doctor any more than any other honest Christian man who was trying to do his best. I don't believe the Lord is arbitrary in that way.

**Amadon:** I hate to hear you say that—that you don't believe there was a time when you were the Lord's physician in a sense in which others were not.

**Kellogg:** I cannot believe that I ever was the Lord's doctor in any different sense from any Christian doctor that undertakes to do his best for suffering human beings is the Lord's doctor. . . .

**Amadon:** I believe it anyhow.

**Bourdeau:** I believe the Lord sent His angel to guide your hand.

**Kellogg:** I know the Lord helps me in operations, and I know He helps me now; for I get into awful troubles, and I appeal to the Lord to help, and I see He does help me. . . .<sup>15</sup>

I want to tell you another thing you do not know about, a testimony I have from Sister White that she has not published, and that none of them have published, that these men have frequently cut out large chunks of things that Sister White had written, that put things in a light that was not the most favorable of them, or did not suit their campaigns that way, that they felt at liberty to cut them out and so change the effect and the tenor of the whole thing; sending it out over Sister White's name. I happen to know that, and I think you know it, too. But I have got a testimony that is on record, and Sister White has got it, but they haven't printed it, and I don't think they will. Sister White said—it was since these troubles began, a long time after this thing started up—not so very long ago—she said, "I saw a boat out in the storm in the sea, and the waves were rolling high, and there were men in the boat, and they pushed you overboard, and you were hanging onto the edge of the boat with your fingers, and they were beating you off." Now that is exactly what they have tried to do. I propose to hang onto all the truth

that I know, and all that I have ever known, and keep right straight along the track I have been traveling all these years, just as near as I can; and let these men go and do their wicked work; and let the whole denomination condemn me and cast me out, if they want to. . . .

**Bourdeau:** Another question I want to ask you in regard to the views entertained by A. T. Jones in regard to organization.<sup>16</sup>

**Kellogg:** I told Brother Jones a great many times that I thought his principles would be beautiful when we get to heaven; but we have to have some kind of organization. Brother Jones is not my product, and I am not responsible for anything he writes or says. Soon after Brother Jones came here, I had an action taken by our Board that in this controversy with the ministers, our Board had no part to act in it and would have nothing to do with it. . . .

### *Dr. Stewart's "Blue Book"*

Now with reference to Dr. Stewart: . . . Dr. Stewart and Dr. Harris came to me and I told them the same thing [about the charge of Kellogg's withholding testimonies from associates]. They said, "Would you be willing to let us look over the things she has sent to you?" I said . . . you have . . . access to them; I have never secreted them or locked them up at all; they are there. . . . I was away from home when that letter [Stewart's letter to Ellen G. White] was prepared. When I got home, Dr. Stewart brought it to me and read it to me. I said, "Dr. Stewart, that is a very smart document, but anybody reading that would say that Sister White must be a very mean, contemptible kind of woman. Don't you see they would?" "Well, yes. I think they would." "Now," I said, "is she that kind of woman? Do you think she is that kind of woman?" "Why no, of course, I don't." "Then," I said, "you want to be very careful you don't ever print that, and if you ever let that go out of your hands at all, you should certainly add a statement to it that you believe Mrs. White was a woman God had inspired and led, and that these things were only

flaws that you had found, but that the main effort and tenor of her life had been wonderfully good and helpful; that she stood for principles that were straight and right, and that her work had been a good work, and that you believed in that thing. "But," I said, "you ought never to publish such a thing; such a thing ought never to be circulated;" and he promised me he never would publish it, and I don't believe he ever will. . . .

### *Kellogg and Ellen White*

. . . I have written her [Ellen White] every little while—"Sister White, don't be alarmed at the statements that have been made to you; don't believe the reports that are being sent to you about my attitude towards you. You have been my friend all my life, and I am your friend and am going to remain so no matter what your attitude is, what you say about me and what you do—I am not going to take up any campaign against you for you have been my friend, the best friend I ever had. . . ." I recognize the fact that Sister White has been a messenger of truth to the world.

I do not believe in her infallibility and never did. I told her eight years ago to her face<sup>17</sup> that some of the things she had sent to me as testimonies were not the truth, that they were not in harmony with the facts; and she herself found it out. I have a letter from her in which she explains how she came to send me some things. She charged me with things I never had done at all, and I got a letter

14. Issued to finance the rebuilding of the Sanitarium after the 1902 fire.

15. Kellogg then tells of a recent experience in which he believed the Lord helped him during surgery as a result of prayer.

16. A. T. Jones, one of the "heroes" of the 1888 General Conference controversy on righteousness by faith, was at this time campaigning against having the office of General Conference President. He believed this created a "kingship" contrary to some of Ellen White's counsels.

17. This is an example showing that one cannot take everything Kellogg says as accurate in every detail. Eight years before this time (1899) Mrs. White was still in Australia. Since Kellogg never went to Australia, he is at best confused as to the date of the conversation he is remembering!

from her in which she explains that she *thought* I had done it, she drew an inference that I had, and she was worried about it. I never made a public matter of that thing. I held that thing in my private drawer, in my own heart, for years and years, and never should have made it public if these folks had not begun a campaign against me, and I have not made it public, and am not going to do it. Just think of it—a man who has got as much business as I have, to pursue a feeble old lady, to try to show up that she is a fraud when she is not a fraud; to try to show up that she is dishonorable, and really an immoral woman when I know she is not. Anybody that knows anything about Sister White's career knows that she has been a woman who has worked for truth and righteousness, and if you can find a flaw here and there, or some plagiarism here and there, that is a mistake and a blunder, and a slip and never ought to have been done; but now that does not invalidate the good that she has done. . . .

