

Spectrum

The Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums

Mirrors

EARLY BATTLE CREEK IN
THE ROAD TO WELLVILLE

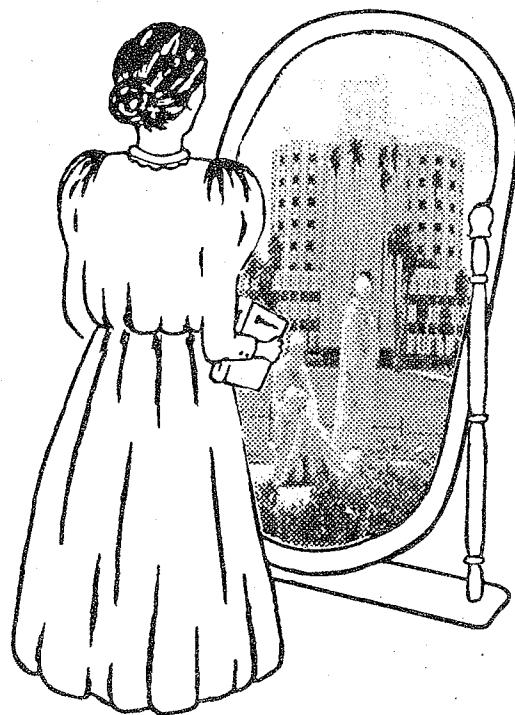
NORTHWEST SDAS IN
THE BROTHERS K

HISTORIAN AS HERETIC IN
PROPHETESS OF HEALTH

LETTER FROM TIRANA—
A PRAYER FOR ALBANIA

NOAH'S ARK OR
'JURASSIC PARK'?

TIMOTHY AND TITUS—
CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES



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Spectrum

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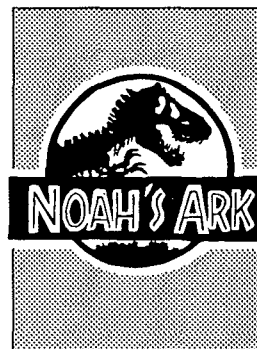
Garyl Land reports that Numbers' latest work, *The Creationists*, underscores the importance of Adventist influences on conservative Protestantism.

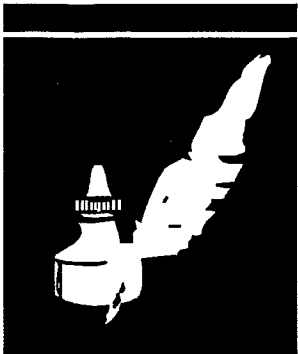
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George Marsden, a scholar of American religious history, welcomes Numbers' book as a "monumental history."

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Jonathan Butler tells the saga of what happened to Ronald Numbers and the Adventist church during the writing and after the publication of *Prophetess of Health*.





Mirrors Through Time

HISTORIANS ARE GOSSIPS THROUGH TIME. THAT, AT least, is what I like to tell my cousin, the historian. Ronald Numbers, raised and educated in the denomination, can't resist ferreting out intriguing information about Adventists, even if they happen to have lived in the past.

Historians, of course, are a lot more than gossips. Jonathan Butler even refers to the "Historian as Heretic." His essay, reprinted from the new, second edition of Numbers' *Prophetess of Health: Ellen G. White*, is a tour de force: not only a history of the emergence of Adventist history, but an analysis of how, since the 1970s, historians have provided the church with more than one legitimate way to approach such crucial topics as Ellen White, social reform, race, and the role of women. Butler argues that Numbers' growing scope as a historian and continued fascination with Adventists—both seen in his latest volume, *The Creationists*—has convinced historians generally that Adventists are a significant part of American intellectual and social history.

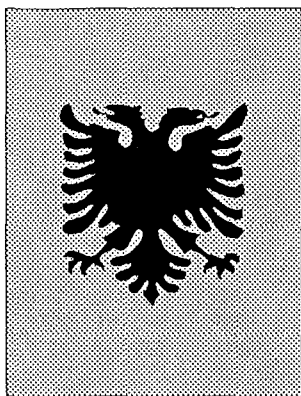
Adventist history assumes varied shapes in creative writing. The recent novels featured in the special section mirror 19th century Battle Creek and the 20th century Northwest. In T. Coraghessan Boyle's comic *The Road to Wellville* we see elongated and broadened images of early Adventists, the sort of delightful and

disturbing reflections of ourselves we glimpse in amusement park mirrors. David Duncan's characters in *The Brothers K*, written by an author raised by an Adventist mother in a more contemporary Adventist church community, are less exotic but sometimes equally alarming. Whether or not the silhouettes these writers outline are familiar, by gazing at and sometimes recoiling from the Adventist characters created in these books we learn about ourselves. By beholding and responding to them we may even become changed.

Perhaps most importantly, historians are reformers. To adapt G. K. Chesterton's words, historians insist on expanding the franchise—extending the vote to members of the community who happen not to be in the room. Each historian looks at the past a little differently; each is a mirror with his own reflection of a community through time. Historians provide us with diverse views of who we have been and are, and therefore suggest options for who we might become in the future.

Creative writers and historians mirror nothing less than the contours of our identity. No wonder that since the 1970s reflections of Adventism provided by historians have been controversial. But their pictures are proving attractive to the Adventist community, and are transforming it forever.

Roy Branson



Letter From Tirana— A Prayer for Albania

A top University of Tirana student becomes an Adventist and a member of Albania's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

by Migen Shehu

As the plane takes off and I leave the United States, I have a special feeling in my heart. I leave a part of myself with these people who have become part of my extended family. I'd often thought about America, but never imagined that in the spring of 1993 I would find myself there, part of the family of God. The flight is long, and the continent unrolls below me like a giant map. In my mind, I look back on my time spent in America—and on my whole life.

God must have wanted my life to be different from those of my friends. I was born 22 years ago in Tirana, the capital of Albania. The country's official name is Shqipëri, The Land of the Eagle, and it is an apt description of a country where 70 percent of the land is wild and mountainous.

From the end of the Second World War until 1985, this tiny Balkan state was in the grasp of a ruthless Stalinist dictator, Enver Hoxha. Those who dared to criticize his totalitarian regime were declared "enemies of the people," removed from jobs and homes, and either killed or exiled for life with their families to labor camps. My grandfather on my mother's side, a professor, ended up in jail because of his democratic ideals. Because of my grandfather's

beliefs, my father, a lawyer, was not allowed to practice, and my mother was barred from attending university. All forms of religion were outlawed. Life was a nightmare.

In December of 1990, students first began to protest against the most severe totalitarian regime in Europe. At the time I was in my third of four levels of study at the university, concentrating on foreign and Albanian literature, syntax, stylistics, and so on. I joined with thousands of others in shouting "Freedom! Democracy! Albania like all of Europe!" Each one of us was in danger of being killed, expelled from the university, or having his or her family suffer reprisals. The image is still in my mind of a police officer beating a young girl who could not run as fast as the others.

Even after the revolution, I was unhappy. Books seemed to be the only things able to bring me peace. I tried continually to forget reality, but inside I felt empty. I didn't understand at the time that what I was longing for was a special feeling. I needed to be loved in a particular, divine way, and to return that love in a way I had never done before.

Until January of 1992, I had never seen a Bible. This may be hard for some to believe, but during the long period of communist rule, owning a Bible or even acknowledging a faith in God were crimes punishable by imprisonment. I began to study the Bible with a group of friends, including three

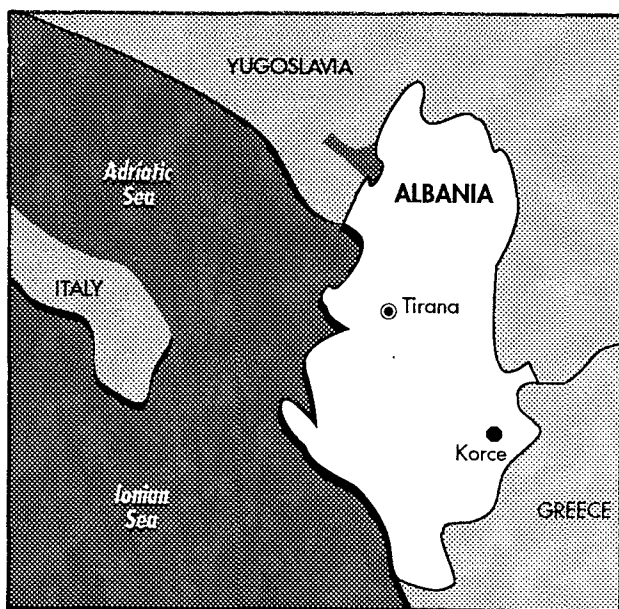
Migen Shehu, a graduate of the University of Tirana in languages and linguistics, is a diplomat in the Foreign Ministry of Albania.

Americans who had come to Albania for a year to share the Word of God with Albanian students. I was told that I could find truth in the Bible about every aspect of life, about becoming a better individual, and about life after death. As I studied, I felt as though a light were shining in my soul, and I began to see the world in a different way.

From time to time I had opportunities to meet believers from other countries who visited Albania. Once, a group of students from Norway came and we shared testimonies with them. When my turn came, I told them that I was a Christian. It was the first time I had really accepted it with all my heart, and expressed it to others. It was a moment I will never forget.

My decision astounded my parents. My grandparents on both sides were Muslims. My father's father had been a muezzin, daily calling the faithful to a mosque for prayers. My parents practiced no religion, since it was forbidden, but they claimed to be Muslims by origin. Since I also had never prayed to God as a Muslim, nor been to a mosque, I insisted—to them, and to my close friends—that I was not converting from one religion to another. Most importantly, my decision made me happier, and I was sure that people who really loved me would want my happiness.

After declaring myself a Christian, I visited many churches in Tirana, looking only for a place to worship God with a group of people. At first I didn't really see a difference among the churches, but found that I fit in best with Adventist believers. The first Adventist church in Tirana was established in



the spring of 1992. David Currie, a pastor from England, held a series of lectures illustrated with pictures from around the world. While attending these meetings, I met an Adventist from the United States. He was a special guest, and was invited to speak. When he explained his plans for publishing Christian literature in the Albanian language, I was immediately interested. I approached him after the ceremony but wasn't able to speak to him, since others were already waiting to talk with him, and he needed to leave.

The following day there was another meeting scheduled at the church. I was very busy with examinations at the university and hadn't planned to attend, but at the last minute I changed my mind. Once at the church, I found myself seated next to the guest from the United States. Not long after that meeting, I began the translation of literature from English into the Albanian language.

I do not think our meeting was merely accidental. Translation helped me learn the essential differences between churches and religions, and brought me to a fuller understanding of what it meant to be an Adventist, and why this church kept the Sabbath. I regularly attended the Sabbath morning services of the Adventist congregation in Tirana. Its 100 members are mainly students at high schools and the university, though retirees as well as uneducated and highly educated members also attend. One is a professor of literature at the University of Tirana, another is one of Albania's most prominent film directors.

In the late spring of 1992, I graduated from the University of Tirana with highest honors, and was invited to take part in a competition organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. When I won the competition and an invitation to become a diplomat, I realized that my life was in God's hands. The feeling of emptiness was gone.

In September of 1992 I was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. One week later I flew to Switzerland with a group of diplomats to study international relations and diplomacy. When we returned, we began work as members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. All the while, I was privately translating Christian literature. A friend from the United States brought me an Apple computer, which made my work easier, and I translated the first Bible studies into the Albanian language.

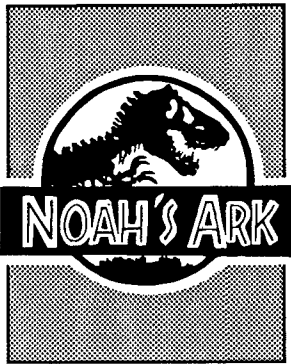
In January of 1993 the U.S. Department of State organized a training course in Washington, D.C. for Albanian diplomats. I was selected to attend along with nine others, including the chief of staff of the

president, an old friend of mine. The president's foreign-policy advisor was also selected. As soon as I arrived the next month in the United States I tried to contact fellow believers. I spent my first Sabbath in a church in Martinsburg, West Virginia. It was unforgettable. I was nervous at first since I knew no one, but people spoke to me as if we were friends—brothers and sisters. I spoke in front of the church, bringing the members greetings from the church in Tirana.

The next week I attended Sligo church, in Takoma Park, Maryland. The Adventist church in Tirana is very small, and meets in a hall that served as the museum of the former dictator. Sligo church, with its 3,000-plus members, was impressive. Again, I had the opportunity to bring greetings from my home church, and to discuss Albania in Sabbath school classes. My only regret was that I wasn't able to accept all of the invitations from Adventists to visit and fellowship with them. I did notice differences

between Albanian Adventists and some strict American Adventists. For example, our economic situation does not permit us to be as selective in our food as some American Adventists are. Also, in reaction to the communists' interference in every aspect of our private lives, Albanians highly value their new freedom in areas such as dress and hairstyle. So do Albanian Adventists—more so than some rather strict American Adventists.

In the late spring of 1993, as my plane returns me to Albanian soil, I thank God again for his love and generosity. After nearly half a century, Albanians have come in from the cold of communism, and religious ideology often terrifies them, for they see it restricting their new-found freedom. At the same time, Albanians need God, for they need hope and the inner strength to change. As I do every day, I say a prayer for Albania.



Noah's Ark or 'Jurassic Park'?

Did God or Lucifer create the dinosaurs? Were they in or out of the ark? Adventists have given many answers.

by James L. Hayward

ADVENTISM ENJOYS A RICH ICONOGRAPHY—multiheaded beasts, resurrected corpses, crumbling mountains, dour angelic messengers. When I was a boy most of these images struck terror in my heart, but a painting by Harry Anderson in *The Bible Story* captured my fancy. Against a backdrop of blossom-covered hills, Adam stands, arms outstretched, surrounded by a newly created menagerie. The lion and the lamb, the wolf and the deer, the cat and the rabbit—all live together in harmony.¹

As I look at Anderson's painting today, however, I find myself asking, "What's wrong with this picture?" What's a vegetarian lion doing with large canine teeth? How come the zebra has cryptic coloration? Where are the dinosaurs?

Dinosaurs? Dinosaurs in Eden? The Bible doesn't speak of them. Why, then, are their

bones so common? Did God create them? Did the devil make them? Will there be dinosaurs in heaven?

After more than a century of wrestling with beasts of prophecy, Adventists are beginning to wrestle with the beasts of the distant past.

On the Origin and Demise of Dinosaurs

Recently I made a presentation to a church group on the challenges that face Adventists who attempt to evaluate the history of life in the context of faith. During the question-and-answer period I was asked for my opinion on the origin of dinosaurs. An elderly lady, unhappy with my equivocal reply, retorted that the problem was one of appearances: "Dinosaurs are ugly," she snapped, "and my God didn't make anything ugly!" Her reaction reflects the opinion of many Adventists.

"Big Animals Long Ago—The Dinosaurs" (1979) by Ruth Wheeler, a children's book published by the Review and Herald Publish-

James L. Hayward, a professor of biology at Andrews University, examines processes involved in the fossilization of eggs and their enclosed embryos. He teaches a course for biology graduate students called *Issues in Origins and Speciation*.

ing Association, illustrates this point well. The narrative begins with a description of the “beautiful world” God made. We see a color illustration of Eden, complete with a giraffe, raccoon, heron, wolf, deer, elk, wild turkey, a mare and her foal, a bear, and a pair of elephants—all creatures of the contemporary world. “Many kinds of animals lived in the beautiful world,” states the text. “All the animals were gentle and peaceful. None of them hurt the people or other animals.”

Turning the page we are transported to a different era, this one rendered in black and white. Dead snags border the scene and storm clouds gather in the distance. *Triceratops*, *Stegosaurus*, *Ornitholestes*, *Brontosaurus*, and duckbill dinosaurs feed along the lakeshore. In the foreground a *Tyrannosaurus* severs the spinal cord of a plant-eating reptile and a second vegetarian races toward the edge of the picture. The message is clear: These “strange” animals were not part of the Creator’s original plan; they “appeared” as a result of sin. Most Adventists would agree, but few have thought seriously about how this was accomplished.²

Ellen White, for one, never used the word *dinosaur* in her writings, though at one point she mentioned “a class of very large animals which perished at the flood.” She also wrote of “confused species which God did not create, which were the result of amalgamation, [and] were destroyed by the flood.”³ Many of her interpreters have assumed that she was referring to dinosaurs in these statements.

In *Creation and Catastrophe* (1972), Harry Baerg suggested that environmental changes brought about by sin had something to do with the origin of dinosaurs (see chart, *Histories of Dinosaurs*, p. 9). “After the Fall,” wrote Baerg,

the physical features of the earth may have gradually changed. . . . Small ponds and lakes, the home of waterfowl, fish, and frogs, grew into large morasses choked with rank swamp growth.

Fossils indicate that by the time of the Flood vast bogs had apparently developed.

In these stagnating waters certain of the reptiles descended from those God had made, found ideal homes. As they lived in the shallow water and fed on the lush plants they grew to enormous size. Later some, such as the *Brachiosaurus*, became so large and heavy that they needed to rely somewhat on the water to support their massive weight. . . . No wonder God chose not to preserve them.⁴

Later, when describing the Flood, Baerg provided a macabre illustration of the deep waters filled with the bloated corpses of the enormous reptiles.⁵

Harold Coffin devoted a short chapter to dinosaurs in his college text *Creation—Accident or Design?* (1969). After examining the diversity of dinosaurs and their sudden extinction by the Flood, he cautiously broached the problem of their origin. One explanation, he noted, might be that they were the result of “amalgamation” between different subclasses or orders. But, said Coffin,

This seems somewhat questionable in the light of the laws of reproduction and genetics today. The original created kinds are more likely to be comparable to the smaller classification units. To equate them to orders or higher units, and to allow hybridization between different types of so large a kind is to suggest a great deal of change. It must be remembered, however, that the Bible does not say that animals may cross only within their species, or genus, or even within their created kind.⁶

A 1983 revision of Coffin’s book excluded any direct reference to dinosaur beginnings.⁷

Pastor R. F. Correia, known as “Dinosaur Bob” to grade school audiences, exhibited considerably less caution than Coffin in explaining the origin of dinosaurs. In his pamphlet “An Examination of the Unique Osteological Features of Dinosaurs as a Special ‘Class of Very Large Animals’” (1985) Correia asked:

Is the apparent over-ossification of the dinosaurian skull as seen in the abnormal ceratopsian frill, the peculiar hadrosaur crest, and the grotesque skull of Pachcephalosaurus with its weird rugosities the result of strange forces which caused malfunction of the pituitary [sic] gland, or are they attributable to mutation, hereditary maladjustments [sic], some pathological condition or even perhaps hybridism? If cross-breeding is the most feasible possibility, then there is some merit in the conclusion of Ellen G. White when discussing what well might be the reason for the demise of the dinosaurs.

Correia went on to quote Ellen White's statement about "confused species," then postulated that dinosaurs arose through "amalgamation" from crocodiles:

If dinosaurs were hybrids and missed the boat [Noah's ark] because they were not original species, then from what true type of creature could they have branched off? From the available data, one of the most plausible possibilities of progenitorship of dinosaurs is the crocodile which shared more homologies with them than any other known creature, ancient or modern.

In Correia's view, dinosaurs were a part of Satan's wicked scheme, a scheme that also resulted in the production of the sinful antediluvians and "all purposeless and troublesome plants."⁸

Armed with statements by Ellen White and "the guidance and research of R. F. Correia," the Dinosaur Committee of the Atlantic Union Conference Office of Education in 1983 published an attractive, two-volume curriculum guide on earth science for elementary school teachers titled *A Creationist View of Dinosaurs*. "Many of us have questioned the existence of dinosaurs," noted the committee on its introduction, but considering "all of the evidence presented by the thousands of specimens that have been found and placed on exhibit in museums throughout the world, there can be no doubt that these animals once

lived on our earth."

Through the use of cutouts, activity sheets, task cards, games, and suggested field trips, *A Creationist View of Dinosaurs* provides children with a wealth of factual information on various species of dinosaurs. This information was packaged within Correia's interpretive framework:

The [pre-Flood] sin that hurt God the most, and caused Him to destroy the earth, was amalgamation (3 *Spiritual Gifts*, p. 64). Amalgamation means the combining, or mixing, of living things to produce other living things that God did not originally create. Amalgamation caused harmful plants to grow (1 B.C. [SDA Bible Commentary], p. 1086). A change occurred in some groups of animals. They grew into strange, monster-like creatures. . . . This was all a part of Satan's wicked plan.

Noah's attempt to convince the antediluvians of God's impending judgment, the building of the ark, and the destruction of all terrestrial life except those inside the vessel are carefully reviewed. Then, lest anyone miss a point crucial to the argument of the entire two-volume document, the Dinosaur Committee states why it thinks dinosaurs became extinct: "We believe that the dinosaurs were among the animals that did not go into the ark."⁹

In striking contrast to the traditional Adventist position that dinosaurs perished in the Flood was the view of Frank Lewis Marsh, an otherwise conservative creationist, who proclaimed that some dinosaurs survived the Flood (see chart, *Histories of Dinosaurs*, opposite page).