I was tempted down at Oakland (1903) to get up in the General Conference there and tell them the whole truth

about the whole business; but I made up my mind I would not do it. I said, "If I do that, it will just destroy all the foundation some people have whose faith is based on this thing." If I should tell the weak spots they would throw away the whole thing. I can see the weak spots and still hang onto the strong ones. . . . I got down on my knees and prayed the Lord to help me, to hold me back from doing any such thing. I have gotten to the point where I see that the Lord takes care of me and my work, and we are going on in spite of all these men are doing; so I am satisfied the Lord saves our work. It is the only thing I ask Him to do.

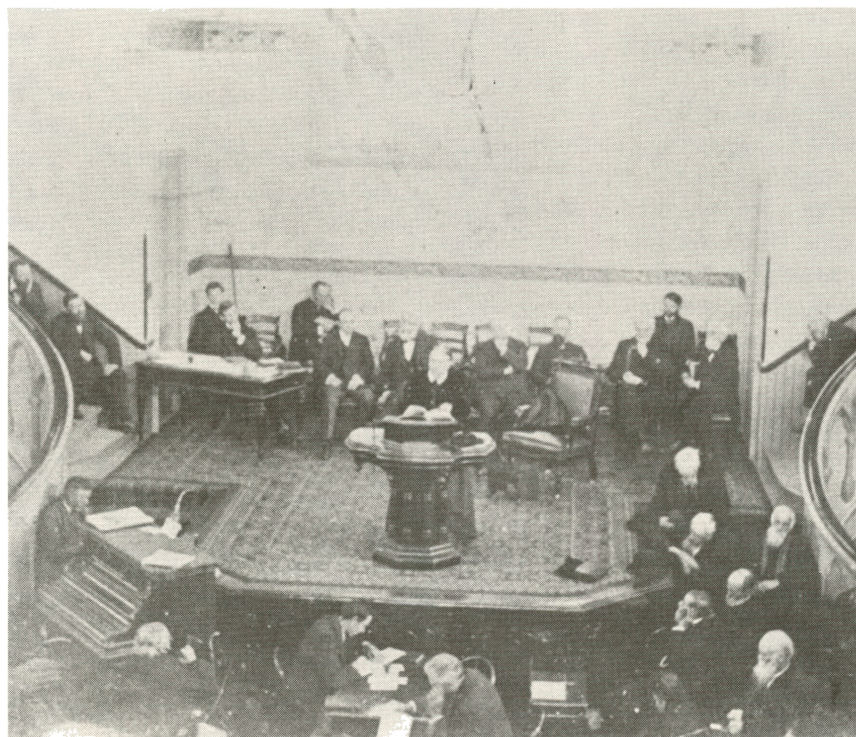
**Bourdeau:** It has never been my disposition to crush you down or to crush the Sanitarium down in anything, and I don't know as I ever thought that our leading brethren had that in view.

### *The Leadership's "Conspiracy" vs. Kellogg*

**Kellogg:** That very thing is the ultimate purpose of the whole thing. If you had been present in the meeting

when this thing started, you would have heard Elder Daniells on his feet say, "I am not satisfied. Doctor Kellogg's imperious will must be broken." That was when we were trying to have peace. That was when he first started this campaign; he started with that spirit; and I arose and I said very quietly, "That will be when I am dead." They have been carrying on their campaign ever since. You can find plenty of people who were present at that meeting and heard that speech. . . . I have been studying my Bible a good deal more in the last two or three years than ever before in that length of time, and the Bible is very dear to me. I never close my eyes without reading a chapter in the Bible at night, and we study the Bible in our home here a good deal more than we ever did before. We are trying to promote Bible study at the Sanitarium; we are not introducing heresy there, but simply studying the Scripture lessons to get help for Christian living, for holding up the moral standard that must be held up. I do not see anything else but to go ahead on that platform; and the Seventh-day Adventist denomination I have been working for all my life—I went into the office when I was a small boy, when I was 12 years old; Brother Amadon was there, and we were good friends; and he always helped me, was kind to me, and I learned to love him very much, because we were always good friends and considerate. I have been working for the upbuilding of the interests of this denomination, and I was willing to keep on working the balance of my life if they would let me; but they proposed to separate from our work and they did it, not because they wanted to get rid of the work, but simply to bring us into hard places where we could not go.

Away back in November, 1902, five years ago, Elder Daniells demanded of me that the Sanitarium be surrendered to the General Conference. I said, "I don't see any way that can be done. It is a private corporation, and I don't see any reason why it should be changed. It will go right on as it is, always has been going; it is working for the interests of



*Mrs. Ellen G. White addressing the crucial 1901 General Conference session.*

the denomination, and it will keep right on as it always has done, and I don't see any need of change." And he became very angry. It was at a private conference of our Board and the General Conference Committee. He became very angry, and he said, "I am done with this thing; I will have no more of this; this is the end." And he arose and left the room. Spicer said, "You will find you cannot carry on the Sanitarium without the General Conference Committee." I said, "Whatever the Lord wants us to do we will do." He said, "You will find you cannot get the young people." I said, "If the Lord has got a young man somewhere He wants to come to the Sanitarium, He will see that he gets there."

So we have been going on. . . . Afterwards we tried to make reconciliation with them, told them we would do anything; but they immediately . . . began undermining work; they were not square; and I sent word to Prof. Prescott—this was after the reconciliation at the Tabernacle [1903]—I sent word to Prof. Prescott and to Elder Daniells, and I said to Prof. Prescott, "Now then, before you leave this town, we ought to sit down together and try to find a basis for harmony, we ought to sit down like men with our official coats off, like brethren together, to try to find some foundation for harmony." He never replied to my note even. . . .