There can be no question that dinosaurs were represented [in the ark], possibly by forms like *Compsognathus*, which was no larger than a rooster. But we would expect the terrible flesh-eating *Tyrannosaurus* to be left outside, along with his vegetarian but tremendously ungainly "relatives," *Diplodocus* and *Brontosaurus*, whose very bulk . . . would make them a hazard around the houses of postdiluvian man.¹⁰

Marsh had more than dinosaurs on his mind when making this assertion. He had engaged in a lengthy disagreement with fellow creationist Harold W. Clark over the meaning of Ellen White's amalgamation statements. Clark had been using White's ambiguous remarks to explain the development of prehistoric creatures and certain races of humans. Marsh, by contrast, did not believe that hybridization was possible between the so-called "Genesis kinds," and he had listed dinosaurs along with "mastodons, lions, wolves, beaver, deer, and apes" as having been created on the sixth day of Creation week.¹¹

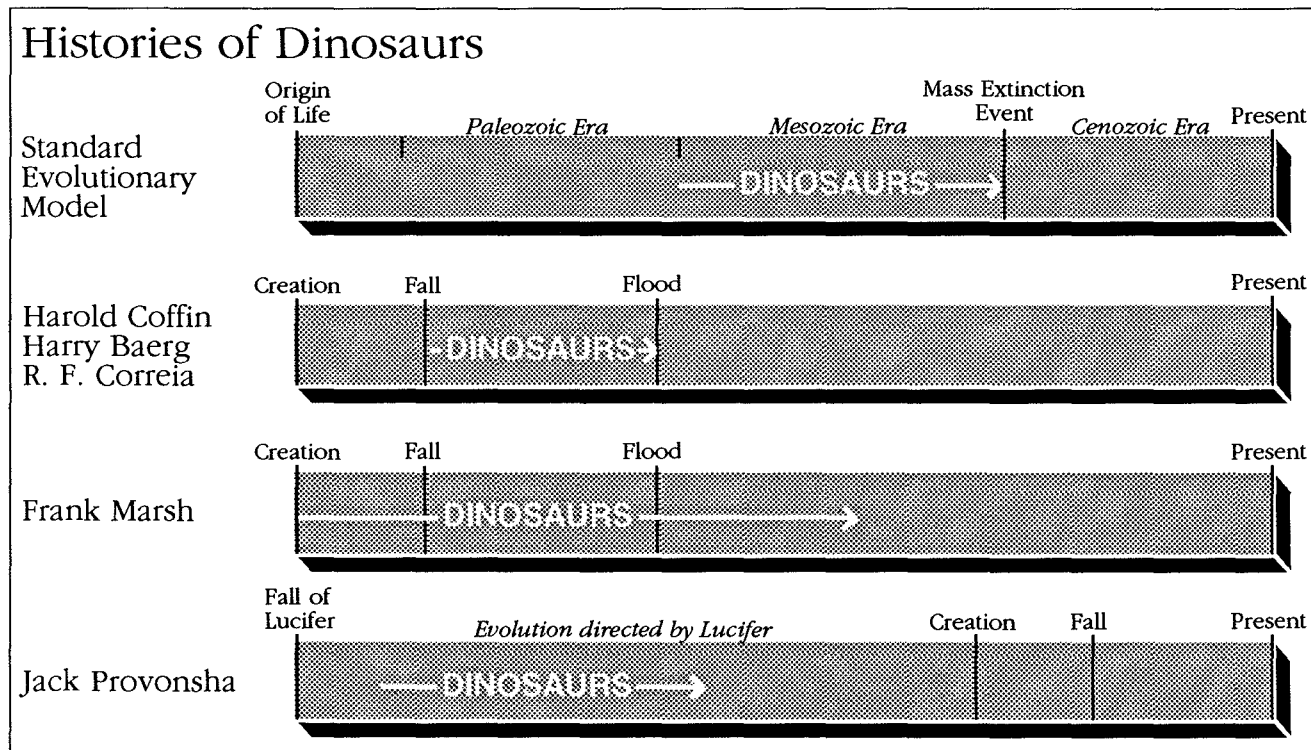
I am persuaded that when God formed plants and animals "after their kinds," He endowed them with chemically different protoplasms which were incapable of crossing, even when manipulated and directed by a very wise devil. In other words, God did not make organisms in such a way that they could cross and then say to them, "Now don't hybridize."¹²

Given his antipathy toward Clark's amalgamation views and his rejection of large-scale

evolutionary change, Marsh, along with many non-Adventist creationists, had no alternative but to suggest that the dinosaurs were divinely created.

While Marsh's views fell somewhat outside the Adventist mainstream, it was theologian and physician Jack Provonsha who proposed the most radical Adventist apology on the topic. After years of pondering the problems of paleontology and biblical interpretation, he became convinced that the very foundation of Adventist belief was "placed in jeopardy by this issue." According to Provonsha, two sets of reality had to be accommodated in any Adventist model of history of life. First, the great controversy theme upon which Adventism is built must be assumed. Second, irrefutable scientific information could not be ignored.

Provonsha's model, inspired by Ellen White and containing elements of the once-popular "ruin and restoration" theory, suggested that Lucifer was given "a long period of time" to work out his principles after his fall from heaven (see chart, Histories of Dinosaurs, below). During this time the "godlike" fallen



angel engaged in creative activity, the record of which "is attributed by the secular scientist to the autonomous working of nature in its process of evolution." Provonsha even postulated that Lucifer's genetic experiments progressed "to the level of hominids, lacking only the 'image of God,'" a reference to human-like fossils. Then, "at some point of relatively recent time, after Satan's principles [had] become clear to the hosts of heaven, God stepped in to demonstrate the alternative to the devil's method—the Genesis story." While Provonsha did not mention dinosaurs by name, it was clear that his model included them in Satan's pre-Edenic kingdom.¹³

Adventist paleontologists have thus entertained a variety of views on the history of dinosaurs to counter the conventional geological model (see chart, *Histories of Dinosaurs*, p. 9). Until recently these views were informed more by exegesis of Ellen White's writings than by serious study of the fossil record. However, several highly publicized fossil finds and an increasing number of church scientists trained in paleontology began forcing Adventists to look beyond their parochial concerns to the wider, if not less perplexing, world of science. Indeed, Harold Coffin, who in 1969 admonished anyone finding dinosaur remains "to cover the site with soil, mark the spot well, and inform the biology department of the nearest Seventh-day Adventist college or university," was suggesting in 1983 that they be reported to "qualified persons in a large museum or university."¹⁴

Dinosaur Eggs and Babies

Jack Horner, a young fossil preparator at Princeton University during the 1970s, took every opportunity to escape New Jersey to scour the mountains and badlands of his native Montana for dinosaur fossils. On one such trip in 1977 he was exploring the Two

Medicine rock formation along the eastern foothills of the Montana Rockies when he stumbled upon the first intact dinosaur egg ever uncovered in the Western Hemisphere. The discovery of the egg suggested this might be a good place to look for baby dinosaur fossils. If he could find baby dinosaur fossils he might learn about how dinosaurs grew and lived.

A year later Horner and several of his fossil-hunting friends visited a Bynum, Montana, rock shop which, they had been told, contained some interesting fossils. It was Sunday, but the shop was open because, as Horner put it, "the owners were Seventh-Day Adventists [sic] and their sabbath is Saturday." The paleontologists were in no hurry, and much to proprietor Marion Brandvold's delight they "wandered around in the shop, picking out all the fossils that had been misidentified and giving them the correct identification."

Mrs. Brandvold then showed the paleontologists some small bones that she and her family had collected some weeks earlier. Horner immediately recognized the bones as those of baby duckbill dinosaurs. They were from the Two Medicine formation near the town of Choteau, not far from where he had discovered the dinosaur egg the previous year. Upon learning of how important the fossils were, Brandvold filled a coffee can with the bones and gave them to the grateful paleontologists.

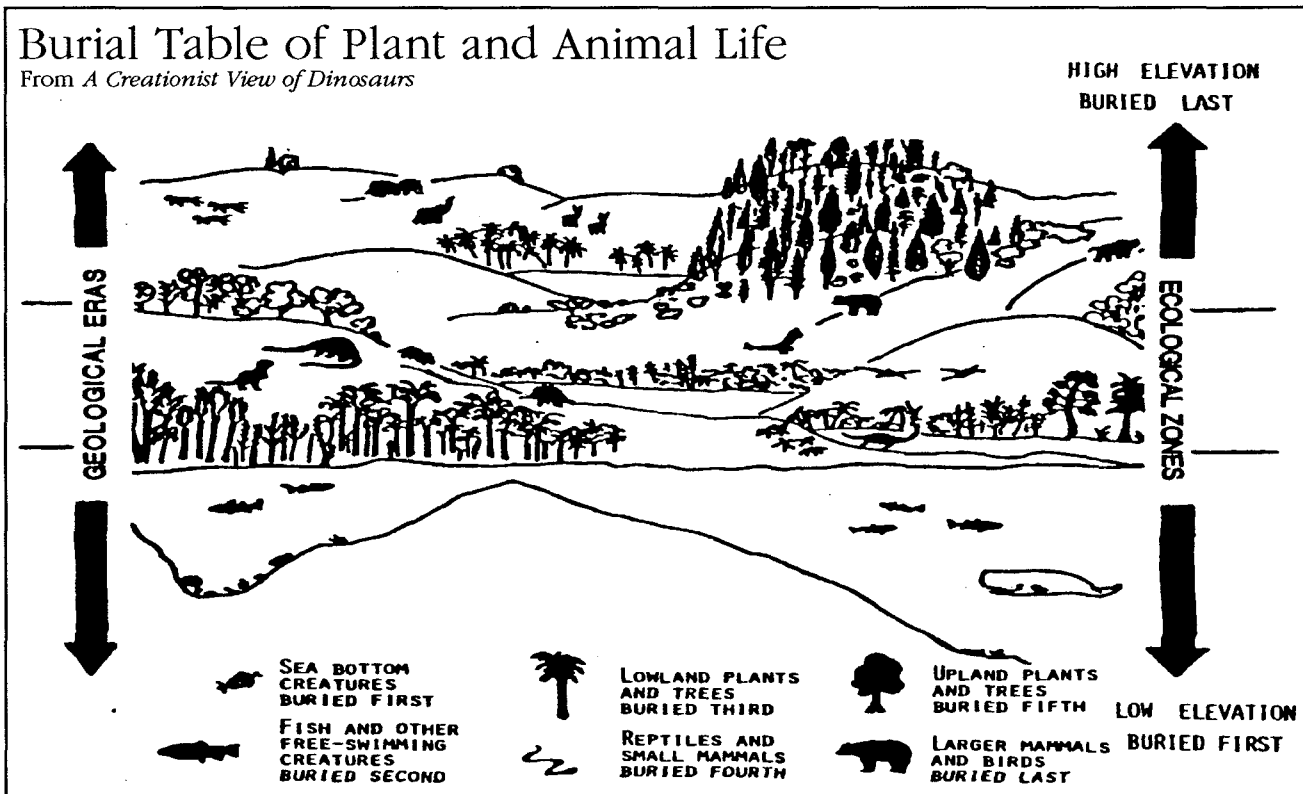
Horner notified his boss, Don Baird at Princeton, of his find and Baird wired him \$500 to cover the expenses for further exploration. The Brandvolds took him back to the spot where they had found the baby bones, and it wasn't long before the group located more juvenile fossils. Then on August 9, 1978, only two and a half weeks after his initial visit to Brandvold's shop, Horner made another historic discovery: a nest containing 15 baby dinosaurs. The babies were all about the same size and their teeth showed evidence of wear, indicating that they had been feeding for some time before they were buried.¹⁵

Over the next few years this remarkable site proved to be a fossil treasure-trove. Nests of at least two kinds of dinosaurs were found: herbivorous duckbill dinosaurs (*Maiasaura peeblesorum*) and smaller, presumably omnivorous, hypsilophodontids (*Orodromeus makelai*). Some nests contained complete sets of eggs arranged in double-layered circles (duckbills) or in single-layered spirals (hypsilophodontids), with their large ends pointed upward. One hypsilophodontid nest contained 19 eggs, each with a fossilized dinosaur embryo inside. Multiple nests were found in at least three different stratigraphic horizons. Finally, a bone bed containing a herd of 10,000 duckbill dinosaurs, perhaps destroyed by a volcanic eruption, was uncovered nearby. As Yale paleontologist John Ostrom noted, this was "one of the most amazing and important fossil discoveries of all time."¹⁶

Horner made several inferences from these fossils. First, the nests were preserved in the precise locations where they were built; it would have been impossible to transport struc-

tures such as these from other locations, and at the same time maintain the arrangement of fragile eggs within spirals or circles. Second, the spacing between the nests, about 20 feet for duckbills and seven feet for the smaller hypsilophodontids, indicated that these animals nested in colonies, much like gulls and other ground-nesting seabirds do today. Significantly, coloniality implies the existence of social order maintained by communication. Third, an apparent lack of a food source close to the nests and the preservation of same-aged juveniles with worn teeth in some nests suggests that the parent dinosaurs fed their babies for extended periods of time. Fourth, the preservation of nests at multiple levels indicated that this area was used as a breeding colony by the dinosaurs for more than one season. Fifth, the sudden destruction and subsequent preservation of 10,000 duckbill dinosaurs in one place by a catastrophe demonstrated that these animals lived in vast herds, perhaps like bison in 19th-century America.¹⁷

Horner's view revolutionized people's con-



cepts of how dinosaurs lived. The fossil hunter himself became something of a folk hero in Montana where he is now curator of paleontology at the Museum of the Rockies in Bozeman. As for the Branvolds, they moved their rock shop from Bynum to Choteau and continued to be lauded by Horner. "Marion Branvold had discovered a lovely little window on the Cretaceous [time period]," wrote the paleontologist in his 1988 book *Digging Dinosaurs*. "What we did was open that window and climb through it."¹⁸

The Branvold-Horner site in Montana is the world's most spectacular example of a dinosaur nesting ground, but it is by no means the only one. Roy Chapman Andrews, on an expedition to Mongolia from the American Museum of Natural History in 1923, found a nesting colony of *Protoceratops*. Reports of Andrews' discovery created a sensation, prompting Flood geologist George McCready Price to grumble in *Signs of the Times* the following year that "a good deal of unnecessary fuss has been made over these ancient eggs."¹⁹

In the early 1980s still other dinosaur nests were found at Devil's Coulee, Alberta; in the Kheda District of Gujarat, India; and at Rennes-le-Château in Aude, France. At all these locations nests were grouped into colonies, and usually the colonies occurred at multiple levels indicating prolonged use by the animals. Numerous other places throughout the world have yielded single dinosaur eggs, eggshell fragments, or bones. Dinosaurs were obviously widespread, diverse, numerous, and prolific inhabitants of the planet.²⁰

Dinosaurs and the Geologic Column

Dinosaur fossils are restricted to the middle or Mesozoic rocks of the geologic column (see chart, Burial Table of Plant and

Animal Life, p. 11). Most scientists interpret this to mean that dinosaurs evolved from a primitive group of reptiles during the Triassic period, or early part of the Mesozoic era, and for 150 million years dominated the landscape. Each of the three major divisions of the Mesozoic rock strata—Triassic, Jurassic, and Cretaceous—contains its own characteristic pattern of dinosaur diversity, indicating that these animals changed and diversified. Then at the end of the Cretaceous period they went extinct, due perhaps to the impact of an enormous meteorite. The demise of these animals, say scientists, opened the way for the diversification of mammals, a group that continues to dominate the world today.²¹

This story is not without its problems. Various types of dinosaurs appear suddenly in the fossil record without antecedent forms. Some paleontologists say this is the result of the incompleteness of the fossil record. Others suggest that new dinosaur species evolved very quickly, making it unlikely that incipient forms were commonly preserved as fossils. Indeed, the presumed "missing links" are sometimes found. For example, an early dinosaur, *Eoraptor*, showing predicted structural affinities with earlier reptiles and later dinosaurs, recently turned up in Argentina.²²

Another problem involves the extinction of dinosaurs at the end of the Cretaceous period. Why would a catastrophe such as a meteorite impact wipe out the dinosaurs and leave non-dinosaurian reptiles, birds, and mammals unscathed? One response is that the dinosaur dynasty was on its way out anyway; the Cretaceous catastrophe was a mere *coup de grâce*. A more radical view suggests that dinosaurs never really went extinct—that birds are feathered dinosaurs carrying on the family tradition.²³

Flood geologists, by contrast, often explain the restriction of dinosaur fossils to Mesozoic rocks with reference to the "ecological zonation theory," a model developed

during the first half of this century by Harold W. Clark. This model suggests that the sequence of fossils in the rocks parallels the sequence of altitudinal life zones in the pre-Flood world. As the Flood waters rose, the successive ecological zones and their inhabitants were destroyed. In this view, Paleozoic sea animals, amphibians, and non-flowering plants lived in the lowest zone, Mesozoic dinosaurs, toothed birds, and a mixture of plants resided in the middle zone, while Cenozoic mammals, non-toothed birds, flowering plants and humans dominated (or as the Flood waters rose, fled to or floated to) the highest altitudes, a sequence reflected in the fossil record (see chart, Burial Table of Plant and Animal Life, p. 11).²⁴

The incompatibility of the ecological zonation theory with the preservation of dinosaur nesting colonies has become apparent to many Adventist scientists. It would have been impossible to float entire nesting colonies into their current positions, one atop another, with eggs and young neatly arranged in ideally spaced nests. Moreover, at the Montana site the herd of 10,000 duckbill dinosaurs is preserved beneath volcanic ash deposited between two of the nesting horizons. As Harold Coffin once observed, "evolutionists have difficulty explaining the sudden disappearance of the dinosaur, but Seventh-day Adventists are not without interpretive problems either."²⁵

Currently, several Adventist geologists are wrestling with the question of where to locate the dinosaur nests with respect to the Flood in

the geologic column. One suggestion is that the nesting colonies and dinosaur herds were buried by post-Flood catastrophes. Adventist sedimentologist Elaine Kennedy, in a recent issue of *Signs of the Times*, alluded to the Montana colony and suggested that the residents lived after the Flood and made their nests "on what is now the surface." Careful examination of this site indicates the inadequacy of this explanation. Not only were multiple colonies superimposed one atop another, but in many cases the eggs and nests had to be jack-hammered out of very hard rock. It is clear from the surrounding stratigraphy that the colonies were buried under significant sediment loads that have experienced much subsequent erosion. It is unlikely that the few thousand years of postulated post-Flood time would allow for the development of such a large overburden and subsequent massive erosion.²⁶

Conclusion

Seventh-day Adventists will continue to build, modify, destroy, and rebuild their models of the past as new discoveries come to light. While some of these models will be developed solely from sacred writings, others will be based on the recent findings of geology, paleontology, geochemistry, and biology. In any event, the fascination of Adventists with prehistoric beasts will persist, at least in some circles, with a fervor rivaling 19th-century attempts to understand the beasts of prophecy.

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It's in the Minutes

1 Timothy and Titus record councils choosing young adults as leaders of the early Christian church.

by John McVay

IF I COULD TAKE YOU TO THE ARCHIVES OF SOME of the more successful businesses of our day and point out the minutes of their early, foundational meetings, would you be interested? Would you want to dig about in those annals of the past for the secrets of the company's success? Imagine going to the archives of Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream, Esprit, or Apple Computer and extracting the minutes of their first meetings. Picture yourself researching until you come across the reasons for the company's success, the features that separated the upstart from the established competition.

What if you could recover the early proceedings of the Christian church? What gave this movement its energy and power? What fueled its conquest? What secrets transformed it from a small, insignificant Jewish sect into a worldwide movement?

1 Timothy provides an important answer to

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those questions in its extract from the "minutes" of early Christianity:

These are things you must insist on and teach. Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Until I arrive, give attention to the public reading of scripture, to exhorting, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders (1 Timothy 4:11-16).¹

The church flourished and grew by asking youth to lead it. That is a timely theme of the letters to Timothy and Titus.

Interpretive Knots

Of course there are many other themes and questions we can find in this correspondence. I am intrigued by the ways we appropriate the themes and approach the questions introduced by these pastoral epistles.² One only need turn to 1 Timothy 2:8-15 and envision different people reading the passage.³ One Adventist reader straightforwardly

appropriates the desirability of “lifting up holy hands,” counsel, but ignores the words about excluding “gold, pearls, or expensive clothes.” Let alone the call for the silence and submission of women, who, after all, are “saved through childbearing.” Another Adventist squirms at the advice to “[lift] up holy hands,” but enthusiastically embraces lines in Timothy about modesty and the appropriateness of women serving in certain roles.

This passage, 1 Timothy 2:8-15, provides only a few of the interpretive knots served up in these three short letters. What does it mean to turn someone “over to Satan” (1 Timothy 1:20)? What are the “deceitful spirits and teachings of demons” and the “myths and endless genealogies” mentioned here? And what do you make of 1 Timothy 5:24 (“The sins of some people are conspicuous and precede them to judgment, while the sins of others follow them there”)? A close look at the hymn (or hymn fragment) of 1 Timothy 3:16 adds more interpretive riddles.

For Seventh-day Adventists, the pastoral epistles contribute additional challenges in providing an interesting analysis of the role of law (1 Timothy 1:8-11) and by seeming to sanction the eating of unclean foods (1 Timothy 4:1-5) and the drinking of “wine” (1 Timothy 5:23).

On top of all this, there are the critical issues that surround the study of these three letters, letters that are frequently judged to come from a generation after the Apostle Paul because of the literary style used, the theological perspectives displayed, the level of church organization assumed, and the nature of the opponents implied.⁴

Young Leadership of Early Christians

With all of these issues to prompt discussion in Sabbath schools across the land, I am fearful that the theme of youth, and what they can contribute to the church, may go unnoticed. Certainly, the letters of Timothy and Titus could be misread with regard to youth in the church. 1 Timothy 3:6 says of a bishop, “He must not be a recent convert, or he may be puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil” (cf. Titus 1:5-9). And of deacons, 1 Timothy instructs: “Deacons likewise must be serious [and the somber faces of aged pioneers rise, apparition-like, in our minds] . . . And let them first be tested; then, if they prove themselves blameless, let them serve as deacons” (3:8,10). We tend to insert a few words—

“And let them first be tested for a *decade or*

two.” We read such cautions as affirmation of the view that the church is best led by highly experienced, older people.

We should not forget to whom this author writes. Paul is giving these instructions to one who is to superintend the selection of these tested leaders. And to that superintendent he says, “Let no one despise your youth” (1 Timothy 4:12); compare the similar words to Titus (Titus 2:7, 8, 15). This one-person nominating committee is so young he is in danger of being despised for it.

At the time of 1 Timothy, the addressee is young enough to be open to suspicion simply because of his age. By the standards of the day, he was probably somewhat over 30.⁵ But the letter looks back to an earlier point in

What if we took a cue from the fragment of the minutes of that board of elders of long ago? What if, instead of youth advising us in our work, we advised them in theirs?

Timothy's story. And it is that earlier scene that discloses the important secret of success: "Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders" (1 Timothy 4:14).

The term, "council of elders" (*presbyterion*), is used to designate two groups in the New Testament. In Luke and Acts, it is used to describe the Sanhedrin, the Jewish "council of elders" that condemns Jesus (Luke 22:66; Acts 22:5). But in 1 Timothy, "council of elders" describes a Christian group. And the letter includes the only excerpt we have from the minutes of an early Christian council of elders.

The apostle may refer to the work of that council in two other passages in the pastoral epistles. In 1 Timothy 1:18-19a, he writes:

I am giving you these instructions, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies made earlier about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, having faith and a good conscience.

In 2 Timothy 1:6, he reminds the youthful leader to "rekindle the grace of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands."

According to minutes of that early council of elders in 1 Timothy, the group of seasoned Christians kneel in prayer. Voice after voice is raised in the most earnest, heartfelt prayer. In the center of the prayer circle is a very young person, a youth probably still in his teens. After a pause, an older woman speaks. And with a quivering voice, she describes the dreams that God has planted in her soul for this teenage Timothy. She describes in considerable detail a divine destiny for this youngster. When she is through, another voice is raised to praise the promise and potential of this one planted in their midst. The young man in the middle cries the quiet tears of one who experiences complete acceptance and trust. Do you see the secret? Do you see what it is

that makes this "council of elders" different from the competition?

Young Leadership of Seventh-day Adventists

O ur church, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, began as a movement of young people. True, the old sea captain, Joseph Bates, was there. But, by and large, it was a movement started by the young, among the young. It is easy to forget that fact as we stare at the yellow portraits of pioneers with their austere, wrinkled faces framed in gray. It is easy to forget that the old patriarch, Uriah Smith, was 21 when he wrote his first series of articles for the *Review and Herald*. We forget that when he became editor of that journal he was not 53, 43, or even 33, but 23 years old. His job description included the tasks of editor, proofreader, business manager, and bookkeeper.

We rejoice in the stories of pioneer James White winning 1,000 people to Christ in a few short weeks; a James White that had just turned 21 years of age. We forget that the somber and aged Stephen Haskell began teaching the Sabbath at 20 years of age, that the bespectacled and bearded Elder J. N. Andrews, after accepting the Sabbath at 17, began his ministerial career at 23. And when Ellen Harmon began to exercise her gifts, she had just celebrated her 17th birthday.

How is it with us? How much time do we spend envisioning what God wishes to accomplish through our young adults? How many committees find themselves kneeling around a young person, praying for the will of God to be manifested in that life? We are an enlightened group. We invite youth representatives to sit on our boards, to give us their counsel, to enable us to see our tasks through youthful eyes. What if we took a cue from the fragment of the minutes of that board of elders

of long ago? What if, instead of youth advising us in our work, we advised them in theirs? What if we spent more time on our knees unleashing youthful warriors to share the gospel of peace?

If an early Christian elders' council shows us the "how to," an even earlier elders' council shows us "how not to." The youthful gaze of the young Galilean leaders meets the steel facades of the elders. The leader of the council speaks. Pointing a quivering, bony finger, he commands imperiously: "If you are the Messiah, tell us."

The exchange comes, rapid fire. The youthful Teacher looks at those elders and says, "If I tell you, you will not believe; and if I question you, you will not answer. But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God."

A rumble of condemnation rises from the aged lips: "Are you, then, the son of God?"

"You say I am."

Irate gestures ensue. Necks snap in anger and gray-bearded chins vibrate in disgust. An uproar rises from those 70 council members that makes the most rowdy parliamentary session sound genteel. The tumult peaks in this proclamation: "What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips!" (Luke 22:66-71)

A young person stands in the midst of the council of elders. A young man who has shown himself to be a teacher. A young adult who has born the mark of Heaven's praise. A person who is truly God's gift to the world. A young man amidst the council of elders. A young person condemned.

Will we follow the outmoded ways of a council that condemns a young Messiah? Or will we read carefully the minutes of that upstart enterprise, Christianity, and take as a central task the affirmation of our youthful members?

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Sexual Abuse, Soul Murder

Sometimes an artist has to create work that he knows will not be popular or easy to look at. This art, part of a series on sexual abuse, is a case in point. My work on this topic was started out of pure frustration. Several of my college students told me about abuse they had experienced.

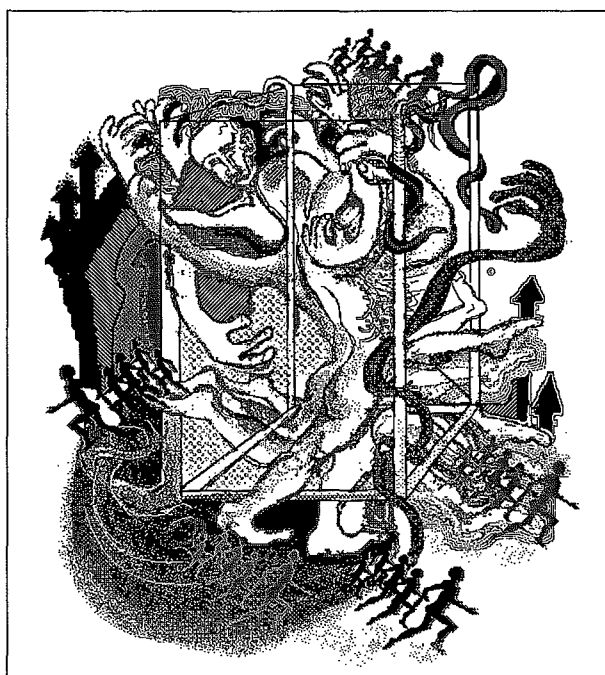
These computer drawings are not about sex. Instead, they show the violent nature of humanity. Unfortunately, society often makes the victim share in the blame. The raped woman "asked for it." The child's story is not believed. Everyone else wants to forget the incident, but the victims cannot. They find themselves alone in their suffering. I understand their pain. Two friends of mine were murdered because of domestic and sexual violence. Their families and friends still suffer.

My hope is that these drawings will help all of us understand how much the victims need our support, and that as a result of feeling their pain more deeply, we will work harder to prevent sexual assaults from happening.

—Roger Preston

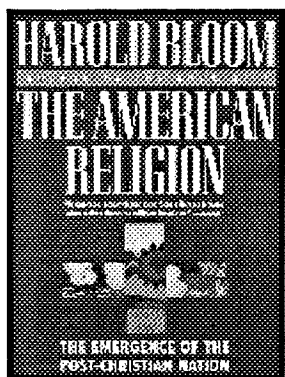


Forced Shame



Embrace/Escape

Roger Preston is a professor of art at Atlantic Union College, and a doctoral candidate at the University of Massachusetts. This art was displayed last year at the Hydrangea Gallery in Newport, Rhode Island.



Do Adventists Cast A Gnostic Shadow?

Two widely noted authors see Adventists as a people seeking special knowledge that is typically American.

by Karl Hall

ANYONE WHO HAS STRAINED AT JUSTIFYING the ways of God to humanity eventually confronts the temptation of Gnosticism. "Gnosticism" is the post hoc label given to an influential set of heresies that helped constitute early church doctrine in the centuries following Christ's death. That one would be hard pressed to employ it as a topic of conversation in our own day is in part a testimony to orthodoxy's subsequent success in defining its own authority. Yet modern America's sense of its own exceptional place in history has also made it fertile ground for latter-day religious convictions that answer to the appeal of Gnosticism.

While the assertion that Gnosticism now pervades certain American subcultures would

excite little remark from religious historians or sociologists of religion, few of us are well attuned either to the social needs it addresses or to its historical influence on our own lives. The insistent question of the Gnostics to the early church—*Unde malum?* (Whence comes evil?)—sparked many of the original doctrinal controversies about the place of evil in a loving God's creation, and about the humanity of the divine Logos. When we rebel at the absolute distance between an omnipotent God and mortal humans, Gnostic systems hold out the possibility of redeeming ourselves through special knowledge. Their systems of cosmic redemption offer a reconciliation of these tensions, both by placing an essential part of us outside the Creation, and by making redemption our own to achieve as much as it is Christ's. As one Gnostic teacher counseled, "Abandon the search for God and the creation and other matters of a similar sort. Look for him by taking yourself as the starting point."

If Seventh-day Adventists are inclined to dismiss these sentiments as more relevant to

Karl Hall, a doctoral student in the history of science at Harvard University, attended Walla Walla College and received his B.A. in chemistry from Stanford University. The American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 288 pages, is available for \$22.00 hardcover. The Road to Wellville (New York: Viking, 1993), 476 pages, is available for \$22.50 hardcover.

the karmic prattlings of New Age gurus than to our own belief and practice, then we would do well to examine two recent books, which provide intriguing insights into the relationship of Adventism to the Gnostic elements that have found such resonance in modern America. In the first, we encounter the earnest appraisals of a "religious critic" who reminds us of our own historical participation in the Gnosticism of 19th-century American religion-making, and candidly points out our ambiguous relationship to those currents today. In the second, we find a clever fictional evocation of a sometime Adventist institution in which the health message was extended into a gospel of human perfectibility. Each book in its own way cautions against confusing the *credo* with any form of self-asserted knowledge that promises transcendence, whether of mortal bodies or the Creation or the community of faith.

The American Religion by Harold Bloom

In *The American Religion* the prolific literary critic Harold Bloom has attempted an exercise in what he calls "religious criticism." The central burden for religious criticism is "to build bridges across gaps, to explain in particular the very curious relations that generally prevail between theology and actual religious experience, in whatever faith." Bloom contends that religious criticism "must seek for the irreducibly *spiritual* dimension in religious matters," much as (he thinks) literary criticism searches for the aesthetic in works of literature. A self-proclaimed Jewish "Gnostic without hope," Bloom certainly realizes he will be met with skepticism. Declaring the standard of value for the judgments in his book to be the religious imagination, he still does not hesitate to suggest that by this standard the deepest implications of the American Religion may be judged an "imaginative triumph."

For Bloom, the central features of the American Religion are the freedom and solitude which the American claims in communion with God or with Jesus. The soul, or rather the "spark" or pneuma of the occult self—that best and oldest part of us that predates the Creation—can commune freely with a solitary God of freedom because it has in some sense always been one with God. The American sense that we are "mortal gods, destined to find ourselves again in worlds as yet undiscovered," leads us to seek that freedom through knowledge of facts and events rather than believing or trusting. Bloom sees sources for this conviction in Wesley and the emphasis on the importance of the *felt* religious conversion. However, he points to the gathering at Cane Ridge, Kentucky, in 1801, as the beginning in America of the "doctrine" of experience that has so dominated subsequent American religious experience.

Bloom finds in Ralph Waldo Emerson and William James the original critiques and philosophical influences necessary to understand the American Religion. For Emerson, as for many subsequent Americans, Jesus is regarded as more Exemplar than Redeemer. It is the risen Jesus, rather than Jesus crucified, who remains at the center of the American Religion. Jesus is not historical so much as he is the imparter of the secrets of resurrection. We can know God just as Jesus did, intimates Emerson, who also warns that we must continually reimagine the sacred historical texts in order to attain that knowledge. Today this understanding, along with the subsequent emphasis by James on awareness as faith, stands in tension with fundamentalism. For Bloom fundamentalism is the "shadow side of what is most spiritual and valuable in the American Religion." He fears that the experiential question he so admires in the American Religion is placed at risk by the fundamentalist insistence on biblical inerrancy, which effectively subjects believers to the professedly non-interpre-

tive (and thus unchallengeable) declarations of their pastors.

Bloom does not care to criticize the wholly experiential faith so much as to trace its genealogy and spiritual manifestations, and he thus expends little effort in trying to explain, for example, the unspecifiable vacuities of the New Age movement. Christian Science, Pentecostalism, the Jehovah's Witnesses (the antithesis of the American Religion for Bloom), African-American religion, and Seventh-day Adventism each receive critical vignettes suggesting their place in the larger scheme of things. But these are merely "Rival American Originals" to the two candidates far more interesting to Bloom, the denominations that he believes will dominate the future of the American Religion: Mormonism and the Southern Baptist Convention. Identifying Joseph Smith's radical deification of the human being as peculiarly American, Bloom does acknowledge that the Mormon Church has significantly distanced itself from the original prophet's emphases. So as not to diminish Smith's relevance to his overall argument, Bloom then curiously manages to find him in all other manifestations of the American Religion.

Within the Southern Baptists Bloom locates a strong Gnostic influence in E. Y. Mullins' doctrine of "soul competency," used by the church to justify a highly individualized experiential faith that shuns corporate creeds and all manner of religion by proxy. Bloom believes this doctrine potentially breaks down

any remaining metaphysical boundaries distinguishing Jesus from the believer, "with rather unfortunate societal and psychical consequences." Walking alone in the garden with Jesus becomes the metaphor that effaces the Logos as Other, making Emersonian self-reliance into the sole spiritual virtue. Thus does the American Religion become more Gnostic than Christian in its theology.

A remnant church is unlikely to greet warmly any assertions that it has been an important historical exemplar of Bloom's Gnostic American Religion.

Bloom concedes that "the Adventists have a theology peculiar to them, one that is revelatory of an American spirituality quite different from any other," but he insists on their historical compatibility with the rise of the American Religion. For him, Ellen White is both the source of that original confluence in the 19th century and the lone obstacle to "absorption into the Fundamentalist desert of middle-class morality" in the

The very drabness and anonymity of Ellen White's religious imagination strike Bloom as in marked contrast to the likes of Joseph Smith. No admirer of White's "simplistic and compulsive" prose style, Bloom marvels that she succeeded in making a religion out of a particular people, the Millerite disappointed.

20th. The very drabness and anonymity of her religious imagination strike Bloom as in marked contrast to the likes of Joseph Smith. No admirer of White's "simplistic and compulsive" prose style, Bloom marvels that she succeeded in making a religion out of a particular people, the Millerite disappointed. Bloom sees in White "an endlessly firm dogmatist" whose unsurpassably convoluted theology has gradually yielded to the same forces threatening the American Religion today: the doctrinal mainstream from without, and fundamentalism from within. Following

Malcom Bull and Keith Lockhart's *Seeking a Sanctuary*, he sees Adventism changing from what was once a negation of material prosperity into a substitute for it. Apocalyptic yearnings have dimmed and yielded to the ongoing "medicalization" of the church's identity. To his mind, all that now lingers in Adventism is White's "desperate will-to-health, a quest for survival amidst every kind of disappointment secular and spiritual."

Commenting on the distinguishing characteristics of Adventism, Bloom notes approvingly the Adventist rejection of the immortal soul as an entity separate from the body. He does take exception to the doctrine of the Investigative Judgment, which he thinks leads effectively to Satanic atonement, as all sins are heaped upon Satan's shoulders on some hidden cosmic stage.

Perhaps it is my own inadequate soul-competency that dictates caution regarding his characterizations. Bloom is justified in wondering if Adventists as a branch of the American Religion are not simply employing apocalyptic figurations to assert their special access to the unseen world of good and evil, gods and demons. Yet the vague notion of shamanism he frequently invokes as the key element in original Adventism still seems inadequate to explain the drama that Adventists would invoke. I cannot help but think that the central trope of Seventh-day Adventism, the great controversy, remains in the end a system of cosmological redemption that is difficult to reconcile with Bloom's central vision of the American Religion: the individual in confident apprehension of the resurrected Jesus. If anything, Adventism's particular vision, rather than urging recovery of a primordial God-in-the-self, risks making the believer into an ever-hopeful spectator.

Behind the mournful visage of the éminence grise from Yale lurks a man still happy to engage in provocations. It is my suspicion that Bloom's theses will not, however, become

"canonical" in any field. Bloom is that rare creature, the accomplished academic grazer who forages widely, though he always returns to his basic thesis, the American search for freedom and solitude. In this work, he has rushed in where specialized academics fear to tread. He offers broad syntheses and outrageous insights, but little sense that the American Religion he describes does not fully determine the complex historical and religious experiences of the groups under consideration, not to mention the larger portion of the population that somehow never falls under his purview.

The religious historian Martin Marty has suggested a relevant contrast between the "private Protestantism" whose experiential faith Bloom has treated in his book, and "public Protestantism," whose many forms he neglects: the communitarian aspects of worship, including the sacraments; rationalist (as against Romantic) influences on the American religious imagination; and faith as a source of social action. Bloom's book is a discerning cautionary tale against parochialism in our efforts to understand the experience of private faith and should incite us to further study of its public expression.

Religion wears many garbs, some of them overtly secular, as Bloom's brief musings on the New Age movement remind us. In general, his idiosyncratic tour of the American prophets of transcendence gives short shrift to the many figures who proclaimed secular avenues for experiential questing. To fill out this picture, we may turn to a depiction of one such figure in an equally idiosyncratic source: a novel.

The Road to Wellville by T. Coraghessan Boyle

On December 14, 1943, just into his 10th decade, Adventism's hardest heretic finally ended his quest for proximate godliness

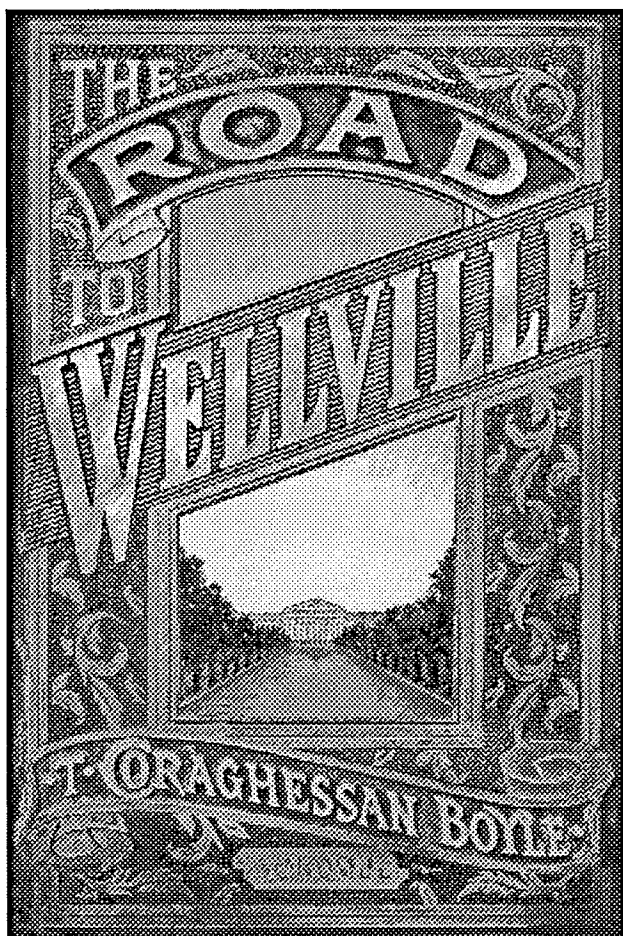
through clean living. John Harvey Kellogg, medical doctor, health evangelist, and visionary head of the sanitarium at Battle Creek for more than half a century, is probably best known among Adventists for his falling out with Ellen White over the matter of church control of the sanitarium early in the century. Whatever residual theological notoriety he may currently enjoy in Adventist circles surely pales next to the influence of the "vast and benign medical establishment" (the phrase is Bloom's) he did so much to engender. In *The Road to Wellville*, the novelist T. Coraghessan Boyle has turned his caustic wit upon Kellogg at the peak of his career in 1907, and the result, while highly critical of the errant physician's religion of health, cannot fail to strike a chord of recognition in the medicalized Adventist community of today. If that recognition brings with it occasional moments of discomfort, the reader

should not be put off, for the insights of Boyle's irreverent book can be quite salutary.

The conventional play of good against evil has no place in Boyle's novel, and virtue certainly finds no personification in a hero. The one convention carefully attended to is a narrative one: in contrast to some of Boyle's more complex previous works, *The Road to Wellville* keeps simple, linear storytelling as its central structural conceit, and Boyle shows himself a master of the form. If his pungent prose seems a far cry from congenially didactic Sabbath-afternoon storytelling à la Josephine Cunningham Edwards, his mordantly astute observations of human behavior are easily worth the price of admission.