While we have sought earnestly for harmony for a long time, and are willing to surrender anything and do anything, . . . I haven't the slightest expectation of any reconciliation. . . . We do not propose to fight these brethren or Sister White or anybody else. . . . We are not going to have any schism; we are not going to do anything of the kind. . . .

**Bourdeau:** You haven't thought of reorganizing, then?

**Kellogg:** We would not think of such a thing. For pity's sake, haven't we had enough organization of this kind? When you have got an organization that can turn itself into a threshing machine, or a destructive engine, for pity's sake, why do you want to get into anything more of that kind? When the

Seventh-day Adventists put me out, I will not go into anything else. I will simply try to live in the fear of the Lord and do my duty; but I am not going to do anything in that direction. If this church wants to put me out, I shan't shed any tears about it at all; but . . . I would like to be tried for all the charges that are brought against me. That would be the Christian way to do it; but I have not any expectation of any such fair treatment as that. . . .

### *Ellen G. White's "Plagiarism"*

I am willing to tell you a little history, something that might be information to you. When the *Great Controversy* came out and the chapters of the history of the Waldenses, my attention was called to it by somebody right away; I could not help but know about it, because there was the little book, Wiley's *History of the Waldenses* right there on the *Review and Herald* book counter, and here was the *Great Controversy* coming out with extracts from it that were scarcely disguised, some of them. There was a disguise because words were changed; it would not have been so proper to use quotation marks because words were changed in the paragraph so they were not exact quotations, but at the same time were borrowed, and your explanation that it was simply an oversight won't hold, Brother Amadon, because it would not have been proper to put it in quotation marks when there were so many words and phrases changed; they were not quotations; they were borrowed. They were plagiarisms and not quotations. There is a difference between plagiarism and quotation.

Plagiarism is when you use a thing almost word for word, but not quite, but just enough different so it is not proper to call it a quotation. There is not a single one of those things that could have quotation marks about them. If you should put it in quotation marks, it would be telling an untruth, because you would be representing this thing as being word for word from the author

when it is not word for word from the author at all. . . . Now, I saw this thing there; my attention was called to it by somebody, and I sent for W. C. White right off, and I said, "I won't stand for this, Will White."<sup>18</sup> Now, I am standing right here, beside your mother, by her writings, and I expect to, but if anybody comes to me with this thing, I shall tell them straight out what I think about it, that it is unwarrantable use of other people's writing; that you have no right to do it, and that I am ashamed of it and I am sorry for it."

He said, "Don't you think that when Mother sees things, runs across things that agree with what she has seen in vision, that it is all right for her to adopt it?" I said, "No, not without giving credit for it. It may be all right for her to quote it and make use of it, but she ought to put quotation marks on and tell where she got it, and should say this is in harmony with what she had 'seen.'" She had no right to incorporate it with what she had "seen" and make it appear that she had seen it first of all. The preface says this book has been written by special illumination, that she has gotten new light by special inspiration; so people read things here, read those paragraphs, and they say, "Here, I saw that in Wiley's book." And I said to Will, "That will condemn your book, detract from the book and the character of it, and it never will do; it is wrong." I said, "I simply won't stand for it, and I want you to know that I won't, and that this thing ought to stop." Now, then, they went on and sold that whole edition, at least 1,500 copies. . . .

They went right on selling it, but they changed the preface in the next edition so as to give a little bit of loophole to crawl out of, giving a little bit of a hint in it, in a very mild and rather in a hidden way that the author had also profited by information obtained from various sources as well as from Divine inspiration. That is my recollection. I remember I saw the correction and I didn't like it. I said, "That is only a crawl out; that is simply something put in so that the ordinary reader won't discover it at all, but will see the larger

statements there of special inspiration; so they will be fooled by that thing." Then there came out other books. Your explanation did not help the case at all about other books. Where is *Great Controversy* and other books, even *Desire of Ages* and *How To Live*? I don't think you ever knew about *How To Live*—with reference to things that were borrowed from Cole's (book).<sup>19</sup>

**Amadon:** I knew a large share of it was borrowed.

**Kellogg:** Those very things Mrs. White's name was signed to, and some of the things—for instance I might recall various ones, if you go through and compare the two you will see a great number of comparisons. I never said a word of that to a living soul, I knew of, for I had the original book in which Sister White read and from which some of these copies were made. I have the book in my library. I know the book, and I have other copies of the book. Dr. Kress was down in Detroit, and he ran across the book eight or ten years ago—Cole's *Philosophy of Health*, and he came to me with great interest and he said, "I have discovered a book here that reads just like *How To Live*—such a wonderful thing that the Lord should put this into two minds at different

times, but the curious thing about it is that this book was written *before How To Live* was written. I said, "Dr. Kress, I know all about that; I have got the book in my library. It is Cole's *Philosophy of Health*, isn't it?" "Yes." "Now, I know all about it. His book was in my library, and Sister White had access to it when *How To Live* was written, and that is the explanation of that; there is no miracle about that; it is just simply a straightforward thing the same as any other."

You know that thing never had any bearing with me at all; it does not have any now, because the truth is the truth, and the thing I am after is the truth. It doesn't make any difference with me. But there is a wrong on the part of the publishers, and I don't think it is right for Sister White to do it without announcing to the public that she did it. If it was right for her to do it, and Will thought it was right for her to do it, then the fact should have been stated in the preface that it had been done, and that would have been all straight then, and nobody could have made any charge of any dishonesty. But that thing never made any difference with me.