The enema liberally applied might seem an unlikely path to godhood, but for Boyle's erstwhile Dr. Kellogg, no aspect of his sanitarium's daily regimen could be deemed more essential. Determined to win "the battle of biologic living" for the marvelous array of prosperous patients attracted to the sanitarium, Kellogg energetically encourages them to modify their fleshy diets and purge their bodies of all manner of noxious native bacilli. As he never tires of reminding them, five sessions a day with hot paraffin, soap, and tepid water are the only way to achieve the "civilized bowel."

Kellogg's constant round of fasting, exercise, "colonic washes," and "sinusoidal" baths (in which the supposed therapeutic effects of electric currents are utilized) is aimed at curing the ailment invariably diagnosed in his newly arrived patients—"autointoxication." The denizens of the San tend to be "of a certain class," and none are admitted who show any serious signs of mortality: disease, disfiguration, poverty. The ills found in the San are self-induced, in Kellogg's way of thinking, and the proper cure invariably lies in an act of self-discipline, a search for the vital spark of virtue within the self that all must undertake if they are to



recover. For Kellogg we are our own demiurges, daily implicated in the botched creation of our dietary selves by our willful propensity for "autointoxication," by our perverse avoidance of the apotheosis that is fully within our grasp.

Enlightenment may come slowly for the San's new patients, though Kellogg knows it does not hurt if one's fellow sufferers in search of the cure also happen to be luminaries like Upton and Meta Sinclair, Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, or Admiral Richard M. Byrd. Kellogg understands the importance of catering to a clientele who come to the San to see and be seen, and "to think positively, eat wisely and subdue their afflictions

with a good long pious round of pampering, abstention and rest." Still Kellogg is a man with a mission and vigilantly monitors his patients' diet of Protose patties, bran biscuits, nut butters, prune fritters, and kaffir tea. Boyle's Kellogg can "put on his lecturer's face as a warrior might have plucked up a shield" in order to captivate his audience with

graphic evidence of the need for fleshly restraint. Even the best company can yield the occasional backslider, though, and in the fictive person of Will Lightbody, Kellogg encounters the skeptical foil Boyle requires to skewer the good doctor's conceits.

Will and his wife, Eleanor, hail from Peterskill, N.Y., where upper-middle class respectability has unsurprisingly failed to secure domestic bliss for the young couple. Vaguely employed in his father's successful business, Will is already becoming more intent on his alcohol and gastric distress than he is on making a name for himself. Eleanor exacer-

bates Will's addictive escapism by running off to the San and becoming a devotee of the radical Kellogg regimen. She eventually drags a reluctant Will to its healthy confines in hopes that he will be set aright by the ministrations of Dr. Kellogg and his able staff.

Will's muted misgivings eventually turn into guilty failings in all aspects of the San's program. Disturbed to discover that Kellogg demands absolute sexual restraint ("I preach abstinence, sir, strict abstinence"), Will proceeds to scandalize his keepers by attempting a tryst with Eleanor, and becomes guiltily obsessed with the imagined attentions of a

solicitous young attendant. More than once he gorges himself into a stupor at the steak-and-fries establishment across the street from the San, earning the censure of Eleanor and Dr. Kellogg and landing him back at square one in his treatments. Endlessly irrigated and dietetically purified, he only grows more convinced of his hopeless corporal and spiritual inadequacy.

Kellogg's adopted son and nemesis, George, is the one character with no redeeming qualities whatsoever. George is actually not so much a character as a personification of the Kelloggian nightmare of unredeemability, a sort of permanently blocked bowel of the soul.

Boyle's authoritarian Kellogg may suffer from a surfeit of hubris, but he is a man of action, someone whose sleepless industry would seem to invite admiration, however ironic. Unfortunately, that zeal makes him careless of the needs and frailties of others, including the physiological shortcomings of his evocatively named personal secretary, Poultny Dab, whom he literally runs to death.

Let the reader suspect that Kellogg and his health-minded band of followers are the only objects of the author's amiable scorn, Boyle also turns his barbs on men of action

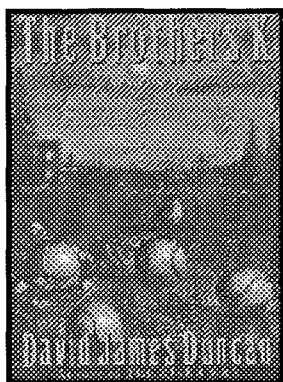
outside the walls of the San. A fictional, would-be entrepreneur, Charlie Ossining, serves as the focus for many of the story's events in the bustling town of Battle Creek itself. By 1907, Dr. Kellogg had concocted the corn flakes that became a thriving business for the doctor and his brother. A multitude of other cereals were soon invented, fueling a booming Battle Creek industry where Charlie hopes to make his fortune.

Charlie's cereal is Per-Fo, whose peptonized and celery-impregnated flakes must first be fabricated and sold in order for Charlie to realize his dreams. This effort turns into an extended shell game that threatens to destroy his chances for attaining respectability. Eventually he joins forces with Kellogg's adopted son and nemesis, George, the one character with no redeeming qualities whatsoever. George is actually not so much a character as a personification of the Kelloggian nightmare of unredeemability, a sort of permanently blocked bowel of the soul. Charlie soon discovers that only an inconvenient regard for the milder civic virtues stands between him and success. Compromise follows, and his desperate strivings for secular salvation prove no more praiseworthy than Kellogg's dietary gnosis.

The Road to Wellville is not a book that will hold much fascination for those merely curious about what image of Adventism they will find in this best-seller. Granted, the Adventist reader cannot help noticing Boyle's generous use of literary license in his portrayal of Ellen White. Even Adventists long skeptical of the historical Sister White will be hard pressed to find her in the dark imaginings of Boyle's Kellogg, who regards her as "the worst kind of rabble-rousing, evangelical charlatan, appealing to the most gullible and ignorant elements" (p. 383). But for Boyle this is a minor matter. His central aim is to "recreate" the past in order

to challenge *present* social phenomena. He has constructed his narrative with a contemporary upper-middle-class audience in mind, an audience financially and culturally capable of making an obsession with its own health and appearance into a kind of religion. Boyle has used the past to write a superbly cynical and perceptive "history" that will help us steer clear of zealots who seek transcendence in corporeal well-being. That said, readers would be aware that Boyle has no intention of muting or complicating this message by injecting into his narrative any of the myriad elements of 19th-century religious experience that made Battle Creek historically possible. I have no quarrels with Boyle's literature-as-history, but we should keep in mind that he is writing the history of our own culture and not that of John Harvey Kellogg.

In *The American Religion* Bloom is also engaged in a concerted critique of contemporary culture, albeit with more explicit reliance on the historical literature. Both Bloom and Boyle think the search for transcendence in modern America has a very practical motivation: our own constant apprehension of death. Their skepticism about the imaginative outlets Americans have found to shield themselves from this fear is expressed in very different forms: Boyle in the style of the amused debunker, Bloom in alternating fits of scholarly admiration and anxiety. Whatever levity or irony they employ should not distract us from their sober insistence that neither present health nor future apocalypse can provide salvation simply because we know it to be so. Indeed, a transcendence appropriate for moral creatures like ourselves would require a larger measure of God's grace than any Gnostic knowledge could ever offer. If these books provide unexpected reminders to that effect, we would do well to pay them heed.



Adventism and the Church of Baseball

A new novel, *The Brothers K*, is the best ever written about Seventh-day Adventists.

by Gary Land

IN THE FILM *BULL DURHAM*, SUSAN SARANDON's character says something to the effect that she worships at the church of baseball. Everett, Peter, Irwin, and Kincaid Chance also worship there, and their father, Hugh, works there—playing Triple A ball for the Portland Tugs. But their mother, Laura, worships at the "First Adventist Church of Washougal." Out of the conflict between these loyalties and their tension with the love that binds the family together arises the drama of this long novel, probably the best work of fiction yet written that gives serious attention to Seventh-day Adventism.

Kincaid tells his family's story from the perspective of his mid-30s, but the voices of Everett, Peter, and Irwin appear from time to time through such means as excerpts from school papers—Irwin's hilarious "History of My Dad"—and letters. The younger twin sis-

ters, Freddy and Bet, play a lesser role. Letters from Gale Q. Durham, Hugh's manager when he pitched for the Kincaid (Oklahoma) Cornshuckers, offer an additional Casey Stengalish philosophical perspective.

The story begins in 1956 in Camas, Washington, just before Hugh Chance, who works off-season at the Crown Zellerbach paper mill, smashes his thumb in a machine, thereby not only ending his dream of going to the big leagues but also forcing him out of baseball altogether. Without purpose to his existence he goes through the motions of living until Caid, after Mama has left home temporarily following a fight over religion, challenges him with the example of a hair-lipped girl at church who prays heartfelt prayers despite her deformity.

Papa then builds himself a shed where he can pitch every night without being seen, though the boys find a place in the hedge from which they can spy. Eventually, through Everett's intervention, a surgeon replaces Hugh's thumb with his big toe, he develops what the boys call a "Kamikaze" pitch and,

Gary Land, who chairs the history department at Andrews University, wrote the essay, "The Literary Image of Seventh-day Adventists," that appeared in *Spectrum*, Vol. 5, No. 1. David James Duncan's *The Brothers K* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 645 pages, is available for \$22.50 hardcover.

again through Everett's efforts, finds himself as a player-coach for the Portland Tugs and becomes the Pacific Coast League's legendary "Papa Toe."

Meanwhile, the boys are growing up and going their separate ways, most of which come in conflict with Mama's religion. Everett becomes the skeptic. In 1964 he begins supper time grace by saying, "Dear God, if there is One . . .," which provokes the "Psalm War," a physical and verbal battle with his mother that results, after an extended consultation between Laura and Hugh, in the lifting of religious requirements from the boys but also an ongoing "Cold War" from the mother. Peter by this time has delved deeply into Eastern religion and is a sort of Buddhist. Irwin is unaffected by these changes, for he is the naturally religious and joyous soul who never thinks to question his religion, even when his libido begins to take control of his social life. Caid, who does not say too much about himself, appears basically bored with Adventism.

Baseball holds the family together until the boys finish high school. But then Everett becomes a political radical at the University of Washington, and eventually makes his way to Canada to escape the draft, for which he is later convicted and sent to a work camp. Peter goes off to Harvard to study Eastern religion and ends up doing research in India; and Irwin and Caid study for a time at the University of Washington. But Irwin, the only practicing Adventist among the brothers, drops

out of school to marry Linda—who is pregnant—is drafted, goes to Vietnam, attacks his company commander who is about to order a young Viet Cong captive shot, is declared insane and sent to California for electroshock therapy. The effort to release Irwin from the clutches of the army brings the family, as well as some members of the "First Adventist Church of Washougal," together one last time in a tragi-comical and anarchic but very human farce.

Baseball and Adventism provide the two motifs around which Duncan develops the themes of family love, growth, and independence, and ultimately questions regarding the meaning of our existence. After the "Psalm War," Papa spelled out the parallels between baseball and religion:

Set in the time period in which I grew up, The Brothers K combines the mythology of the baseball that I lived both asleep and awake as a boy, with the Adventism in which I was raised and that I now study and teach, and with which I too have struggled.

So based on experience, I'm telling you guys: baseball and churches have got the same boredom factor, the same hypocrisy, the same Pie in a Big League Sky, the same bone-hard benches, the

same loudmouthed yo-yos mixed in among the decent fans in the pews, the same power-loving preacher/managers delivering the same damned "Do what I say or you're doomed" sermons. Hell, they've even got the same stinking organ music, (p. 180).

Not surprisingly, just as Irwin is the only Chance boy to continue practicing Adventism into his college years, so Caid appears to be the only one for whom baseball continues to provide the structure through which to understand his life.

For most of the novel, Adventism does not

appear very attractive. Until the "Psalm War," Mama grimly tries to hold her children to her religious beliefs and practices. When she sends the three older boys to summer camp, Caid observes, "I think she was hoping to prove that a place could be fun even if it had to do with Adventists. And I think she's wrong." After the war she, with the cooperation and support of Elder Babcock—her self-righteous, removed-from-life pastor—engages in a witch hunt to prove that her unbelieving boys are going over to Satan and in the process drives them away from herself. Sabbath school and church services are boring, the church members seem to have no humanity, and the beliefs appear incredible.

Everett expresses his regret at being born into this "Sabbath cult," and Caid wonders

"how can we possibly behave decently toward people so arrogantly ignorant that they believe, first, that they possess Christ's power to bestow salvation, second, that forcing us to memorize and regurgitate a few of their favorite Bible phrases and attend their church is that salvation, and third, that any discomfort, frustration, anger or disagreement we express in the face of their moronic barrages is due not to *their* astounding effrontery but to *our* sinfulness?" (p. 227).

When the church not only refuses to help Irwin obtain conscientious objector status but undermines his efforts by declaring that he is not a real Adventist, Seventh-day Adventism appears a hopelessly closed-minded, irrelevant, oppressive institution.

Toward the end of the book, however, the image softens somewhat. Caid comes to understand Irwin's attack on his officer as growing out of his innate Christian pacifism that he learned at church. When the final crisis arises and Irwin must be rescued from the army, most church members turn a deaf ear to the family pleas, but Brother Randy Beal (a wonderful ballplayer, by the way, who seems to lose his life force when he is in church) and his

wife Nancy (on whom Caid had an adolescent crush), Irwin's old Sabbath school teacher Sister Harg, and the visiting pastor, Elder Kim Joon, all turn out to help.

Joon, in fact, surprises Caid by his own criticism of institutionalized religion when he says,

"The first Christians [I] met as a boy in Korea were Adventist missionaries, very simple people. They had no power, and wanted no power. They told us Bible stories, it is true. But they gave us food and shelter and medicine first, and teased us and told jokes and played with us and loved us. So we *begged* them for the stories. . . . This was what Joon thought Christianity meant! Food and medicine for the body, and stories for the heart if you begged for them. Then he came here, found a country full of people begging *not* to hear the stories, went to seminary, and found out why. No food. No medicine. No doing unto others. Just a bunch of men learning how to bellow the stories at others whether they wanted to hear them or not!" (pp. 576, 577).

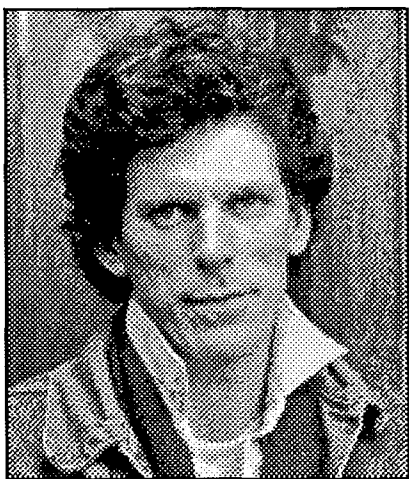
Then he adds, "Ha! Kincaid was right! Joon is an orphan! And now he longs to do for a stranger named Irwin what Old Man McCready [an Adventist missionary] once did for a stranger named Joon." Not surprisingly, Joon plays a key role—even if it requires stretching the truth—in obtaining the help of the Southern California Conference administrators and through them physicians of Loma Linda University, all of which leads to Irwin's rescue.

Finally, we learn why Mama grasped her Adventism as if it were a life preserver. Caught as a young woman in a cycle of violence and sexual abuse, she had visited churches in search of help and it was the Adventists that helped her. And when she married Hugh, he understood the meaning this religion had for her life, and though he did not accept it himself and tried to act as the voice of reason when she attempted to impose it on her family, he made no attempt to undermine her faith.

In the end, after Hugh dies from lung cancer, Mama places his ashes in the blue ceramic jewel box in which she had kept her tithes and offerings. After initially having his insides “turn” on seeing this, Caid thinks,

it began to feel about perfect. Because what *is* an offering, really? What can human beings actually give to God? What can they give to each other even? And what sorts of receptacles can contain these gifts? Work camps and insane asylums, Indian trains and church pews, bullpens and little blue boxes . . . Who belongs in what? When do they belong there? Who truly gives what to whom? These were questions we were all struggling to answer not in words, but with our lives. And all her life Laura Chance had placed ten percent of all she'd earned in this same blue box before offering it—in the full faith that it would be accepted—to her Lord. So now, just as faithfully, she'd placed a hundred percent of her husband in the same box. That was her answer to the questions. And I'm hard put to think of another that would do greater honor to her husband, her Lord or her little blue box (p. 621).

The Brothers K, a title of multiple meanings, is a book rich in language (although readers unaccustomed to contemporary literature should be warned of the frequent four-letter words), in philosophical and religious questioning, and in narrative. It made me laugh, it made me cry, sometimes both at the same time. A few years ago I read Duncan's *The River Why*, a wonderful novel that combines fishing and metaphysics. As a novel, *The Brothers K* is probably an even better book because it more closely integrates its philosophizing with the narrative drama. It also struck me at a very personal level. Set in the time period in which I grew up, and combining the mythology of the baseball that I lived both asleep and awake as a boy with the Adventism in which I was raised and that I now study and teach and with which I too have struggled, this novel gave me an emotional and intellectual experience I will long remember.



Meeting the Author of *The Brothers K*

David Duncan talks about his Adventist roots: junior camps, a pious mother, and a fundamentalist grandmother with a scatological sense of humor.

by Daniel Lamberton and
David James Duncan

This interview with the author of *The Brothers K* was conducted in March 1993 at a park in Portland, Oregon. We sat near outdoor basketball courts where the city's best players meet, and spent the first part of the interview talking about our own middle-aged efforts to keep up with the game. Duncan is a slim, healthy man. He is intense, but laughs easily. He speaks of his attempts to balance writing with being a husband and a father to his three children. I intended to focus the interview in two places—on Duncan's experiences with Seventh-day Adventists—both his mother and grandmother were Adventists—and on his methods and beliefs about writing. But Duncan is affable and before I knew it, we had talked more broadly for nearly three hours.

Duncan says he has worked hard to keep his imagination directed toward writing and so, rather than teach or go on the writing/workshop circuit, he has spent most of his adult life working at low-paying manual labor jobs—driving a truck and running a landscape service called the "Lawn Ranger." He says, "I've always wanted to be real pure about how I approached fiction,

and it felt better to indenture my body than my imagination." What follows are some of Duncan's statements about his experiences with Adventism and his own spirituality.

Lamberton: Both of your books, *The River Why* and *The Brothers K*, are set in the Pacific Northwest. Did you grow up here?

Duncan: I grew up in east Portland, which is mostly working class. My grandparents came from Trout Lake, Washington, which had quite an Adventist enclave. They were dirt poor—families of eight or twelve in one-room houses at the sawmill and orchard camps. But they were very hard workers. After church they liked to drive us through Portland's posh west hills neighborhoods and say "You too can have this one day." And I would say, "No I won't. It's not any dream of mine." But now I am living in west Portland. It would make my grandparents happy.

Lamberton: Your books show evidence of a lot of reading, and feature rather young people who know a lot about books and the natural world. This wasn't the usual profile of a 1960s Adventist adoles-

Daniel Lamberton, a poet and author, is a member of the English department at his alma mater, Walla Walla College.

cent. Did you read a great deal when you were young?

Duncan: I read voraciously, starting in high school. I lost a brother when I was in seventh grade, and I began to question things. I had an older friend who went off to Stanford University. He started sending me reading lists and books, and my friendship and correspondence with this guy grew so much more interesting than anything in high school that I basically quit studying everything except great novels.

Lamberton: And the natural world; did you spend a lot of time outdoors?

Duncan: Most of the religious experiences of my childhood occurred on rivers. The natural world that was here, shreds of which still survive, is incredibly beautiful to me. I don't need a more articulated

proof of God's love for man than what the world, before it gets mucked up by humans, is like. That to me is intoxicatingly beautiful, and I just don't want anything better than that. The unspoiled world is the most important church by far.

Lamberton: It is powerful to think of the particular *place* where one sees God. Ignatius Loyola used to pray by visualizing the place where he imagined God to be. He would wonder, "How do things sound and smell and look, here where I am? If at Calvary or in a different place, how should I approach God here? What should my prayer be here?"

Duncan: A friend of mine who's been a Jesuit for years (and in Nepal for years, so he's kind of Hindu-Buddhist-Jesuit-Zen monk) recently became a Trappist. He's always been an activist, so his life has taken a huge turn toward the contemplative. There's a whole enclave of monks at his abbey that all do zazen, Buddhist meditation. But he doesn't. He sits in the lotus position with the other guys, but his prayer is just the name of Jesus. That does it for him. I love those kind of crossovers, you know. That moves me more than anything that comes out of Billy Graham's mouth ever will.

Lamberton: How autobiographical is your fiction?

Duncan: I don't feel that it's that autobiographical. I'm trying to tell a story that *feels* true. I'll occasionally play with a firsthand experience, but in a very blithe way. In autobiography I become obsessed with honesty. Before I would even try to publish an essay about my brother's death, ["A Mickey Mantle Koan," *Harpers Magazine*, September 1992], I ran it past my mother and sister to see how it squared with their memories. But in fiction I allow myself complete freedom to enter the lives of the characters and

imagine, "wouldn't it have been wonderful, or moving, or sad in a spiritually helpful way if this had happened?" And I'm just off.

Lamberton: Have you been imaginative through most of your life? Or do you feel imagination is something that takes over only when you start to write?

Duncan: I think it was always there. I wrote a story in the second grade that was published in a PTA magazine. It was about Jesus finding different kinds of injured animals every birthday, because his family was so poor they couldn't buy him presents. So he would go to the wilderness and find cool animals, and that would be God checking in—"Here, have a sheep this year. Here, have a bird with a broken wing." Also, I used to take little toy soldiers and set up virtual landscapes in the yard, always with a hose. Always I liked running water, rivers in my imaginary world. These worlds would get more and more involved for five or six days till Mom would say, "You're flooding the driveway."

Lamberton: But she didn't worry about your imaginative life?

Duncan: She didn't seem to be worried that my imaginative life was intense when I was young. I think in some ways school and church lessened that intensity. They try so hard to channel the imagination down straight and narrow paths. The imaginative life for me was not a fearsome thing. It was freeing. So maybe my rebellion against time-worn channels was stronger.

Lamberton: How did your family take *The Brothers K*? Especially your mother?

Duncan: It was difficult for her to read because she feels all books are autobiography or history, and she felt that "our" story was being totally distorted. She was very upset part way through the book, so she went to see her Adventist pas-

Part way through reading The Brothers K, my mother went to her Adventist pastor. He said, "There's nothing your son could say about the Adventist clergy that would be more humiliating to us than the things that the Adventist clergy have actually said and done." I thought, what a great guy!

tor. He said, and I think this is almost an exact quote: "There's nothing your son could say about the Adventist clergy that would be more humiliating to us than the things that the Adventist clergy have actually said and done." I thought, what a great guy—what a good thing for him to say! And when she read through to the end, she saw there were Adventist characters who weren't painted as ogres. Then one staunch Adventist friend of my mom's read the book and she thought it was excellent. So that helped. My mom needed to hear from a friend that my book had some saving graces, that it wasn't trying to tell bad, lying stories about her family, that it didn't have anything to do with her family.

Lamberton: I imagine some Adventists ask what your connection to the church is.

Duncan: I never went to an Adventist school. My brother, who has three degrees from a conservative Baptist seminary, went to an Adventist academy, but got kicked out. My grandmother was an Adventist terror. In terms of her rigidity and her constant judgments, she was similar to the mother in the novel. There was also a side to my grandmother which I don't know how to portray. She had this wonderful, scatological sense of humor—so that even in the midst of her rage, I could figure out ways to make her laugh. But I wasn't trying to re-create my grandmother in *The Brothers K*, with Mama Chance. I was just trying to create a wounded person. I think a lot of fundamentalists are wounded people whose hurt makes them want the world to be much simpler than it really is. They want something that is absolutely secure, that never waivers, that does not require hard decisions. When you can cling to a dogmatic system, the gray areas disappear. But I live in the Wil-

lamette Valley where it's gray most of the year.

Lamberton: I was impressed with what your memory of events like Sabbath school could bring up. The book took me back to my childhood's camp meetings, to the smell of Vegeburgers and things like that.

Duncan: I went to Adventist summer camps a couple of times—to Big Lake. I enjoyed it. There was a thing called Wilderness Outpost where you could hike to a lake and get the hell out of the camp, and that's what I always did.

Lamberton: So is there some autobiographical sentiment in the book?

Duncan: I don't think there's anybody who's received fundamentalist indoctrination as a child who doesn't have a lot in common with any other child who has. Baptists know the same songs as we do—"This Little Light," "Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam," all those.

Lamberton: A bookstore owner told me you actually started this book off by writing about Baptists. Is that true?

Duncan: That's right. Because Baptists are a flagrant example of an anti-literary, monocultural, close-minded understanding. But I didn't know enough about the Baptists. When you go back to the well of impressions, when you're conjuring everything you can from a childhood in church, it has to be there firsthand. So it was the Adventists for me. Those Adventist preachers that I had to listen to all those years were the guys I wanted to answer; it felt good to create Elder Babcock. And the split in my own family's religious beliefs was like the split in the novel. Adventist versus non-Adventist. My grandmother was only 17 years older than my mother, and lived just down our street. My grandfather was also raised in an Adventist family, but he didn't go to church

at all till he was diagnosed with cancer in his late 70s. He worked on Saturdays. He didn't give a poop what the Bible said, he wanted to make money. And my father was a jock, an abandoned kid, stuck in an Adventist boarding school. But he was never successfully indoctrinated in the Adventist "way." So I had this double generation of two males who were completely uninterested in religion, and two females who were very traditional and who wanted us to embrace the old family religion.

My mother's not somebody who goes around judging others—a thing that drives me crazy about fundamentalist religions of all stripes. But she grew up in an Adventist community, went to an Adventist school, and knew Adventist kids, so that when the fire and brimstone preachers talked

The split in my own family's religious beliefs was like the split in the novel. Adventist versus non-Adventist. I had this double generation of two males completely uninterested in religion, and two females who were very traditional and wanted us to embrace the old family religion.

about everyone who wasn't an Adventist going to hell, that was fine with her. Everybody she knew was saved. When I heard the same things in sermons as a boy, though, it meant that everybody I knew in public school, all my friends, were going to hell. So the same message for me was disturbing.

Lamberton: How did you learn to write? How would you answer that?

Duncan: Well, I never took a fiction writing course. But as a young man I did have an intense longing for something like an apprentice-master relationship. In fact, I tried for one. There was a man, a Southern writer I admired, Andrew Lytle. I offered to become a slave on his farm in exchange for writing tips. He said forget it. Thank God. I was young. People really want to surrender to someone who knows.

One of the many problems when people talk about inner experience is that there's no context, no stage on which it can take place. Humans are best able to convey inner experiences through carefully constructed rites, and you almost have to be initiated into the meaning of the rite.

Think of the pathetic reverence Robert Bly gets. Or Pat Robertson. Or Rajneesh. I think the same impulse creates monsters out of some evangelists: people don't want to have to think. But I feel we're put here to struggle and doubt. I love the line "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." As far as learning how to write, I think just reading great, difficult books was an important part of it, just to see how far I could challenge myself. Writing criticism wasn't too helpful. I imitated other writers when I was young. I think that was helpful. I would imitate Mark Twain and Dickens. I loved the way they worked, the rhythm of those long 19th-century sentences.

Lamberton: You sound in your conversation and writing as if you've kept a strong sense of the spiritual. How is it to write of that?

Duncan: *The River Why* is really a book about spiritual conviction, and the scene where Gus gets God was absolutely heartfelt. I would never write directly about anything I would call mystical experience. But I felt it would be a denial of the very few most important experiences in my life to leave the metaphysical dimension out. I felt I had to labor for 200 pages before I had created a world where spiritual feelings could be incarnate. One of the many problems when people try to talk about inner experience is there's just no context, no stage on which it can take place. Humans are best able to convey inner experiences through carefully constructed rites, and you almost have to be initiated into the meaning of the rite before you're not talking gibberish.

Another problem when people talk about spiritual experience is they say, "I felt, I had, I did, it was my experience." But if you've had a genuine spiritual experience, you haven't had anything. Your *spirit* has had an experience, and for the

rest of you to talk about it is creating a false claim.

Lamberton: I think that something you do well in your books is display frequently avoided responses to religion—you show how even in our own spirituality there are things to mock and that most of the time, we don't have a clue.

Duncan: This woman from the *New York Times* called to interview me about *The Brothers K*, for one of those information boxes the *Times* will occasionally put inside a review. She said, "In your books, people are religious, then sacrilegious. What's with the back and forth?" I said, "You know, there are two indigenous gods in the Northwest, Raven and Coyote. They're an ancient tradition here. And they're both revered, but they're both irreverent characters. It feels natural to me as a native North-westerner to cross back and forth." And she said, "Raven, Coyote? What are you talking about?" Then she quoted me as saying "He likes to write religiously and sacrilegiously," something I didn't say, because she had no idea what I was talking about. I read a lot of mystics in the Christian tradition, and I wouldn't say there's a self-mockery there, but I do feel that Christianity's loss of its own mystics, of the loss of respect for mystics and their importance in the formation of priests or theologians or preachers, is a huge tragedy.

Lamberton: Have you filled up that loss in your books with things from Eastern religions? In *The Brothers K* you make quite a few references through Peter to Eastern spirituality. What's happening there?

Duncan: As my personal odyssey goes, I was so disillusioned with things Western that I was only able to regain respect for the Christian tradition through the back door. The Oriental door. These people were able to make sense to me, not only of my brother's death, but also

of the state of the world and its darkness. They offered me a real metaphysic that enabled God to remain compassionate despite the suffering of the world and its humanity. I first encountered Oriental thought in high school—in the flip Buddhism of Kerouac, and the sincere Oriental leanings of Hesse. But, unlike a lot of people then, I went back to the source of the material, read the Tao Te Ching, the Upanishads, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Koran. When you start reading a Taoist mystic, then a medieval Christian mystic like Meister Eckhart, then a Sufi mystic like Rumi, you're reading what seems like the same person. As evidence to a skeptical mind, I found the unity of these discrete traditions overwhelming. I would say this unity was the real focal point of my education. And it was an education that I received, not through universities, but through a circle of passionate friends. There were probably a thousand books that a handful of us read together in our twenties.

Lamberton: I've felt that what you've done in your books is extremely genuine in its Christian foundation and sentiment.

Duncan: I truly feel that Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism are essentially the same. There is one God. For all humanity and for all creation. I wish I could be kinder to those who feel that its

only their God, but I can't. Saying that, I think it is important to follow just one guide. You can't have 10 gurus. When you utter your prayer, which one do you pray to? You have to be clear on that, but that part of me is private.

Lamberton: That reminds me of the story about Jung. He refused to go into a meeting of people discussing his theories because he said "there are too many Jungians in there."

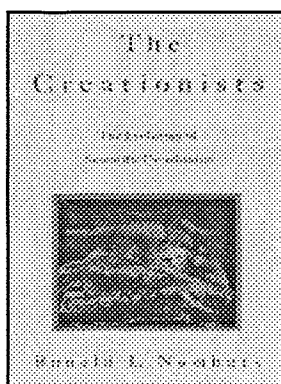
Duncan: I would hate to be a Duncanian.

Lamberton: To all of us there is a huge importance attached to the ability of language to make reference to the world. Language contracts may be suspended or broken, but there are circumstances where breaking this contract is unacceptable. Many reading your books will ask whether you write of real bodies, real pain, real places. This is an important question to them. Are you eager to say your novels make no direct references to real people and places, or do you think that maintaining a tie to actual reference should even be an issue? I've sort of asked you this already.

Duncan: Well, I have a better answer to that question than the one I gave earlier. People love to create autobiographical links between writers and their fiction. Especially if they like the fiction there is an impulse to give it greater

authenticity by finding direct links to the author's life. But I don't like to talk about autobiographical links. The essential miracle of literature for me, is that we all sit down, as readers, with these black, dead marks on a page, and with nothing but our feeble training back in grade school and these marks, we re-create a world, we create these characters, we give them life. It's the individual reader who does that. The author is done, the author has vacated the scene. It's the reader alone who resurrects all these emotions. And what a miracle! What a skill. To me it feels like some ontological proof of the inner life that we can do this through literature. And it denigrates, or just lessens the beauty of that experience to try to verify it with little autobiographical linkages.

I don't think a book should be more powerful for readers because they know Princess Di really did walk through a room referred to in some scene. That's a meaningless angle. If you've been moved to joy or tears by a work of fiction, it's your inner life that deserves the thanks. It's nice that the author had the initial experience, but the reader re-creates an original experience in just as valid a way as the author did. I think that's just great. The fact that I had brothers and a family and stuff is secondary. The reader's recreation is the essence of what fiction is about.



The Adventist Roots Of Creation Science

Ronald Numbers' carefully researched, readable account of how George McCready Price shaped conservative Protestantism.

by Gary Land

WITH THE PUBLICATION OF *THE CREATIONISTS*, Ronald L. Numbers, professor of the history of science and medicine at the University of Wisconsin, has contributed significantly to our understanding of the history of science and religion in modern America. He has explored the development of a major subculture within American life and thereby illuminates the complexities of the interaction of elite and popular thought. Interestingly, his account underscores the importance of Seventh-day Adventism's influence on conservative Protestantism, particularly the impact of the Seventh-day Adventist George McCready Price on the emergence of scientific creationism among militant evangelical Protestants.

In his first four chapters, Numbers argues that although many Protestant leaders in the 19th century opposed Darwinian evolution,

hardly anyone promoted the concept of a young earth or the universal importance of Noah's flood. George Fredrick Wright, possibly the leading conservative Christian spokesman on geological matters, moved from being a Christian Darwinist to an association with fundamentalism in the early 20th century, but he appears to have accepted a form of evolution. *The Fundamentals*, published between 1910 and 1915 and to which Wright contributed, offered a wide variety of opinions on evolution.

By the 1920s two dominant interpretations of the Genesis creation story had become popular among conservative Christians. The idea that the days of Creation referred to long ages had been held by many 19th-century Christians and shaped the thinking of William Jennings Bryan, prosecutor at the Scopes trial. A second option, that there was a time gap between the first and second verses of Genesis and that the Creation story actually told of a recreation, appeared in the widely read Scofield Bible in 1909 and seems to have become the most popular view among fundamentalists in

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the 1920s. The well-known anti-evolution lecturers, Arthur I. Brown and Harry Rimmer, both advocated the latter, "gap theory."

The next five chapters tell the story of how a largely self-educated, armchair geologist, George McCready Price, gradually began to shape fundamentalist opinion. As early as the turn of the century, Price, influenced by Ellen G. White's belief that Noah's flood was worldwide and that the Sabbath doctrine required a six-day Creation, argued that the geological column did not exist and that geological phenomena were attributable to a single catastrophic deluge. By the 1920s, his writings were appearing in fundamentalist publications, although on Flood geology editors and readers seemed unaware that Price's views differed from their own.

The first attempt to develop an organization to promote creationism, the Religion and Science Association, established in 1935, floundered over the division between day-agers, gap theorists, and Flood geologists. The Deluge Science Society, formed in 1938, limited itself to Flood geologists and seems to have been dominated by Seventh-day Adventist physicians. But when Harold W. Clark, an Adventist teaching at Pacific Union College, began advocating the reality of the geological column, putting forward his ecological zonation theory as a creationist explanation, the society began to splinter.

Meanwhile, the American Scientific Affiliation, founded in 1941 to represent evangelical scientists, was becoming increasingly open to evolutionary thought. Conservatives became disturbed. The publication in 1954 of Bernard Ramm's *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, which advocated progressive creationism, stimulated a reaction from John C. Whitcomb, Jr., an evangelical Bible teacher. In 1961 he combined forces with Henry M. Morris, an engineer, to write *The Genesis Flood*. The geological portion of the book

read, in Numbers' words, "like an updated version of [Price's] *The New Geology*" (p. 202).

Eventually selling more than 200,000 copies, *The Genesis Flood* thrust Whitcomb and Morris into the limelight, eventually leading to the establishment of the Creation Research Society, the attempt to open public schools to creationism, and the spread throughout the English-speaking world of what became known as "scientific creationism."

Numbers concludes that geology rose to prominence for four reasons: (1) Whitcomb and Morris "skillfully promoted it as biblical orthodoxy"; (2) it appeared to fit a "literal" reading of Scripture; (3) it provided a historical and theological symmetry with premillennial expectations of Christ's soon return; and (4) it gave "scientific sanctification" to a "non-evolutionary history of life" (pp. 338, 339).

This brief summary gives little indication of the complexity of Numbers' account. Not only does he trace the development of Flood geology, he also examines anti-evolutionary thought in England, follows the history of the American Scientific Affiliation, describes the various creationist institutions, looks at creationism's impact on the churches, and analyzes cases of alleged scientific persecution of creationists.

Through all the turns of his story, the author keeps his focus on the development of scientific creationism. He writes clearly and enlivens his account by effectively describing such personalities as Wright, Price, Morris, and Walter Lammerts, as well as the less respectable characters like Benjamin Allen and Clifford Burdick.

Numbers bases his study on a thorough reading of anti-evolutionary and creationist literature, ranging from major books to obscure pamphlets. He consulted the papers of more than 70 individuals and institutions, many of which remain in private hands. He also interviewed nearly 50 people connected with creationism. *The Creationists* is an im-

pressive and painstaking piece of research presented in a highly readable style.

Seventh-day Adventist readers will find Numbers' account fascinating, not only because of its description of Price, but also because it clarifies the history of Adventist creationism through Clark and Frank Marsh to the sometimes troubled history of the Geoscience Research Institute. Numbers also clearly demonstrates the tensions between Seventh-day Adventist and non-Seventh-day Adventist Flood geologists. Whitcomb and Morris, for instance, had to minimize their indebtedness to Price in *The Genesis Flood*, because of Adventism's suspect nature within the conservative Protestant community.

This volume gives readers much to consider. It is apparent that virtually no one turned to scientific creationism for scientific reasons; theological or philosophical factors played the major role. And, as the story of individuals within the American Scientific Affiliation reveals, holding to a conservative creationist position is very difficult for those studying geology. Not until 1979 did a Flood geologist emerge with both a Ph.D. in geology and a secure fundamentalist faith.

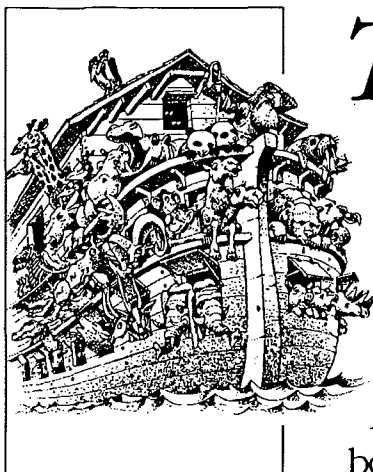
Although the conservative Christian community has been committed to Scripture, its members obviously read Genesis in various ways, which suggests that perhaps a "literal" reading is not so literal after all. Even within the Flood geology camp, considerable disagreement occurred over just what the Bible allowed. "The core belief was not a young earth . . . but a young life," Numbers writes. "On almost every other issue—from the age of the universe and the origin of the law of thermodynamics to the limits of organic variation and the number of fossils attributable to

Noah's flood—the scientific creationists indulged in open and spirited debate" (p. 336).

Curiously, creationists felt the need for their faith to receive the imprimatur of science. In reality, they tended to read the Bible with the same common sense—almost positivist—mindset with which they approached the physical world. It would be useful to know more about their assumptions regarding the nature of Scripture and religion. Creationists seem to have sometimes adopted the position that the "ends justify the means." The movement's sometimes cavalier quoting of scientific authorities and concern with winning debating points are disturbing. Although Numbers notes the self-criticism within the creationist movement, the persistent influence of Clifford Burdick's sloppy, if not dishonest, scientific efforts suggests that desire sometimes overcame careful thought and procedure.

Finally, as private individuals and as citizens, we are faced with the question of who we turn to for authority. Creationism is, in part, a reaction against a scientific elite that has wielded great power in determining the truth within our culture. When the truth of the elite conflicts with the truth of the populace, who should win, especially in the public schools? Highly technical science and a democratic society do not necessarily fit easily together, particularly when there is a conflict of fundamental assumptions.

The Creationists is essential reading for anyone interested in the recent history of religion or in the question of origins. Ronald L. Numbers, although saying he is an agnostic, has taken a motley crew of scientists, theologians, and publicists seriously and has given them a sympathetic hearing. Scholars and general readers alike will be indebted to him for many years to come.



The Creationists— As Intriguing As a Potok Novel

A scholar of American religious history welcomes Numbers' book as a "monumental history of the young-Earth movement."

by *George Marsden*

IMAGINE YOURSELF DEEPLY COMMITTED TO A community that confirms your experience that its religious faith is the most important commitment that a person can have. Integral to this community is belief in an unerring Bible. Moreover, your community's faith is energized by the conviction that biblical prophecies will be fulfilled precisely by events accompanying the imminent return of Jesus. The whole Bible is correspondingly to be interpreted as literally as possible. Hence the Earth cannot be much more than 6,000 years old. A web of reinforcing factors makes it virtually impossible for you to abandon any of the above beliefs. Accepting an old Earth or biological evolution is therefore out of the question. Your job, as someone fascinated by science, is to use your high intelligence to find an alternative model in which to fit the scientific evidence. The task is difficult, but no more

so than other challenges that scientists have surmounted.

Ronald Numbers, a distinguished historian of science at the University of Wisconsin, understands well the drama and the potential agony of the challenge facing creation scientists. Numbers recounts that he grew up in a family of Seventh-day Adventist preachers but that he eventually came to the devastating conclusion that attempts to explain the geological evidence of a world-wide flood was a hopeless task. Nonetheless, in this monumental history of the young-Earth movement, there is no bitterness or cynicism. Rather, he tells the story with remarkable even-handedness. This feat reflects the unique perspective of one who is no longer an Adventist, yet who keeps on his desk a framed ticket for a 1940s lecture entitled "God's Answer to Evolution," in which his father was the lecturer.

This marvelously detailed, engagingly told and sometimes astonishing history has the intrigue of a Chaim Potok novel. Like Potok's *The Chosen*, in which an Orthodox Jewish boy

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finds out that his orthodoxy is liberal in the view of his Hasidic neighbors, *The Creationists* is largely the story of a struggle between the orthodox and the hyperorthodox. One of the remarkable parts of the story is how a small group of flood geologists rose from a marginal position, even among conservative Bible-believing Protestants, to come to represent the best-known creationist viewpoint.

Before 1960, what is today known as "creation science" had only the most meagre support even among the conservative evangelical or fundamentalist communities in the United States. Most earlier fundamentalist leaders had allowed for some accommodation of the geological evidence for an old Earth. Some allowed that the "days" in Genesis might represent aeons. Many others subscribed to a "gap theory" that allowed for vast amounts of time between when the Universe was created in Genesis 1:1 and its being "without form and void" in Genesis 1:2. Even William Jennings

Bryan, leader of the anti-evolution crusade after the First World War, allowed for an old Earth. Just before the Second World War, almost the only prominent figure who insisted on a young Earth and argued that the biblical flood provided a scientific explanation of geological data was George McCready Price, a tireless lecturer dedicated to vindicating Adventist founder Ellen White's revelation on these points.