I have known that thing all these years, and you never heard me complain about it. I have never made any-

thing of it, never intend to in the world; because Sister White had published things that were true; she had been standing for temperance, for purity and for the things that were good, and giving the effort of her life to promote those things earnestly and sincerely, and I know that thing, and now I don't want to detract from any of the good she has done by picking up things I think are flaws.

I can go and pick out a lot of things, could have done it anytime in the last 25 or 30 years, and so could you; but what good is there in that? I could find fault with some of the good old prophets of olden time, but what good is there in that? We want to build up the things that are strong and suppress the things that are weak. . . . [T]he Battle Creek Sanitarium has not published anything of that kind, has never prepared anything of that sort, and I never prepared anything of that sort—in opposition to Sister White, or to the Seventh-day Adventist denomination or Seventh-day Adventist doctrines—and the Sanitarium never is going to do it and I do not propose to do it.

**Amadon:** . . . I said that Sister White never writes the prefaces to her books.

. . .

**Kellogg:** . . . About the preface, Sister White always *saw* the preface. Certainly she had no right to let the book go out to the world without reading the preface, and she always did read the preface. It is an error, Brother Amadon, I cannot say anything else about it—it is an error and Sister White herself is involved in that error; it is not a deadly error; it doesn't condemn the good things she has done. She has got just as good a right to make mistakes as I have.

**Amadon:** . . . You know, Doctor, that Sister White never in the office sat down and read proof properly.

**Kellogg:** She looked it over, but the thing has been a bad mix-up.

**Amadon:** You know in the days of the Elder (James White) how her writings were handled just as well as I do.

**Kellogg:** Of course I do.

**Amadon:** And I guess I know pretty nearly as well as you do.



The Battle Creek Sanitarium before it burned to the ground in 1902.

**Kellogg:** Of course you do, you know all about it; but it is a foolish thing for anybody to hold up these things, pick out these flaws as representing Sister White's work when they do not represent it at all.<sup>20</sup>

### ***Control of the Battle Creek Tabernacle***

**Kellogg:** . . . How could you ever believe I wanted to get possession of the Tabernacle down here and tell that story all about and get it published in the papers and send it all over the world? It is the most contemptible lie that was ever got up in the world.

**Amadon:** That is just what Sister White sent here.

**Kellogg:** I know it; nevertheless it was a falsehood.

**Amadon:** Then see here. If that is so, Doctor, how was it that the Sanitarium planned how they would heat the Tabernacle—they would send steam down that pipe they had to draw oil up?

**Kellogg:** That is the first I ever heard of such a scheme as that. That is the most ridiculous thing you could imagine. You could no more get steam down to the Tabernacle in that way than you could shoot it down. That is simply a pipe lying there in the cold ground. That is one of the wildest things I ever heard. I want to say to you that that talk—no matter where it came from—whether from Mrs. White or anybody else—about our wanting to get possession of the Tabernacle or having any hankering in that direction is absolutely foolish, absolutely untrue. You cannot find the slightest confirmation of any such thing. It is false.

**Amadon:** Then in that matter, it is Mrs. White vs. Dr. J. H. Kellogg.

**Kellogg:** It isn't any such thing.

**Amadon:** I say it is.

**Kellogg:** It is not. It is Mrs. White versus the facts.

**Amadon:** You say it is not so; she says it is so.

**Kellogg:** I challenge you to show one atom of evidence that that is so; and another thing, how could I do it if I wanted to? And another third thing,

what could I do with it if I had it? Where is there the slightest intimation I ever wanted to do it? . . .

**Amadon:** How was it when we had a certain meeting for the election of trustees,<sup>21</sup> down they came from the Sanitarium, a whole lot of them, and run the whole thing over our heads?

**Kellogg:** I will tell you the truth about that thing, and the Lord is witness of what I tell you. I heard there was going to be a meeting down there, and somebody says, "Those Washington fellows are going to try to get possession of the Tabernacle, and it is not fair; it belongs to the people of this town and they are fooling those people, and it is wrong for them to do it, and we ought to go down there and take a share in that thing and let them see that they can't run things just like that."

I said to them, to everybody I could get hold of who was interested in it, "Don't you go near the place; don't you have anything to do with it. The Battle Creek Church have swallowed Elder Daniells and the whole General Conference Committee and have believed the things they have told them, and they are entitled to have exactly what is coming to them; they are entitled to all they are going to get. They will find out sometime how they have been fooled, but they are entitled to have just the punishment that is coming to them, it is due them for the way they have acted. . . ."

I said, "If they see any of us down there they will say that we have got a game to carry down there, to get it." I afterwards found out that Judge Arthur and Will Kellogg, my brother, were there, and I took them to task for it, and I said, "For pity's sake, what did you go down there for? Those folks will think that we are after it, and we don't want a thing to do with it." Now, then, I know just how this thing came about. Your preacher down there saw those people there, and he judged me just as you have been judging me, and he said, "Now, Dr. Kellogg has been trying to get possession of the Tabernacle," and he wrote a letter to Elder Daniells and Elder Daniells had that letter in Europe to prove that I was doing this thing—

because he saw those people down there; it was purely suspicion and inference. I never dreamed of Will's going down there, never dreamed Judge Arthur would go down there. Judge Arthur was getting all out of joint with things, and I did not suppose he had any interest in it at all. But I never knew a thing about it.