During the 1920s, however, most American fundamentalists had become militantly opposed to biological evolution, especially in reaction to those who were using Darwinism to shock people with faith in a literal Bible. Between 1940 and 1960, however, opposition to biological evolution was weakening among fundamentalist academics who were broadening their outlooks and beginning to call themselves "evangelicals." The American Scientific Affiliation, founded in 1941 as an organization of Bible-believing scientists, originally included proponents of a young Earth as well as advocates of an old Earth. During the next two decades, this sizable organization became a forum for accommodations of biological evolution and biblical belief. The small minority of young-Earth proponents felt excluded and resolved to establish an alternative for fundamentalists that would be equally viable scientifically.

Central in the ensuing transformation of flood geology into an influential national movement was Henry Morris. Morris, who is described by Numbers as a person of ability and integrity, was a fundamentalist fascinated by prospects for literal fulfillments of biblical prophecies. Unhappy with views of the Bible that did not take it at face value, he dedicated himself to defending a young Earth, adopting flood geology much like Price's. Receiving a Ph.D. in hydraulic engineering from the University of Minnesota in 1950, he held an important position in engineering at Virginia Polytechnic Institute until 1969, when he felt



George McCready Price

forced out because of his fundamentalist views. In the meantime, the landmark for the launching of his alternative movement was the publication with John Whitcomb, a biblical scholar, of *The Genesis Flood* (1961), a volume that eventually sold more than 200,000 copies. The book helped to spark the formation in 1963 of the Creation Research Society under Morris's leadership.

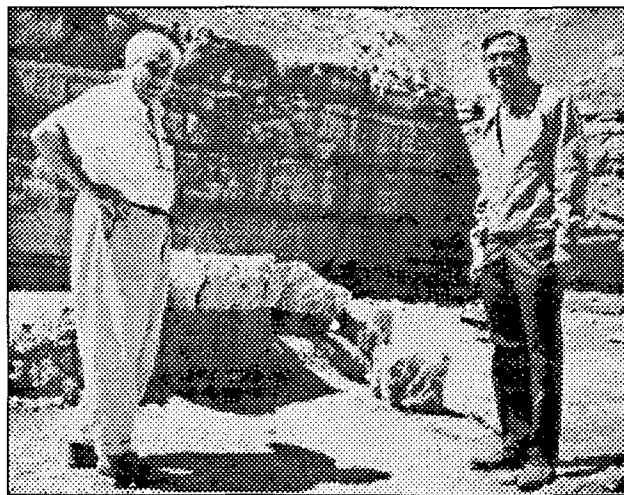
Not happy with the narrow sound of the term "flood geology," Morris referred to his movement as "creation science." Throughout the 1960s, creation scientists emphasized frankly the biblical basis for their views. During the 1970s, however, the strategy shifted. One of the explanations for the surge in popularity of the movement was that by the 1960s biological evolution had been reintroduced into U.S. public schools and was seen by fundamentalists as one part of a new relativizing of American public values. In the midst of the conservative backlash of the 1970s, creation scientists attempted to insert their views into public schools as an alternative to evolutionary views. This public strategy necessitated shifting emphasis to the scientific, rather than the biblical, basis of their conclusions. Furthermore, their characteristic view of sciences shifted from a Baconian objectivism to appeals to the views of Karl Popper and Thomas Kuhn, which emphasized that equally valid science may proceed from alternative viewpoints.

In order to win legislative approval, flood geologists now claimed for themselves the term "creationists," ignoring the fact that every other type of Christian believed in some form of creation as well. To the biblical literalists, however, all views that said that God used evolutionary processes as a means of creation were inconsistent. Therefore, they argued, there were only two real options: evolutionism and "creationism," meaning flood geology. Incredibly, in 1980 the legislatures of

Arkansas and Louisiana adopted this "two-model" view, mandating the teaching of "creationist" (in Arkansas specifically young-Earth) models alongside evolutionary views. Although those laws were struck down in the courts, the creation-science movement has continued to flourish at the local level. Moreover, polls show that nearly half the U.S. population will affirm recent creation of humans. Creation-science arguments have also been exported world-wide to new churches where biblicist "either/or" arguments have strong appeal.

Numbers does a marvellous job of telling this story, particularly the internal history of the creation-science movement. His research is superb, bringing in much previously uncited correspondence. Even when he is describing some of the questionable activities of some of the more marginal figures who have been part of the movement, his tone is even-handed, letting the facts speak largely for themselves.

Numbers does not spend a great deal of time analyzing the reasons for the astonishing success of the movement. One factor he mentions is the populist appeal. American evangelicalism has long had a democratic rhetoric, appealing to people to decide for



Louis B. Leakey, discoverer of early man in Kenya's Olduvai gorge, and his friend Molleurus Couperus, professor emeritus of medicine at Loma University and Spectrum's first editor.

themselves. In American folk religion there is also a tremendous reverence for the Bible, literally interpreted. Creation scientists have been able to validate their arguments and to win legislative support by appealing to this popular base. The movement also has other political connections, which Numbers only mentions. Creation science typically has been closely associated with a broader conservative religious-political package. Morris, for instance, has long been a friend of Jerry Falwell. Numbers is, however, clear on the general point that creation science is a reactive movement. As in Bryan's time, the perception that evolutionary naturalism is undermining all traditional values is one impetus for promoting stark alternatives.

One lesson implicit in this history is that some scientists too have been guilty of posing stark alternatives. Evolution has often been used to ridicule any traditional faith. Some secularists have been all too ready to accept

flood geologists' claims to speak for all "creationists" and then to dismiss even more nuanced arguments that belief in a creator might be a useful hypothesis for understanding the Universe. Those who insist that nothing could ever be clarified by positing the existence of a higher intelligence are in a formal sense something like creation scientists. They are so committed to a community that finds this secular faith immensely useful that they are convinced that they *must* be able to find an exclusively naturalistic explanation for everything.

Unless we suppose that natural science of the past century has somehow settled all such issues, we might expect that in the future there would be wider acceptance of a variety of hypotheses about the possible relationships of natural phenomena to higher creative intelligence. Those who insist on the extremes, however, may delay any such evolution of scientific thought.



Ronald L. Numbers

The Historian As Heretic

New essays in the second, expanded edition of *Prophetess of Health* (1993) include this introduction, reprinted by permission of the University of Tennessee Press.

by Jonathan Butler

A Family Affair

Nothing more poignantly illustrates the conflict between the historian and the believer than the trouble it can cause within families. When Ronald L. Numbers, recently hired as a historian at the University of Wisconsin, neared the completion of his manuscript on the Seventh-day Adventist prophet Ellen G. White, his father, Raymond W. Numbers, the pastor of an Adventist church in Las Vegas, was approaching the end of his ministerial career. Pastor Numbers prayed that his son would not publish the book. After *Prophetess of Health* nevertheless appeared in print in mid-1976, a broken father, unable to write his son directly, wrote to his daughter, Carolyn. Recalling the many times their mother and he had prayed over their children's cribs to dedicate them "to the giving of the Last Message of Mercy to the World," he added, "Satan has no right to steal you or Ronnie away from what you were born for." He concluded the letter by claiming a promise in Ellen White's *Child Guidance*: "The seed sown with tears and prayers may

have seemed to be sown in vain, but their harvest is reaped with joy at last. Their children have been redeemed."¹

The publication of his son's book had been a shattering experience for Ray Numbers as a father; and, curiously enough, it was just as devastating for Pastor Numbers as a son. More than forty years before, when Ray had been a ministerial major at the Adventist college near Washington, D.C., his own father, Ernest R. Numbers, himself a minister, had abandoned his family and faith in Ellen White after being publicly exposed in a brief lapse into adultery. The fact that Ray's father had held a middle-level administrative post in the church's General Conference ensured far-slung knowledge of the scandal. For the sensitive young theology student, this shameful experience had been at once damaging and formative. He devoted his life and career to redeeming the sullied family name. But after forty years of blameless toil in the Lord's vineyard, his restoration had been undone. Ironically, the son of the apostate was now also the father of an apostate. Having spent a lifetime restoring his name,

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there was too little time to do so again. Earlier than planned the disheartened pastor retired.²

When *Prophetess of Health* was first published, Adventist academics thought it chic to provide psychological explanations for Ron Numbers's slant. They spoke of unresolved conflicts with his inflexibly fundamentalist father or hostility to his father's version of the church. This tack played well among the cultivated Adventists in educational and medical centers. No thought was given, however, to the way such pop psychology could easily have been turned on the apologists themselves. Nor did the defense suggest that psychology or psychohistory might serve as a suitable tool for understanding the Adventist prophet as well as her detractors. Psychohistory only served to account for prophets of other traditions—Joseph Smith or Mary Baker Eddy—not Ellen White.³

Numbers's maternal grandfather, W. H. Branson, had been the church's General Conference president, and the author of a classic apologetic. For Numbers, a favorite son of the church, to have gone sour, then, was taken as something akin to a betrayal of the family.

Such apologetics understandably S piqued Numbers as a historian, who wanted his work analyzed not his life psychoanalyzed. But a rebuttal to Ron Numbers that cast reflections not only on the rebellious preacher's son but, to no small degree, on the preacher-father deeply disturbed Ray Numbers, too. He spoke plaintively to his son about it. (They had generally never had problems speaking to each other, even when speaking on opposite sides of a question.) While Pastor Numbers wondered if he had, unwittingly, prompted his son's book, his concern went deeper, to the way he might have affected his son's soul. The father wanted to know, candidly, if he had been a rigid and unreasonable authority figure at whom his son now hurled his book. Ron assured his father that he had been a wonderful, caring parent, more flexible than many of his contemporaries and, while his son had grown up to disagree with him on many points of faith, he had always respected him. Thus, whatever the strains that had been placed on father and son as believer and historian, the openness and affection between them, through it all, seemed to belie the psychological reductionism of *their* critics.⁴

The effort to explain away *Prophetess of Health* by way of the psychological problems of its author was neither more dignified nor less dubious than the mere *ad hominem* attack. In fact, the intensely personal nature of responses to Numbers's book within the Adventist church smacked of a family quarrel. As something of an extended family, Adventists usually prove more generous to non-family members than errant relatives. When Numbers, at thirty, began his research on the Adventist prophet at the Ellen G. White Estate, Arthur L. White, grandson of the prophet and head of the archives, welcomed him

not only as a respected young scholar from the Loma Linda University School of Medicine but as good Adventist stock. Numbers's maternal grandfather, W. H. Branson, had been the church's General Conference president and the author of a classic apologetic answer to the charges of the church's most notorious apostate, Dudley M. Canright.⁵ For this favorite son of the church to have gone sour, then, was taken as something akin to a betrayal of the family.

Two of Numbers's uncles, husbands of his father's sisters, did what they could to rein in their nephew. Roger Wilcox, who served as General Field Secretary of the General Conference, proved less avuncular than officious in relation to Ron. Named as chair of a committee at G.C. headquarters to deal with the book, Wilcox planned strategy for minimizing its damage. Another uncle, Glenn Coon, an evangelist who headed the ABC Prayer Crusade ("Ask, Believe, Claim"), implored Ronnie not even to publish his manuscript and offered to repay him whatever expenses he had incurred in the writing of it, "whether it was a thousand or ten thousand dollars." Admitting he was not able to afford such an offer, he promised to pray for a miracle and then pay in installments. As an alternative to his nephew's manuscript, he suggested that the two of them co-author a more positive book on Ellen White. Though Coon remained Numbers's favorite uncle, his effort to abort publication of the book obviously failed. But the ABC's-of-prayer crusader consoled himself with the thought that his prayer had not failed. For, as Uncle Glenn later pointed out, he could find no Bible promise which said, "Ron will not write a book against [Sister] White."⁶

Neither of these relatives was the least bit persuasive with Numbers.

However, his cousin, Roy Branson, an ethicist at the S.D.A. Theological Seminary, had exerted an earlier influence on him when the two taught together at Andrews University in 1969-70. In that year, Branson co-wrote with Herold Weiss, a New Testament scholar, a brief, provocative essay on "Ellen White: A Subject for Adventist Scholarship." Published in *Spectrum*, a new, independent journal largely for Adventist academics and professionals, for which Branson and Numbers had been among the founding fathers, the essay called for Adventists "to discover the nature of Mrs. White's relationship to other authors," "to recover the social and intellectual milieu in which she lived and wrote," and "to give close attention to the development of Ellen White's writings within her own lifetime, and also to the development of the church." Two years later, at Loma Linda University, Numbers began his study of Ellen White as a health reformer for which the Branson-Weiss essay, in general terms, could have served as a prospectus.⁷

Skeletons in the Closet

In this retrospective on *Prophetless of Health*, I hope to assess the impact of the book on Seventh-day Adventists, without overlooking its reception beyond the circle of Adventism. In a sense, this introduction echoes the book's two underlying themes: milieu and change. First, in regard to cultural and intellectual milieu, Numbers, like the subject of his study, did not write *in vacuo*. His work may be the single most important example—but by no means the extent—of a historiographical coming of age within Adventism since

1970. While the focus here is on Numbers, it is revealing to view the way in which his work fits into the larger landscape of contemporary Adventism. Second, just as the prophet and her church underwent changes in the nineteenth century, perceptions of the prophet and the church's self-understanding have undergone profound development over the past two decades, at least among educated Adventists. How did Numbers contribute to these changes and what was the nature of these changes?

Until Numbers's book on Ellen White, the Adventist prophet was among the better-kept secrets in American religious history. Seventh-day Adventists themselves seemed to hide their founding mother from the public. In his mapping of American religion, Martin E. Marty writes that ethnicity is the "framework or skeleton of religion in America; around 1960, that skeleton was taken out of the closet." For Adventists, who are at once a religion and a kind of ethnic group, Ellen White has served as a "skeleton" in the two ways Marty suggests: First, she has been the framework for the movement, holding life and limb together in every area of the church's thinking and behavior. All of Adventism stands in her debt for its understanding of the Sabbath, the Second Coming of Christ, justification and sanctification, health reform and medicine, child nurture and education. But, second, she has been a "skeleton in the closet" in that Adventists have hidden her from the non-Adventist public, as if to talk too openly about their "mother" betrays an unnatural dependence on her. Likewise, over the years, the church's ministers and teachers have concealed facts about her career from an *Adventist* public, as if the children were not mature enough to see their spiritual mother as an imperfect human being.⁸

Like other religious minorities, Adventists can be quite sensitive about their public image. In their recent historical and sociological study of the church, Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart concluded that there have been, historically, two public perceptions of Adventists: as apocalyptic fanatics and as philanthropic physicians, symbolized respectively by William Miller at the entrance to the movement and John Harvey Kellogg at its exit. Hidden from view is the complex, internal existence of the church out of which most Adventists live. Ellen White characterizes this Adventism.⁹ If she had been faceless to the public, within the movement she—not Miller or Kellogg—serves as the mirror in which Adventism sees its own face. Millerism represents something of an embarrassment, the debacle from which a now superior Seventh-day Adventism once extricated itself. And because

Within Adventism, Ellen White—not Miller or Kellogg—serves as the mirror in which Adventism sees its own face. With a self-image that combines both feelings of superiority and inferiority, Adventists display both pride and insecurity regarding public images of their prophet.

Kellogg left Adventism after growing too big for it, he imposes on the church a sense of inferiority. With a self-image that combines both feelings of superiority and inferiority, Adventists display both pride and insecurity regarding public images of their prophet. In general, they prefer no association of Ellen White with the apocalyptic fanaticism of her origins. They emphasize, instead, the universality of her health writings and medical institutions.

For Adventists, Numbers had chosen the right topic—health—in introducing their prophet to the public, but this made it all the more disappointing when he identified her with marginal aspects of health reform. Adventists had known all along of skeletons in the closet with respect to their millenarian beginnings, but they had not suspected that similar skeletons could be found in their origins as health reformers. Numbers had hauled them out. This unnerved church members who were not used to seeing their prophet through other people's eyes. They complained that where her writings appeared bizarre, White had been quoted "out of context." This was both untrue and true. It was not true that the documents had been generally misread or misinterpreted. It was true, however, for perhaps the first time, that White's statements were being handled by secular hands. That is, as a result of Numbers's work, White's life and writings were being viewed in their context, but from the perspective of *another context*. Adventists were most unsettled to find her in *Time* magazine. Indeed, they seemed as disturbed by *Time's* coverage of *Prophetess of Health* as they were by the book itself. For in its review-story, the national weekly had portrayed White to its huge readership as a visionary who, as Numbers had

shown, linked masturbation to "imbecility, dwarfed forms, crippled limbs, misshapen heads, and deformity of every description."¹⁰

Confronted by what they took to be bad press on Ellen White, some Adventists could still remain blasé. After all, the prophet had prophesied of future attempts to nullify her writings, which transformed every criticism of her into another prophetic fulfillment.¹¹ Her predictions of the future actually reflected her contemporary experience. For she had faced severe threats to her authority throughout her lifetime. The first serious challenge occurred in the 1840s and 1850s, when she and her husband, James White, co-founded Seventh-day Adventism; the next one came around the turn of the century, when the widowed matriarch sought to re-found the church in her own image.

In the early period, Adventists focused on the nature and authenticity of her visions as well as the relationships of her visions to the authority of the Scriptures. Her visions served as a kind of *urim* and *thummin* that endorsed various biblical interpretations of the pioneers. In Adventist orthodoxy, White assumed a modest, confirmatory role relative to the Bible, much as she subordinated herself in her marriage to her dominant husband James. The 1860s and 1870s, however, saw the visionary's influence increase as her husband's power decreased. By the time of her husband's death in 1881, White enjoyed a more expansive role in the church. Her relationship to her devoted son Willie, who came to oversee her affairs, formed the paradigm of her matriarchal leadership at the turn of the century, much as her marriage had done for early Adventism. No longer the subservient wife, she now imperiously mothered a new generation

of Adventist leaders and their followers. Her dramatic public visions had ended, but her no less dramatic literary output had replaced it. And where her authority had once been secured by merely confirming the biblical interpretations of various brethren, she now claimed divine authority for her statements on the basis of their originality. Thus, her writings shifted for Adventists from merely commentary on the Scriptures to something of a new Scriptures.¹²

Assaults on White's authority have been aimed at either the prophet as visionary or as writer. To charge that Seventh-day Adventists, despite their claims, have relied on White's visions or writings as more authoritative than the Scriptures implicates both the early and later prophet. To account for her visions in psychopathological terms, as hypnotism or hysteria for example, grapples with the trance phenomena of her early life. To debunk her as a plagiarist goes to the heart of her literary identity. Canright, an Adventist evangelist who had been a close friend of the prophet before his defection, produced the most comprehensive and sophisticated polemic against her, as he took on both the visionary and the writer. His book was, however, no more than the polemic of a disillusioned ex-believer, which limited its credibility and its public.¹³

Holy War at the White Estate

Adventist leaders initially dismissed Numbers as another Canright. In establishing and protecting its borders, the church has always found in the defector a familiar, easy, and probably necessary target. In the church's mind,

Ellen White could be viewed only in the extreme, as either prophet or fraud, divinely inspired or satanically controlled; little middle ground existed between hagiography and heresy. But in seeking "neither to defend nor to damn but simply to understand" Ellen White, Numbers confronted the church with something new, and ultimately more challenging than the polemic. He also ensured a larger reading public for his efforts. Numbers, after all, was the product not only of a complete Adventist parochial education but of the graduate degrees beyond Adventism that the church encouraged for its brightest youth before they returned, ideally, to teach in the Adventist system. He represented, then, not a failure of Adventism's religious and educational vision but a noteworthy success. With a freshly minted Ph.D. in the history of science from the University of California, Berkeley, and teaching appointments at the two Adventist universities—first Andrews, then Loma Linda—Numbers had finished revisions of his dissertation on Laplace's nebular hypothesis before turning to an Adventist topic. This was hardly the pinched or unschooled profile of the typical polemicist, concerned less with exploring a subject than exposing it. This is not to say that Numbers came to his study of Ellen White devoid of animus. Few intellectual Adventists can reflect honestly on their religious background without some element of anger. To those within the church or outside it, however, Numbers seemed superbly suited, by both religious background and professional training, to produce as fair a study as any of the health-minded Adventist prophet.¹⁴

His resultant monograph had an astonishing impact on Seventh-day Adventists. One Adventist religion scholar commented that *Prophetess of Health* "constitutes

the most serious criticism of the prophetic powers of E. G. White ever to appear in print." For the sheer explosiveness of its historiographical challenge, Numbers did for White what Fawn Brodie had done for Joseph Smith.¹⁵ Indeed, nothing like it had happened among Adventists before, and probably nothing like it can happen again. The explanation for this resides largely in the fact that in his book Numbers addressed an Adventist agenda. To be sure, in making his case as a first-rate historian, he avoided both apologetic and exposé. But in his study he did not transcend the prophet-fraud framework.

What preoccupied Numbers were Adventism's historical and scientific claims for the "prophetess of health" and how those claims held up under the scrutiny of a historian of science. At the same time, he laid aside the question of supernatural claims regarding her, as a matter for faith not historical explanation. As a throwback to a nineteenth-century Baconianism in which nature and the Bible complemented rather than contradicted one another, Seventh-day Adventists had found in White's health teachings a "scientific" basis for belief in her divine inspiration. Two somewhat contrary models had served the church here. On the one hand, most Adventists saw White's health writings as singularly original and well in advance of modern scientific medicine; only lately had medical research been able to confirm what Adventists had known all along from inspiration. On the other hand, even those few educated Adventists who acknowledged that their prophet had been an eclectic indebted for her health views to her context found the "proof" of her inspiration compelling: with much fallacious health science available to

her, she had always taken the correct position.¹⁶

Numbers demolished both these models of explanation. More than that, in undermining White's own claims of intellectual independence as a health reformer, he called into question her integrity. Though he had largely concentrated his study on the scope of White's health teachings, Numbers could not have raised more far-reaching questions in regard to the prophet's life and charismatic leadership. Shedding light on her entrée into the health reform in the late 1860s, he illuminated the critical transition for the prophet from young visionary to middle-aged writer, marked by a shift from confirmatory to initiatory inspiration. Her claims to originality were sabotaged, of course, where Numbers pointed up cases of her literary borrowing. He stopped short

While moving Ellen White from Adventist icon to an accessible historical figure of more universal significance, Numbers had so played the iconoclast, one non-Adventist reviewer critiqued him for "failing to convey adequately the charisma that Ellen White must have possessed."

of tagging her a plagiarist, however, because he felt that plagiarism implied the conscious intent to deceive.¹⁷

In his book, Numbers's achievement was clear. He had probed a period of White's career in which myths had been born, and he had debunked them. This was at once a strength and a limitation of the study. In favor of the approach was that it offered a long-overdue counterbalance to Adventist hagiography. Numbers had moved Ellen White from an icon within the Adventist household of faith to an accessible historical figure of more universal significance. In order to accomplish this, he had played the iconoclast. He can be faulted for the fact that to topple a venerated image, however necessary, seems by itself unsatisfying and incomplete. One non-Adventist reviewer critiqued him, for example, for "failing to convey adequately the charisma that Ellen White must

have possessed to permit her . . . to overcome considerable opposition to her health ideas and fasten them as articles of faith upon her expanding body of disciples."¹⁸

Not surprisingly, Numbers's book occasioned a full-blown historical debate within Adventism. But before discussion of the book had reached anything close to the refinement of a debate, in fact while the "book" was still a manuscript, it provoked something akin to a hagiographical "holy war." Arthur White, as the chief guardian of his grandmother's papers, ensured that the conflict over Numbers's study would elicit this sanguinary reaction. After all, White had devoted his life to protecting the persona of the prophet, and at sixty-five, was writing the official biography of his grandmother. Like his father before him, he had operated the White Estate as a closed archives. Then in the mid-1960s, he allowed limited access to primary materials, but with formal trustee approval required for the quotation of any heretofore unreleased documents. Ostensibly, this policy was designed to protect the privacy of individuals to whom Ellen White had written personal and pointed "testimonies." In fact, however, the White Estate seemed most concerned about protecting the image of the prophet herself.¹⁹

Just two years before Numbers arrived at the White Estate for his research, Arthur White had been "burned" by an Adventist English professor, William Peterson, whose textual and historical study of an Ellen White chapter on the French Revolution marked the first instance of a modern critical study of the prophet's writings. In a brief scholarly article, Peterson found White to be a poor historian in that her use of historical materials betrayed bias and inaccuracy. But the acrimonious debate that followed im-

plied that Peterson's findings had been for Adventists less a study than a desecration.²⁰

When Numbers submitted his request for document releases, Arthur White became alarmed that the Peterson problem could repeat itself, or worse. Speaking for the White Estate board, he refused five requests of Numbers's on the following sensitive subjects: the phrenological exam of Edson and Willie White, Ellen White's two sons; John Harvey Kellogg's reference to James White as a "monomaniac in money matters"; James's mental health; Ellen White's insistence on an anti-meat pledge for the church as a whole; and the prophet's account of dining on wild duck. In a low point in relations between Arthur White and Numbers, the archivist also denied knowledge of a sensitive document that had been recently brought to his attention. By this time, White had become deeply agitated by "the Ronald Numbers matter." Before cooperating any further with the historian on his research efforts, then, White flew from Washington to Loma Linda and spent an entire afternoon grilling Numbers on his faith in Ellen White. At one point he drew from his briefcase the small booklet *Appeal to Mothers*, in which the prophet described her revelations on masturbation. White asked, "Brother Numbers, do you believe this?" Still dependent on the White Estate for materials, Numbers replied, diplomatically, that "this would be one of the most difficult documents to substantiate today."²¹

Uneasy about Numbers's work, White had assigned Ronald Graybill, a White Estate researcher in his late twenties, to aid Numbers with desired revisions. He had hoped a young historian, about to enroll as a part-time graduate student in American history at Johns Hopkins University, could represent the

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Estate's interests to Numbers even better than he. Graybill had earned the respect not only of churchmen, such as White, but of lay and academic audiences within the church for his popular historical writing and speaking on Ellen White. In this position, Graybill seemed to do no wrong. In response to Peterson's article, for example, he dredged up the fact that Ellen White's use of historians had involved reliance on only a single Adventist writer who had anthologized a number of historical quotations. The fact that this exposed White to be an even worse historian than Peterson had supposed was lost on Graybill's audience; it was more important that he had undercut Peterson's research. A meticulous young scholar had used historical method to serve Ellen White rather than debunk her. As a result, within Adventism's intellectual community at least, he increasingly set the timetable for the church's new historical awakening to its prophet-founder.²²

Graybill naturally resented any suggestion that he was the Estate's apologist-for-hire. Indeed, his major professor, Timothy L. Smith, cautioned him against becoming a "kept historian." For his part Numbers believed that when it came to the study of Ellen White, one could not indefinitely serve two masters. Not even Graybill's considerable finesse could satisfy the unyielding and, basically, contradictory demands of both historical scholarship and church diplomacy. Trying his own hand at prophecy, Numbers wrote Graybill: "You may be the White Estate's fair-haired boy today, but I'd be willing to bet you won't be tomorrow." Numbers himself had not scorned all accommodation to an Adventist audience. With his friend Vern Carner, he had founded and edited *Adventist Heritage: A Maga-*

zine of Adventist History, popularly written and illustrated to recast new historical scholarship on the church in terms palatable to Adventists. In hopes of providing still another publishing outlet for Adventist historians, he had also launched a projected multi-volume series of "Studies in Adventist History." Moreover, he had turned to his study of the Adventist prophet's health views in order to make his lectures more appealing to Loma Linda medical students. But his deepest reason for the research was less pragmatic. For him, "the ultimate cause prompting me to write what I did was, I think, to discover the truth."²³

In 1973-74 Numbers took a fellowship year at Johns Hopkins, during which he revised his White manuscript while beginning a new book. Before coming east, he sent Graybill a preliminary draft of *Prophetess of Health*. This first exposure to Numbers's work shocked Graybill. He fretted to the author about "the tone of the material, the selection and emphasis and the kinds of sources you accepted," and he foresaw in Adventism "a crisis of the first magnitude" over the book. Though differing in their approach to Ellen White, when Numbers arrived for his fellowship year the two developed a rapport based on their common interest in the prophet. Numbers invited Graybill to share his apartment in Baltimore the one night a week he stayed over. In proximity to Numbers, and a world away from the White Estate, Graybill felt the pull of single-minded historical inquiry. At times he daydreamed aloud of how, after Arthur White's departure, he could write his own critical biography of Ellen White. For now, however, Graybill allowed himself no more than a vicarious involvement in *Prophetess of Health*. But he enhanced the book's argument

by feeding Numbers provocative historical materials that the White Estate had uncovered in readying its reply to the author. This happened so often that Numbers, in the midst of the Watergate era, referred to Graybill's role at the White Estate as that of a "Deep Throat."²⁴

By the time the book was published in mid-1976, however, Graybill had assumed the role of arch-apologist on whom many in the church relied for the definitive answer to Numbers. In fact, one distinguished Adventist historian, even before a rebuttal had been prepared, expected that "Ron Graybill's indefatigable scholarship will come close to plugging the 'leaks'" in White's authority caused by *Prophetess of Health*. Meanwhile Numbers, now the "apostate," had been cast into the "outer darkness" of the University of Wisconsin, with

Owing to the profound disparity between Graybill and Numbers in the mind of the Adventist public, one denominational editor quipped, "Two Rons don't make a White." In reality, their relationship personified the interdependency of orthodoxy and heresy.

most no access to Adventists. Owing to the profound disparity between Graybill and Numbers in the mind of the Adventist public, one denominational editor quipped, "Two Rons don't make a White." In reality, however, their relationship had always involved a deep level of reciprocity, personifying the interdependence of orthodoxy and heresy.²⁵

Throughout the polishing of his manuscript, Numbers benefited enormously from Graybill's intense scrutiny of the work. For an Adventist historian writing on Ellen White the Seventh-day Adventist millennial metaphor of an "investigative judgment" proves applicable. In an image suggested to them by the biblical notion of the sanctuary, Adventists believe that all of heaven, at the "end of time," sits in judgment on earthlings below by recording every good deed and misdeed. In analogy to this, Numbers sensed the eyes of an invisible spiritual community on him as he wrote his book. At the White Estate this metaphor took on flesh and blood; Graybill acted as a record-

ing angel. Because factual errors in *Prophetess of Health* were therefore significantly reduced, Graybill had been an advantage to Numbers; but the controversial historian had, in turn, helped Graybill. In taking a heretical position, Numbers had moved "left" of Graybill, and therefore created more space for him—between Numbers and Arthur White—in which to establish a new, more moderate stance. But this only worked as a symbiotic relationship so long as the two organisms, so to speak, both remained alive and mutually supportive of each other. Should Numbers become dead to the Adventist community, more moderate positions would then be the furthest left, and therefore vulnerable. In a return letter to the same historian who had looked for him to plug leaks, Graybill warned that if Numbers were not credited with having made "some genuine points, people will never see any need to adjust their concept of inspiration accordingly." He added, "We can't offer people solutions to problems that they don't have."²⁶

From Numbers's point of view, however, Graybill had often been duplicitous by exacerbating relations between the historian of science and the White Estate and, in turn, the church, in order to appear all the more indispensable in a redemptive, mediating role. Numbers came to believe that Graybill had sacrificed him to further his own interests. Historical points that Graybill seemed to have found persuasive in private conversations, he later faulted before an Adventist public. Numbers knew the White Estate researcher was internally conflicted over many of the historical issues raised by *Prophetess of Health*. He felt betrayed when Graybill projected the conflict onto an Adventist stage as a morality play in which Numbers

wore the black hat and he donned a white one.²⁷

Ironically, Graybill, the historian of religion, often saw his role in more pragmatic, less moral terms than did Numbers, the historian of science. He saw himself, if not as a hired gun, at least as the attorney representing a client. He might not have been fully convinced of the validity of all the White Estate positions, but he was willing to offer to them the best defense available. He was not just a defense attorney, however. He also had a pastoral concern for church members, whom he was trying to lead to a better understanding of their heritage without, at the same time, threatening their faith. It was not until several years later, when work on his dissertation forced him to synthesize what he knew about Ellen White into a coherent whole, that he discovered how impossible it was to deal with her life objectively without being accused of adopting a negative tone.²⁸

From Morality Play To Farce

If the strife at the White Estate over Numbers's book took on aspects of a morality play, at Loma Linda University, where the author held academic appointment from 1970 to 1974, it seemed more like a farce. During his year's leave of absence at Johns Hopkins, Numbers circulated the first draft of his manuscript, in confidence, among five colleagues. But somehow the document reached a duplicating machine, and soon purloined copies, at five dollars apiece, were making the rounds. In this stage Numbers's manuscript resonated more irreverence than the later finished product, and it still may be the case that Adventist perceptions

Adventists believe that all of heaven, at the "end of time," sits in judgment on earthlings below. Numbers sensed the eyes of an invisible spiritual community on him. The White Estate gave the metaphor flesh and blood.

of the historian's work have been shaped more by the first draft than the published version. The pre-publication fallout led, by 1974, to the loss of Numbers's job at Loma Linda. It is still not clear, however, whether he resigned or was fired. In fact, both occurred about the same time. In an informal, but crucial spring meeting between the university president and the board chairman, Neal Wilson, it had been determined that the young medical historian would not be allowed to return to campus after his fellowship year in Baltimore. In the same period, too, board members of the Loma Linda University Church discussed whether he ought not be disfellowshipped. On the east coast, Numbers learned that he had become a political liability to David Hinshaw, the dean of the medical school who had hired him, and out of a sense of personal loyalty to him offered to resign if his salary could be continued through the following year. Not until later did he hear from Wilson that he had been "fired."²⁹

Incredibly, however, the issue of academic freedom relative to his case never surfaced at Loma Linda. No faculty member or administrator in the university, or elsewhere in Adventist education for that matter, publicly protested Numbers's termination. Instead, the university community became engrossed in clearing the names of faculty members accused of aiding and abetting the historian in his research and writing. Months after Numbers had left the campus, a conspiracy theory, which linked various university personnel to the book, took hold in the highest echelons of church leadership. Rumors circulated that a local pastor had filched financial records on Numbers and others at Loma Linda and delivered them at a local motel room to the church's General Conference president, Robert Pierson,

and Wilson. The pastor and a colleague sought to establish a conspiracy between Numbers and Dean Hinshaw, Carner, who taught religion at LLU, and A. Graham Maxwell, chairman of the division of religion. They charged that *Prophetess of Health* could not have been written alone; the book was too detailed, with too many footnotes. Thus they concocted a story in which the alleged co-conspirators had met together in various cities throughout the country to lay plans to destroy Ellen White and the church. In support of Numbers's research Maxwell had supposedly contributed from twenty to forty thousand dollars of his own money; and in one instance, in Chicago, plans had been made "in the presence of prostitutes."³⁰

It was ludicrous, of course, that so isolated an act as writing a book could be explained as a conspiracy. Nor did it make any sense that several colleagues in the same institution would travel to distant cities in order to meet with one another, when they were free to lunch together any day of the week in Loma Linda. Despite the far-fetched nature of these charges, however, the targets of them within the university felt themselves to be in real jeopardy. Hinshaw and Maxwell seemed to have fallen victim to vendettas, with the controversial book providing a convenient excuse to get rid of them. Though the district attorney was queried in regard to taking legal action against the accusers, because of the circumstantial nature of the case no charges were brought. But if nothing reached a court of law, the episode did reach the court of public opinion. Because analogies to Watergate abounded, the affair was termed a "stained-glass window Watergate." After all, there had been, allegedly, a "break-in" and a pilfering of documents. A chief executive

of the church had been implicated. A "cover-up" had ensued, followed by a full-scale investigation and exposure. As a result, a fatuous conspiracy theory had been laid bare by evidence of a real conspiracy.³¹

After moving to Madison in the summer of 1974 to join the department of the history of medicine at the University of Wisconsin, Numbers found that the Adventist hysteria over his projected volume, though largely out of sight, was not out of mind. The White Estate enlisted the support of Rene Noorbergen, once a writer for *The National Enquirer* who had recently published popular and sympathetic biographies of "psychics" Jeane Dixon and Ellen White, to investigate Numbers's motives for writing his study. Noorbergen planned to question Numbers by telephone about his book while surreptitiously recording his responses with a sophisticated polygraph. But Numbers had been forewarned (by Graybill) of the chicanery and rebuffed Noorbergen

Adventist scholars felt that Numbers's iconoclastic study forced them to choose between endorsing him and losing their jobs, or exaggerating the distance between themselves and him and losing a piece of their souls.

when he called. The White Estate also sent a staff member, Robert Olson, to the Madison Adventist church for a weekend series on the prophet in order to counteract any negative influence the historian might have on the local membership. He urged church members to ostracize Numbers. By this time the historian was philosophically estranged from Adventism but still hoped to remain tied to the church as a cultural Adventist. Once Olson had alerted local Adventists to him, however, he saw no point in returning to the Madison church.³²

"Outing" the Adventist Historians

Numbers's first months in Madison marked a dark period for him. Not only was he spent physically and emotionally, but he was alone. Alienated from Adventists, he had not yet adjusted to life beyond Adventism. Moreover, his marriage was ending, and his wife's betrayal at the root of the breakup seemed emblematic of the way his Adventist colleagues had betrayed him. Though expecting his work on Ellen White to be controversial among the Adventist rank and file, he counted on Adventist historians to rally to his defense. But with the circulation of his manuscript Numbers had become a pariah. Despite the fact that this had resulted from their colleague's historical research in his area of specialty, Adventist historians (with a few exceptions) had been no more supportive of him than were Adventist academics in general. Loma Linda University had not only dropped him from its staff but, in the following year, had dumped him from the masthead of *Adventist Heritage*, the journal he had founded, without a single public outcry from his

historian colleagues.³³

If Numbers saw himself as betrayed by his fellow scholars, they could interpret his iconoclastic study as a betrayal of them, though the explanation for this is somewhat oblique. In recent years an increasingly sophisticated class of academics had joined the ranks of Adventist higher education. Brandishing Ph.D.'s from big-name, secular universities, this new breed of Adventist professor had often found itself at odds with the vast majority of conservative church members, who supported the colleges and universities. The only way to survive in so precarious a position was by way of complete discretion. Almost anything could be said in private. But Adventist academics who publicly dared to break the informal code of silence on controversial issues did so on their own. Numbers certainly had his silent partners. From time to time colleagues quietly voiced their

Adventist historians adhered to the secular canons of historiography, except with regard to Ellen White. Numbers tore apart the last veil, historiographically speaking, between the holy and most holy places. He entered the innersanctum of the prophet's life, not as a believer, but as a historian.

personal approval of his work. But none of them wanted to be driven from cover by their more outspoken colleague. In a sense, Numbers had betrayed *them* by forcing them into a difficult position. Either they endorsed him and lost their jobs, or they exaggerated the distance between themselves and him and lost a piece of their souls.³⁴

Concern for job security at Adventist colleges no doubt had been a factor in the lack of support for Numbers on the part of disingenuous colleagues. But Adventist historians also had genuine reservations about Numbers's study. The church's historians had not resolved their own distinctive version of the believer-historian conflict. They complained about the tone of Numbers's writing. One senior historian commented, for example, that he could accept everything about the book but the disrespectful conclusion to the reform dress story where Numbers wrote, "Journeying to California, Mrs. White discreetly left her pants behind."³⁵ But their concerns ran deeper than literary packaging to the very basis of the argument.

Adventist historians adhered to the secular canons of historiography, except with regard to Ellen White. She occupied a supernaturalist preserve off-limits to naturalist history. In teaching or writing history on any other topic, Adventist historians generally would find it naive to evoke "the hand of God" as a cause. Notwithstanding the occasional old-guard historian who saw evidence of angels at the Battle of Bull Run (and only there because Ellen White had said so), virtually all of them explained the American Revolution or the Civil War, Women's Suffrage or the New Deal as other historians did. But the historical study of Ellen White was a different matter. Because Adventist historians ruled out ex-

ploring the visionary's life with the same methods that governed their study of an Abigail Adams or an Elizabeth Cady Stanton, they chose *qua* historians to ignore her altogether. They often brushed close to the prophet with studies of other figures or events in Adventist history that served, indirectly, to humanize her. But Numbers, unforgivably, had gone in where angels had feared to tread. To draw again upon Adventist metaphor, he had torn apart the last veil, historiographically speaking, between the holy and most holy places. He had entered the inner sanctum of the prophet's life, not as a believer but as a historian.³⁶

The Estate Strikes Back

Numbers saw the equivocal posture of Adventist historians as far less tolerable than the straightforward opposition of the White Estate's churchmen. By temperament, he favored total candor. He saw the issues in the same stark terms that Arthur White did: he simply found himself at odds with him. But relations between Numbers and the Estate's administrative personnel remained civil, if not cordial. This made sense to both parties. Numbers, after all, needed approval from the archives to quote its sources in his manuscript, and the White Estate staff hoped that a good rapport between them and the historian would ensure a book more favorable to the prophet. It became all the clearer that a book was actually in the offing when, in May of 1974, Numbers signed a contract to publish his manuscript through Harper and Row. Numbers had arranged with the White Estate to critique his work in manuscript, and now Clayton Carlson,

head of Harper and Row's religious books department, looked forward to the Estate's comments as well, if only to minimize factual errors in the book.³⁷

Once Numbers had produced his revised manuscript in the fall, however, it was not always clear that Arthur White saw the Estate's critique as a means of improving the future publication. Rather, he seemed bent on so discrediting Numbers with Harper and Row that the publisher would abort the project altogether. To this end, White flew to New York in January of 1975 and spent a day with Carlson poring over a notebook full of documents. In several months of preparing its formal response to Numbers, the White Estate staff had divided the labor as follows: White on dress, Olson on sex, and Graybill on phrenology. These three then went on to New York in February with a 223-page reply for

Carlson's eyes only. By this time, relations between Numbers and the White Estate had deteriorated to the point that some at the Estate now believed Satan had "gained control" of the historian. Arthur White did not want Numbers to have access to the response because it would only provide "grist for his mill." But there was another reason to keep him from seeing it; the document was riddled with *ad hominem* barbs that were bound to offend him. Carlson, however, flatly refused to accept the White Estate response if the person most able to make use of it were not allowed to see it. So, White gathered up the manuscript and returned with it to Washington, D.C.³⁸

By the end of the month, however, he had changed his stance and forwarded a copy of the Estate's reply to Numbers. Graybill then called the historian and asked to meet with him. On a weekend in early March, Graybill and Richard Schwarz, chair of the history department at Andrews University, traveled to Madison for extensive discussions with Numbers about his manuscript. Numbers was still on good terms with Graybill, and he counted Schwarz a close friend. The senior Adventist historian had hired him out of graduate school and still called him "Ronnie." If Graybill was fast becoming the church's leading authority in Ellen White, Schwarz was its premier denominational historian. The threesome planned a three-day working weekend at a hotel in Madison. They moved a six-foot banquet table into Graybill's room. Schwarz had brought a microfiche reader and a box of Ellen White's books and the works of denominational historians. They also had an IBM typewriter.