This man wrote to Elder Daniells, and he sent word to California; and Sister White wrote a letter to Elder Haskell, wrote a letter to Dr. Kress, one to Daniells and to somebody down here, and Will White got those letters and took a paragraph here, a paragraph there, and a paragraph from the other one and put them together, and made up a thing and sent them out with his own name signed to it. It is a "testimony" from Willie. . . . Sister White in that document does not in a single instance say that the Lord has shown her I was trying to do such a thing as she said I was. . . .

### ***Influencing Ellen White***

**Kellogg:** And when I saw that plagiarism, I tell you, Brother Amadon, it hurt me bad. I had seen this scheming and misuse of a wonderful gift the Lord gave to Sister White. James White used to abuse it and you know it, you know it. . . . I knew it for I was intimate with the Elder and tried to hold him back. He told me of his plans. He made me an

18. It would be most interesting to know when this conversation took place. It sounds as if it may have been when Kellogg, as a youth, worked at the *Review and Herald*. If so, he would have hardly been in any position to lay down the ultimatum he recalls!

19. Since Kellogg was only 12 when *Health or How to Live* began publication, it is more probable that Cole's book was in the *Review and Herald* stock of books carried for sale where he became acquainted with it—just when, it would be impossible to say.

20. An omitted section reiterates Kellogg's arguments about the so-called "Blue Book" containing Dr. Stewart's objections to what he considered to be contradictions in Ellen White's writings.

21. At this time title to the Tabernacle property was not held by any conference organization, but by Trustees elected by the local congregation.

intimate for a good many years, and for more years than any other man that ever lived, and I knew all about his plans and his schemes. Elder White got after U. Smith, pursued Smith and tried to get me to join him in schemes against Smith that I would not uphold him in. I held him off on dozens of things he was determined to do, for he would occasionally go on the warpath, get Sister White to back him up, bring pressure to bear.

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**[T]hey have got her [Ellen White] tangled up with all the little personal affairs of business and a lot of other things that the Lord has not given her any information about or any light about.**

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Harriett Smith (wife of Uriah Smith) met me on the street the other day, and I was speaking to her about that three weeks' siege down there when they shook you all over the bottomless pit. I went to those meetings. I was a small boy, but I said to Harriett that I had a good deal of respect for "you because you would not confess what you had not done." She said, "But we did confess." I said, "I did not know that." But I said, "What made you do it?" She said, "They kept at us until they got us so nearly crazy we did not know what we were doing, and there was no way we could stop it but confess; but afterwards Brother White came around, got them all together, and acknowledged that he had been after us, pursuing us." And she said, "I would not go; I stayed away; I would not go to the meeting, and by and by he came to me where I was and in the room where I was, and he came and put his hand on my shoulder, and said, 'Harriett, I tried to crush you; I did my best to crush you; will you forgive

me?'" Now, you know that is where Elder White was a bigger man than those other fellows; he would get on a tear, on a campaign, and when he had carried the thing far enough he had sense enough to turn around; but Will White is not big enough to turn about. W. C. White knows just as well as I know that he has been doing a wrong thing, is on a wrong track, and that he is not straight; and if he could get back again where he was five years ago, he would be tickled to death today; but you see Prescott and Daniells have forced him over, have gotten him into a position where he went so far he cannot retreat from it, and that is where they are.

**Amadon:** I don't hardly think it is wise to call up the dead, to turn Elder White over in his casket, and Brother Smith and others that have passed away. Of course, we know how things were back there, and there were things that were not just as they ought to have been; but there is an old poem that says, "Let it pass, let it pass," and I believe that is better than to bring it up.

**Kellogg:** I want to tell you that is my position now. I saw it pass, and it passed; so I am trying to hold my breath in this thing until this passes. . . .

**Amadon:** Say, Doctor, I want to tell you—you have been charging up things against Will. Now Will don't have that wicked feeling against you. . . .

**Kellogg:** I told you a little while ago he would be glad to get back on the old basis. He keeps up a campaign against me when he knows he has not got any foundation for it. He is the foundation of the whole business.

**Amadon:** I think the devil is No. 1.

**Kellogg:** He is No. 1, and W. C. White is No. 2.

**Amadon:** That is a pretty strong charge.

**Kellogg:** It is no stronger than the charge you are making against me that I am hypnotizing people and hypnotized by Satan.

**Amadon:** Doctor, the *Testimonies* say so.

**Kellogg:** How do I know what is truth? The Lord has to come to impress

the truth on your heart, and when the thing is true it has the power to vindicate itself and to impress itself. . . . Now, Will White had in his pocket at that very moment when Prof. Prescott was giving that address,<sup>22</sup> a testimony from his mother to Prof. Prescott not to do it, and he had had it all day long. He had it there Friday morning, and he carried it around all day, and knew that the attack was going to be made upon me that night, and he never delivered it to Prof. Prescott at all.

**Amadon:** Then he didn't do right.

**Kellogg:** That is what I am telling you—he is a schemer, and he wanted that attack to be made on me; and the brethren on the ground knew that—Sutherland and others, and they had seen that letter that Sister White had given to W. C. White. . . .

. . . That is the way Will White has been manipulating things right along, making things different from what they were.

His mother gave a testimony and he held it up. Down at Washington they did the same thing. They had a testimony that they ought to send \$5,000 down to Elder Haskell. She gave it to Will. Will said it would not do. She had a vision in the night and told Brother Haskell he would carry \$5,000 back with him; so he expected to have the money, and she wrote out the letter and sent it to Elder Daniells and Will White held that up, did not let Elder Daniells have it, and I received a letter, a copy of a letter in which she wrote that to Elder Evans and instructed them that they must go ahead and carry it out, and it explained the whole thing. That shows Will's manipulation right straight along.

That is what I mean by saying he is the tool the devil is using to make trouble. I wrote to him 12 years ago when he was in Australia, "I see your finger between the lines, and I warn you to keep your hands off from this thing. Let your mother act free." There would have been no trouble if she had not been brought into all these details of business and everything else. If they would let her alone to deal with the great prin-

22. Kellogg refers back to the public attack made on him and ideas expressed in *Living Temple* at the 1904 Lake Union Session in Berrien Springs.

ciples of truth, righteousness, temperance and reform, it would have been a wonderful thing; but they have got her tangled up with all the little personal affairs of business and a lot of other things that the Lord has not given her any information about or any light about, and have made her to do business with the sale of books, or to settle church quarrels, and such things. And the Lord has never authorized any such use at all of the wonderful gifts He gave her.

**Bourdeau:** Brother White thinks he is taking the place of his father.

**Kellogg:** His father used to make a lot of trouble in the same way.

**Bourdeau:** I understand that the Lord has shown her years ago that Brother (W. C.) White should be an adviser in making use of the testimonies.

**Kellogg:** I don't know anything about that at all, but I know I got hold of W. C. White [1904 at the Berrien Springs meeting], I saw him sitting out on the porch, and I called out to him and said, "Come here, Will, you and I were boys together, we were friends, and we changed. I believe just what I did then. I have not changed at all. I am just what I have been all the time, and what is the use in having this unseemly quarrel? . . . He said "Oh, Brother Kellogg, you can do more than anyone else to settle this unpleasant time we are having." I said, "What do you mean? Do you mean I should confess I am a pantheist? I suspect if that is what you mean you can depend on it I will not—before I will ever do it, for it is a lie and you know it; it is not the truth and you know it is not the truth." "Well, but Doctor, you have been saying things that weaken faith in the *Testimonies*." I said, "I am not responsible for faith being weakened in the *Testimonies*. You have been sending me things you ought to have had sense enough to know were not true and could not be true, and that is what has made trouble."

## **Chicago Buildings**

**Kellogg:** I said, "There is the matter of those buildings in Chicago. Your mother wrote me, 'You have erected buildings in Chicago to harbor the unworthy poor; you have taken money from the Sanitarium to erect buildings to harbor the unworthy poor.' And I wrote back to Sister White, 'We have erected no buildings, taken no money; you have been misinformed;' and I got back a letter charging me again with it, the second time, denouncing me harder than ever for having put up those buildings, misappropriating the Lord's money; and with having robbed the treasury of the Lord, defrauded the Lord's people; and I should have sent the money to Australia that I used for putting up those buildings." I said to Will, "You ought never to have sent me such a letter as that, and when I denied it, told your mother she had been misinformed, she ought to have believed me instead of repeating the charge; and not only that, but sending it all over the world. Now, then, when people come to see me and ask me where those buildings are, I am bound to tell them that there are no buildings there. I am not going to lie about this thing. I am standing by your mother and the testimonies, but I am not standing by anything that is not true." He said, "But mother has explained that." After several years I told her it was not true—when she came to this country I spoke to her about it, and she said she had never done it, she had never seen that I had taken money from the Sanitarium for any such purpose, and had no recollection of ever having written me any such thing. Not until after denouncing me in Washington there about the book did I receive anything from her. Some time after that I got a letter from her saying, "I saw a building in Chicago. I thought it had been erected. I afterwards found out it had not been erected. Dr. Kellogg was very much surprised because I wrote him as though it had been erected when it had not been erected;" and that she did not condemn me for erecting the building. So I was tried about her. She

had charged me with embezzling money, with robbery, with defrauding the people; and that is what troubled me—not because she condemned me for erecting the building. Then she wrote, "My warnings reached them just in time to prevent them from erecting a building they had planned." I never planned building there at all, never intended to erect a building.

**Amadon:** That has all been explained.

**Kellogg:** It has not been explained at all. I am telling you this so I believe in my soul that you know the facts; then I am not responsible for what you do in any way at all. Will White said, "Mother has explained it." I said, "But the explanation is worse than it was before, because her explanation admits that she charged me with fraud and robbery on a mere supposition. She *thought* the building had been erected, condemned me for erecting it, and for taking money to do it with, charged me for erecting it, and for taking money to do it with, charged me with robbery and fraud, circulated it all over the world, to South Africa and England, as I can prove.

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**She had charged me with embezzling money, with robbery, with defrauding the people; and that is what troubled me—not because she condemned me for erecting the building.**

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On a mere supposition, Brother Amadon, what right had she, when she saw a building there, to *suppose* that I did it, and charge me openly that I had done it and to send me such a testimony? The Lord never gave her any such liberty as that; it was a mistake to do that, and her explanation that she "thought" it makes it worse, because it shows she charges people and sends people testimonies on suspicion and without a "thus saith the Lord" to back it up.

. . . We never planned any building to

harbor the unworthy poor. The only plan we had was a building for medical students, a medical college, and I brought it up in 1901 at the Conference here and she endorsed it and helped me make an appeal to the people to raise \$100,000 for that very purpose, and it is on the record, and the *Bulletin* will show it; so it is plain enough that the Lord had nothing to do with it at all.

Will said, "Now, Doctor, I will tell you all about that building in Chicago. You know mother was writing things in the night that came to her; in the morning she would write it out, and I said, 'Now, Mother, I don't think the Doctor is doing such great things in Chicago as you think he is.'" I said, "How on earth, then, did you suppose I was to believe it if you did not believe it yourself?" He said, "Well, I will tell you. It went on and by and by the stenographers copied it out, got it all ready, and I looked it over and I thought it would not do any harm to let it go, because I supposed of course you would understand that it was figurative ambition, all figurative. Well, now," he said, "I will tell you. After a while, after mother had been writing, she brought me one day a paper which told about what great things you were doing there in Chicago, and putting up great buildings, using great sums of money, etc.; so I thought perhaps there might be some truth about the whole business."

I know it is the truth, because my brother, Merritt, told me Mrs. White came to him with a paper. He said, "Doctor, there is a thing I think I ought to tell you, but I hardly dare to do it; but," he said, "years ago, down in Australia, Mrs. White came to me one day with a newspaper giving an account of large buildings you were putting up in Chicago, and the money you were spending there, and so on, and Mrs. White said to me, 'Now, Merritt, I don't want you to write to Dr. John anything about this, because I am going to write him myself, and I want to write him

first.'" Merritt told me about having seen the article before she sent me her testimony. Will White told me she read the article to him *before he was willing to believe the testimony or to let it come to me*; and he let it come on the strength of that.

After Sister White wrote me what I stated, . . . I wrote her back, "You are mistaken, Sister White, you have been misinformed." She wrote me back as soon as the letter could come, about three months after the first letter, saying, "I have not been misinformed." It amounted to that. And she went on and copied from a paper, and said, "Two or three days ago I saw an article, my attention was called to a paper giving an article telling about the work you are doing in Chicago," and she copied from that paper and gave me a reference. It was the *New York Christian Advocate*, and it was an article written some four years before.

Now, then, I saw at once where she got her information. I knew the Lord had not shown her that thing because I was not doing it. The way things were fixed at that time, I could not have done it if I had wanted to; our charter would have been forfeited, and the whole thing would have been lost, and our attorney here was cautioning me repeatedly every little while, with the greatest care—"Be careful not to expend any of the money of the institution here outside of the State," because Harmon Lindsay and others were watching us and had lawyers watching us so that they might use that as a means of breaking our charter; and besides that there was a party in Chicago that had a bogus suit for blackmail against the institution on the ground of malpractice. It was absolutely groundless, but they were trying to break our charter also for the same reason; so I was watching the thing with great care and I would have cut my arm off before I would have taken money from the Sanitarium to put up a building there. . . .

. . . As soon as I got that second letter, I said to Dr. Paulson right away, "We know now where she got the information. She did not get it from the Lord, that is sure." So we went to New York and got a copy of the paper with the article in it, and got the whole thing; then I saw at once what the situation was. There is the whole truth of the whole business, exactly the thing.

. . . I know . . . that everything that Sister White writes me cannot be taken exactly as verbal inspiration; that we have got simply to take the truth of it. A lot of the things she writes have got to be accepted and taken, and what you cannot act upon in the fear of the Lord, ask the Lord to show you what your duty is, and do the very best you can to be square and straight with yourself and with every principle of light and truth you see.

**Amadon:** That is, if the thing harmonizes with your idea of things, accept it, if not, let it go.

**Kellogg:** Why do you say that?

**Amadon:** Because the one to who the document comes is to judge.

**Kellogg:** Then, what would you have me to do with such a thing? . . .

**Bourdeau:** As I read it in the manuscript—Dr. Stewart—

**Kellogg:** Dr. Stewart hasn't got it there.

**Bourdeau:** In the manuscript I have at our home, I saw it spoke of one building being put up in Chicago, then it brought in a testimony with regard to a lot of buildings you were putting up, not saying in Chicago, but elsewhere, anywhere, and using money—

**Kellogg:** That had reference to Sanitariums. The first testimony I got did not say Chicago. It said, "You have taken money to erect buildings to harbor the unworthy poor," but it did not say where they were. . . .

*(Part 2 of this interview will appear in Volume 20, Number 4.)*



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## *Reactions to Bull and Lockhart on Space and Time*

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To the Editors: As a clinical social worker, I particularly enjoyed “The Art of Expression,” by Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart (*Spectrum*, Vol. 20, No. 1). What Bull and Lockhart define as the Adventist preference for expression within time rather than space can also be redefined in therapeutic terms as a tendency to prefer *doing* rather than *being*. *Doing* is time bound, while *being* is primarily related to one’s existence within space. A person preoccupied with *doing* might have trouble relaxing (I never seem to have enough time), might have difficulty in accepting others as they are, and might feel guilty for failing to accomplish all assigned tasks. Adventists in particular feel guilty for using their time poorly or missing a timely opportunity to witness for their faith, as this failure will result in lost souls. Those who are content with *being*, on the other hand, might be more inclined to be accepting of another’s beliefs and more likely to enjoy their here and now existence.

Several problems exist for those whose expression is purely within the boundaries of time. First, this approach would severely compromise the ability of a therapist, pastor, or friend to respond to another’s experience with non-judgmental warmth and acceptance. How can we truly listen to someone openly and respect their point of view if we are constantly trying to figure out how to change (save) them? Generally, attempts to convert others to our position become more destructive than supportive and lead to a feeling of exclusivity and elitism which only serve to alienate those we are trying to help.

Second, being time-bound hinders us from experiencing the world from another’s point of view. Adventists’ attitudes toward fiction are a good case in point. Great literature allows us to see the world through the eyes of another, thereby increasing our ability to sympathize with and accept their world view. This acceptance can only occur within space, without having to worry about time running out or probation closing before we can save the individual. Time pressure creates a need to reject others’ experiences as less than sufficient and leads to rejection of those who don’t hold an Adventist viewpoint.

Third, the way in which we choose to experience time will directly influence our ability to experience God. By creating a God that is time-bound, we limit God’s power. Even Christ talked about the kingdom of God being present among (or within) us, certainly a dimension more appropriate to space than time. When the kingdom is experienced as

a state of *being* rather than exclusively as a goal which must be reached by *doing*, we become free to accept the gift of God’s grace rather than having to do something in order to qualify for the reward. Time pressure creates an urgency to produce results and is more likely to produce a works-oriented philosophy toward the kingdom. An ability to just *be*, on the other hand, is a position more open to the presence of grace.

Several activities would seem to be more appropriately experienced within space rather than time. Meditating is a *being* activity unless it becomes goal-directed. We are told to “Pray without ceasing,” certainly a call to a state of *being* rather than of *doing*. Nature is also best experienced by *being*. Adventists, however, are more inclined to try to learn lessons from the Book of Nature, a *doing* activity, rather than contenting themselves to just *be* and let nature impact upon their senses.

It seems to me that in our rush to get to heaven, we as Adventists too often forget that we also have a God of the present. By failing to incorporate the dimension of space into our lives we seriously compromise our ability to experience God’s grace and reflect his unconditional love and acceptance in our relationships with others.

Curt VanderWaal  
Ann Arbor, Michigan

To the Editors: The Bull and Lockhart essay on Adventist worship (“The Art of Expression,” Vol. 20, No. 1) stimulated memories and reflections on important parts of Adventist worship they do not stress. If you are a conservative Christian, you likely have experienced a unique psychological phenomenon known as the “altar call.” Typically, you experience it as a foreboding discomfort that first becomes noticeable near the end of a sermon. With the minister getting more “earnest,” you secretly hope that it will “blow over,” but you know it won’t. Then the ultimate cue—the organist covertly slips back to the bench from the front row of the choir loft and softly begins to play “Just As I Am,” and you know this is for real. Soon many around you are standing and you know you’d better get on your feet and join them or they’ll get the wrong idea—they’ll think you dislike Jesus—that you’re not interested in having Him as Lord of your life.

When it’s over, you typically experience intense mixed emotions. You feel relief (that it’s over), guilt (that you’ve been phony), and anger (because you’ve been manipulated). Your pastor’s emotions are likely to be more positive. He feels awe (that God has again used human lips to call disciples), inspired (that the Holy Spirit has moved so mightily on the hearts of parishioners), and thankful (for the

privilege of being so integral a part of God's kingdom here on earth).

But something is wrong. In his efforts to "call the flock," the pastor has unknowingly utilized hypnotic-like techniques and unwittingly replaced the voice of the Spirit with group psychology.

Does God call for public commitment?

Typical altar-calling preachers suggest that real commitment carries with it the courage to "go public." I've heard Billy Graham say, "Jesus always called people publicly." Urgency is often added to the formula by suggesting that, "This could be your last opportunity!" And I've heard preachers suggest—in the style of good real-estate or car salesmen—"It'll never be easier than right now!"

It is difficult to find scriptural parallels to the itinerant evangelists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries who contrasted vivid mental images of the horrors of hell with the glories of heaven in a crude but effective motivational device designed to cause listeners to "hit the sawdust trail." In Scripture we find inspiring examples of personal commitment leading to public consequences, but the "publicness" always seems incidental. There is no implication that public commitment is any better than private worship.

"So, what's the big problem?" you might ask. "If you don't want to go forward and re-dedicate your life to Jesus, you don't have to. And if even one or two people find Christ it's worth it. Are you in such a big hurry to leave that you won't allow that?"

I believe that there is only one legitimate kind of altar call—the kind that most of the worshipers can *comfortably* sit through! Paradoxical as it seems, any "call" that fails that test is not the work of God, but rather an exercise in group manipulation. It is not the "still small voice" of the Holy Spirit that is getting the saints on their feet, but the power of group psychology. And worse yet, there is tremendous coerciveness built into the dynamics of such a process.

Asking an audience to participate in an altar call drastically reduces the parishioners' communicational options. The person in the pew is reduced to *binary, non-verbal* communication. Herein is the greatest coerciveness. If more than half the church is standing to their feet in "coerced re-dedication," you have almost no choice but to join because, if you don't, those present must interpret your not standing in binary grammar. To stand means to love Jesus; to sit means to dislike him. To stand means you want him to come and take you home; to sit means you'd rather stay. To stand means you want to see his work go forward; to sit means you'd rather it didn't. The pastor has reduced your communicational options to a non-verbal binary mode. And you've had no choice.

That is why most persons leave an altar call feeling manipulated. They have just communicated about a very complex personal relationship (with God) in a simplistic, non-verbal, binary mode, and the group dynamics did not allow "no communication." Such manipulations leave most people resentful and favor a religion for exhibitionists, narcissists, and hysterics. Private, thoughtful persons are forced to "go along" or else be seen as less than fully devoted.

A noncoercive invitation to rededication could be given quietly during a closing prayer without requiring any outward signals. Do we seriously think that God cannot "read our hearts" unless we are standing, or walking down the center aisle? Will the Holy Spirit fail without the assistance of pastor-hypnotists? Let's alter the altar call. Let's make it a non-coerced opportunity for thinking about one's relationship to the Almighty, not a time of coerced exhibitionism.

"'Come now, let us reason [not stand] together,' says the Lord" (Isaiah 1:18).

John Berecz  
Andrews University

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