At the outset of the weekend, Numbers complained that in places the critique was too weak to

One remarkable aspect of these Madison discussions deserves notice. In a report to his White Estate colleagues, Graybill stated, "On virtually every occasion where Dr. Schwarz and I felt the evidence was strong and clear, Dr. Numbers agreed to change his manuscript."

be useful; he also found it insulting. Graybill admitted its shortcomings, apologizing especially for personal attacks. On their weekend together, however, the three men found a good deal of common ground. They combed through every scintilla of Numbers's manuscript, and the author agreed to change both factual and interpretive points. Single words that carried emotional or negative connotations were exchanged for more agreeable terms. Numbers also solicited help in finding more heartwarming episodes in the prophet's life in order to build empathy for her as a historical figure. No one ended the weekend under the illusion that his book was anything less than a major revision of the traditional Adventist view of Ellen White. Numbers had accounted for the visionary's life in strictly naturalistic terms; the average Adventist would find this shocking.

Ernest Sandeen, a noted church historian from a fundamentalist background, saw Numbers's book as more than simply "a valuable work of social history"; it was also a "moving personal document and a report on the state of one American denomination's soul."

But given the firestorm of criticism that Numbers would face for his book, one remarkable aspect of these Madison discussions deserves notice. In a report to his White Estate colleagues, Graybill stated, "On virtually every occasion where Dr. Schwarz and I felt the evidence was strong and clear, Dr. Numbers agreed to change his manuscript." Or where one of them sided with him, Numbers stuck with his original interpretation. The subsequent published criticisms of *Prophetess of Health*, then, even those of Graybill or Schwarz, more than likely faulted not just Numbers but one or the other of his companions on that Madison weekend.³⁹

The 258-page book appeared in print in May of 1976. The even longer White Estate critique of it came out in the fall. Just prior to the publication of his book, Numbers and the White Estate blamed each other for many of the same sins. The Estate believed that the historian had mishandled the prophet by way of sweeping generalizations, a sneering attitude, quotations taken out of context and, most importantly, dishonesty. Numbers thought the Estate had treated him in much the same way. If the two had sometimes mirrored each other, in an ironic twist, Numbers found himself, in the late spring, in a similar position to the White Estate in regard to releasing materials. To people who were "misrepresenting" her, the Estate had always refused permission to quote the prophet. But when it came to publishing their reply to Numbers, which copiously quoted his book, the Estate needed the historian's permission. It would be necessary for him, of course, to judge whether *he* had been misrepresented in its document. Numbers may have never had any intention of finally declining the White Estate request, but he did let the matter hang for a while. Arthur White wrote several solicitous letters to the author beginning

in late April. After seeing the critique, however, Numbers caustically responded that he found it to be "grossly unfair." As late as mid June he still withheld permission, for he had expected the Estate staff to be as fair in evaluating his work as they wanted him to be in evaluating Ellen White. "But apparently," he concluded, "we have a double standard."⁴⁰

The State of the Church's Soul

Spectrum provided the most important public forum within the church for evaluating the published book. Roy Branson, as editor, had invited a review by noted church historian Ernest Sandeen. Himself from a fundamentalist background, Sandeen understood the torturous conflict between believer and historian, especially when they inhabited the same person. But he also knew that, as if by some historiographical law, the skeptical believer produces the best historical scholarship. Though it had obviously been a deeply painful experience for the young historian, Numbers had made an invaluable contribution to his church and to the scholarly world beyond it. If Seventh-day Adventists were not too defensive to come to terms with Numbers's view of Ellen White (and, in this regard, Sandeen had every confidence in Adventists), they would avoid the pitfall of Christian Scientists, who had rejected historical scrutiny of Mary Baker Eddy. Thus, Sandeen saw Numbers's essay as more than simply "a valuable work of social history"; it was also "a moving personal document and a report on the state of one American denomination's soul." Upon reading the review in manuscript, Bran-

son thought it would be good for his cousin's soul to hear it, so he called him and read it to him over the phone. For more than two years, Numbers had faced almost nothing but criticism for his work on Ellen White. This essay, from a historian he greatly respected, expressed profound gratitude for his efforts. He broke down and sobbed.⁴¹

The Adventist commentators in *Spectrum*, for the most part, took a dimmer view of Numbers's book than Sandeen expected of them. Only one Adventist historian, Numbers's predecessor in the history of medicine at Loma Linda, W. Frederick Norwood, embraced the book. He insisted that it would disturb only those who had exalted Ellen White "to a pedestal of innerrancy and infallibility, a position she did not claim for herself or even for the Bible writers." But two other Adventist scholars rebutted the book with finely spun apologetics. Warning readers that Numbers wrote history from an entirely naturalistic slant, Schwarz argued that the raw historical facts called for a supernaturalistic explanation. He admitted that White may have borrowed from other health reformers, but he suggested that both the prophet and her secular informants may have been inspired by the same Spirit. He contended, too, that Numbers had obtained his facts from unreliable, hostile witnesses, such as Canright and Kellogg. Fritz Guy, an Adventist theologian, faulted the book for its unbalanced view of White, its naturalistic approach to her, and its skepticism with regard to her integrity. But he regarded all this as a negative virtue. For a limited or faulty perspective on the prophet might spur further investigation of her and also provide an opportunity to correct theological misperceptions among Adventists regard-

ing inspiration.⁴²

Numbers believed that Schwarz's comments on the writing of history tended to "caricature rather than clarify the art." With reference to Schwarz's defense of multiple revelations, Numbers professed to admire such "valiant efforts to rescue Mrs. White from embarrassing situations." But he pointed out that if the church accepted these explanations, "its doctrine of inspiration [would] never be the same." The criticism that he had lent too much credence to Adventist defectors Numbers found potentially the most damaging. He counted roughly 1,185 citations in his book, however, and found that nearly two-thirds came from pro-Ellen White materials, while a mere 3.9 percent were from those hostile to the visionary. The differences between Schwarz and Numbers, as it turned out, were more apparent in the pages of *Spectrum* than they were in reality. For Schwarz, incredibly, had based at least some of his critique on an earlier draft of Numbers's manuscript, not the published book. When he later read the book, Schwarz apologized to him for rebutting "errors" that had been changed in the final version, in part at Schwarz's own urging. Guy, presumably, had read the book, but to make his key historical points, in Numbers's view, he had drawn uncritically on the White Estate's reply.⁴³

Under the title "A Biased, Disappointing Book," the White Estate presented in this same issue of *Spectrum* a synopsis of its longer response to Numbers. The fundamental difference between the White Estate and the historian (and perhaps, finally, their *only* difference) was that the Estate believed Ellen White's divine inspiration could be historically proven; Numbers insisted it could not. The Estate asked: "Did Ellen White receive her health message from the Lord or from

earthly sources?" Arguing that the prophet, prior to her health vision of 1863, had no more than a limited, fragmentary knowledge of health reform, the Estate said that White's intellectual independence implied her supernatural inspiration. But in establishing White's independence, the Estate hurt its case at one point by proving too much. When the Whites' son Henry was stricken in December 1863 with a fatal illness, it recounted, the frantic parents called a local physician instead of employing Dr. Jackson's system of water cure. This argument proved an embarrassment, however, because the prophet had received a divine endorsement of the water-cure system six months prior to this in her health vision of June 5. In its zeal to prove White's obliviousness to earthly sources, then, the Estate had inadvertently suggested that the prophet ignored her heavenly source as well. Numbers, of course, had made his case for the deriva-

It is an important commentary on the nature of Seventh-day Adventism, however, that its intellectuals and its clerical leadership remain keenly aware of each other. Numbers could not be dismissed out of hand; he had to be dealt with.

tive nature of White's health writings by showing how knowledgeable early Adventist leaders were of the health-reform movement and by citing close literary parallels between White's and that of other health reformers. But Numbers added, "Even if Mrs. White were unique, it would add no *historical* evidence to her claim of inspiration."⁴⁴

In every aspect of the debate between the Estate and Numbers, it seemed clear that they resided in separate universes. Given the gaping void between them, it is surprising that the two parties remained in close enough proximity to carry on such an extended quarrel. It is an important commentary on the nature of Seventh-day Adventism, however, that its intellectuals and its clerical leadership remain keenly aware of each other. Numbers could not be dismissed out of hand; he had to be dealt with. But church officials were miffed that the *Spectrum* issue devoted to Numbers had, by and large, taken his work seriously. And an article written by another of its guest reviewers had, in their view, gone too far. Fawn Brodie, best known to Adventists for her highly regarded biography of Mormon prophet Joseph Smith, contributed perhaps the most provocative reflections on White's life that Adventists had ever read. Noting that Numbers had left a psychobiographical analysis of the visionary to future writers, Brodie proceeded to highlight material in the narrative that could inform such a clinical study. Church leaders were enraged. They threatened to censure or shut down *Spectrum*. General Conference executives, including President Pierson and Vice-President Wilson, along with White Estate officials, met in an emotionally charged meeting in Philadelphia with members of *Spectrum's*

editorial board. The session's most riveting moment captured the depth of feeling with regard to the Brodie essay. A White Estate official silenced the room with the following vivid remark: "It's as if Mrs. White had been stripped naked, stripped naked!"⁴⁵

Throughout the year of its publication, church officials orchestrated a concerted campaign against *Prophetess of Health*. Along with its twenty-four-page reply and full-length *Critique*, the church highly promoted an inexpensive paperback edition of *The Story of Our Health Message*, a sympathetic study by Dores E. Robinson, a secretary and grandson-in-law to the prophet. Study aids designed to answer questions raised by Numbers now accompanied this book. Other apologetic books on Adventism and health followed. In reactionary fashion, these did not so much respond to *Prophetess of Health* as retell the Adventist health story as if Numbers's book had never been written. But in a series of Prophetic

Non-Adventist scholars exerted an influence on Adventist academics. For the first time Adventists saw Ellen White as an object of historical interest to scholars in the fields of American social, medical, church, and women's history.

Guidance Workshops, each conducted for two weeks on four Adventist college campuses, Robert Olson and other White Estate officials sharply denounced specific points in the book. *Time's* review of it in August, entitled "Prophet or Plagiarist?" called for a rejoinder in the workshops. At Andrews University in southern Michigan, the weekend after the article hit the newsstands, Olson reported that not a *Time* could be had within fifty miles of the campus. Numbers's book itself could not be conveniently obtained at Andrews. The university bookstore would not display it, but did sell it on request. The book was treated as contraband, carefully wrapped in plain paper, so customers could leave the store with it undetected.⁴⁶

This atmosphere throughout the church made it difficult for Adventist historians to come to terms with Numbers's book in their own way. But gradually they did. An important early step in this process was a review in *Spectrum* by Gary Land, a historian at Andrews University, of the White Estate's full-length *Critique*. With some trepidation, as "a denominational employee, whose job may depend on adhering to orthodoxy," Land underscored numerous examples of "how the White Estate's adoption in practice, although not in theory, of the inerrancy approach to inspiration has led it to make arguments that do not fit the facts." But, for generations, the church lived with the "practice" of Mrs. White's inerrancy. And Adventist historians felt a duty to integrate the new historical thinking with the old faith in such a way that Adventism might be transformed without being destroyed. In 1979, one young Adventist historian, Benjamin McArthur, questioned whether the church's revolution of historical consciousness, especially with regard to its prophet, might not irreparably damage the

tradition, much as historical criticism had done to Judaism a century before. In a presidential address to the Association of Western Adventist Historians in the same year, Eric Anderson commented that McArthur may have been too pessimistic. But Anderson agreed that Adventist historians had to deal with the theological implications of their work. Failing to do so invited comparisons to the World War II scientist lampooned in Tom Lehrer's ditty:

Once da rockets are up
Who kares where dey come down?
Dat's not my department
Says Verner Von Braun.⁴⁷

An Historical Revolution

Non-Adventist scholars faced none of these concerns, of course. But their largely enthusiastic reception of Numbers's study, evident in the raft of favorable reviews, exerted influence on Adventist academics. For the first time, Adventists saw Ellen White as an object of historical interest to a wider community of scholars in the fields of American social, medical, church, and women's history.⁴⁸ And the "gentiles" brought their different perspectives to the monograph. Adventists, for example, had thought of Numbers as utterly secular and naturalistic. But outsiders to the community, such as Martin E. Marty, saw him as "half-in, half-out of the Adventist church." If he was "in transit from Adventism," he had still presented an "empathetic and fair story of her life." Another reviewer felt that the book reflected Numbers's "conflict between historical objectivity and commitment to religion."⁴⁹

Close to the publication of *Prophetess of Health*, Adventists certainly found no humor in, and

therefore did not appreciate, the tongue-in-cheek tone of James C. Whorton, who wrote, "Numbers' 'attack' on White is subtle even by satanic standards, for he takes great care to be objective, and if his judgement errs it is on the side of charity." Whorton continued in a humorous vein in his later book on the history of American health reformers: "Although Numbers's case is convincing," he wrote, after summarizing his argument, "White perhaps did receive genuine revelations, and conceivably outraged Adventists are correct in seeing his book as a Satanic 'deception.'" If Adventists could not realistically expect outsiders to share their religious sensibilities about the book, they would have preferred a wider scope to the Adventist health story Numbers told in order to dilute revelations about their prophet. But Whorton favored the way Numbers had displayed only enough of the larger Adventist health story to tantalize readers. In doing this, it was as if he had followed the standard advise of health reformers: "to avoid gluttony, end each meal while a bit of appetite remains. One finishes *Prophetess of Health* with a feeling of satisfaction, not satiety, and a relish for future samples of related items."⁵⁰

Adventists had complained that Numbers had been too interpretive, too biased. But some of the non-Adventists found it the sparest of narratives, understated, and lacking in an interpretive framework, for which they either lauded or faulted him. In the developing area of women's history, for example, Numbers proved potentially as controversial as he was anywhere beyond Adventist circles. Gerald Grob appreciated his narrative history as a valuable building block but complained that he had not done more to analyze White against a backdrop of the changing roles of women

in the nineteenth century. Another reviewer seemed piqued by the interpretation she found in the book of "an ignorant, hysterical, hypochondriacal female, almost without redeeming qualities, and manipulated by a few clever men." For the most part, however, as a result of Numbers's effort, the Adventist visionary took her rightful place in the emergent historiography on both women and health reform. Moreover, more general and interpretive studies of American religion, society, and culture added the Ellen White of Numbers's narrative (without alterations of their own) to the historical pantheon of women religious leaders and health reformers.⁵¹

All of this impressed Adventist historians. Numbers, after all, was a success story. He had pulled himself up from the Adventist "ghetto" and had "made good." And if he still projected something of a diabolical persona for the average Adventist in the pew, Adventist academics found more and more to admire in him as a historian. Indeed, because secular historians had seen Ellen White as interesting and significant, a generation of Adventist historians began to view her, for the first time, as a legitimate object for their own scholarly inquiry. In this way, Numbers had inspired an escalating revolution in Adventist scholarship on the prophet. He himself had gone on to a full and productive academic life beyond Adventism. But from his lofty perch at the University of Wisconsin, he served, quite unintentionally, as a kind of conscience for Adventist historians; they were more likely to take on tough issues with candor because they felt him looking over their shoulder. They kept him apprised of developments within the church, sending him manuscripts for comment, kibitzing with him at scholarly meetings, even inviting him occasionally to

Adventist campuses for clandestine discussions of his earlier work. A key indicator of his rehabilitation came in 1980, when west coast Adventist historians invited Numbers to speak to them at Walla Walla College. Many of them now envied his experience with the Ellen White book—to have wrestled with the angel, to have passed through dark nights, to have felt so alive. But none of them would quite reproduce it. Much of their later historical writing confirmed Numbers's findings in other aspects of the prophet's life. Some of it went far beyond his work in radically reassessing her. None of it, however, would reach the public beyond Adventism with the impact and notoriety that Numbers had achieved. Nor would any of it create the scandal within Adventism that Numbers did. Evidently, Adventism could lose its innocence only once.

In the decade following the publication of *Prophetess of Health*,

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historiographical developments on Ellen White focused on her, as they had in the past, as both a visionary and a writer. Her literary identity had been first to occupy contemporary Adventist scholars, and revelations in regard to the prophet dramatically increased over time. Numbers's own modest discoveries of literary parallels between Ellen White and Larkin B. Coles, which filled no more than a page in his endnotes, soon utterly paled beside other literary finds. Donald McAdams, then a historian at Andrews University, examined a chapter on John Hus in White's revered classic, *The Great Controversy*, and found her writing to be the "selective abridgements and adaptation of historians." To his amazement, he learned that she was not just borrowing the occasional paragraph which she had run across in her reading, but was "in fact following the historians page after page, leaving out much material, but using their sequence, some of their ideas, and often their words." Indeed, the only truly original part of White's chapter in manuscript, astonishingly, had been excised by editors from the published text.⁵²

For Adventists, however, McAdams's literary findings (along with those of Peterson and Numbers) were only a harbinger of worse things to come. Walter Rea, an Adventist pastor in California, had once believed that the Bible and Ellen White's writings should be the extent of a good Adventist's reading material. Indeed, he had committed vast portions of White's writings to memory. In time, though, he ranged beyond this limited reading list, deciding that it must be permissible to read books that White herself had read. But when he gained access to her library, he came upon a startling number of literary parallels between an author he had thought inspired and original and

the writers she had read. He then spent twenty years corroborating this discovery. Drawing especially from her books *Prophecy and Kings* and *The Desire of Ages* and a contemporaneous writer, Alfred Edersheim, Rea amassed a huge number of literary exhibits which he later published in a book provocatively entitled *The White Lie*. When he first presented his findings to a General Conference-appointed committee of scholars and churchmen, the committee objected to his sloppy methodology and acerbic tone, but conceded that "Ellen White, in her writing, used various sources more extensively than we had previously believed." Churchmen hoped to educate lay Adventists in regard to these troubling facts, but Rea's story reached the *Los Angeles Times* before much could be done, and the church revoked his ministerial credentials.⁵³

Literary analysis of Ellen White's writings quickly gave way to even more controversial and far-reaching biblical, historical, and theological studies of her. Joseph J. Battistone, a New Testament scholar, undercut the usual Adventist use of the prophet as an authoritative biblical commentator. Suggesting that her writings were unreliable exegetically, he saw them as primarily homiletical in nature. No part of White's commentary on the Bible mattered more than her interpretation of "last day events." My own article entitled "The World of E.G. White and the End of the World," which I wrote while teaching at Loma Linda University, placed White's understanding of eschatology within the context of nineteenth-century society and culture. I argued that White's scenario on the end of time, deeply formative for the Adventist identity, had been culturally conditioned. The political, social, and cultural events to which Adventists still looked in the

future to signal the end of the world more properly fit conditions of her nineteenth-century world than that of the late twentieth century. In short, Adventism was an anachronism.⁵⁴

Another key to the Adventist identity was the church's doctrine of the sanctuary and investigative judgment. For Adventists, the sanctuary served as a symbol of their special role as God's remnant at the close of human history. But an evangelical Adventist theologian, Desmond Ford, came to the conclusion that Adventism's understanding of the sanctuary was both poor exegesis and unchristian. And because Ellen White's role had been so significant in establishing the doctrine—as it had been with all basic Adventist beliefs—Ford's call for a radical overhaul of the sanctuary teaching challenged White's authority among Adventists. Indeed, in any Adventist theological debate, Ellen White's views provided the hidden agenda. Adventists preferred to place themselves, at least in theory, in the Protestant lineage of "Scripture alone," not as a non-evangelical sect based on the visions of a prophet. But, practically speaking, they were more likely defined as a group that spoke only when White spoke and were silent where she was silent. Ford's declarations on the sanctuary identified a central tenet of Adventism as rooted in White's writings rather than the Scriptures, as sectarian rather than evangelically Protestant, and, most important, as wrong rather than right. For this reason, Ford concluded that White's legacy should be seen as "pastoral" rather than "canonical." Though, at a conference in Glacier View, Colorado, church leaders moved considerably in Ford's direction on the sanctuary doctrine, they—almost simultaneously—stripped him of

his ministerial credentials.⁵⁵

All of these developments in Ellen White studies dealt with the prophet's writings and how they related either to the Bible or her own literary and cultural context. Another line of investigation has cut through her writings to the person behind them. Still in an initial yet promising stage, this scholarship examines the personal and social circumstances that account for White's emergence as a visionary. In writing his book on the prophet, Numbers had "consciously shied away from extended analyses of her mental health and psychic abilities." Sixteen years later, however, he and his present wife, Janet S. Numbers, a clinical psychologist, have addressed the matter of the prophet's mental health.⁵⁶

Further inquiry on White as a visionary has widened to include the enthusiastic social environment that produced her. Graybill completed his doctoral dissertation at Johns Hopkins on Ellen White as a charismatic religious founder, and he devoted a chapter of it to her trance-visionary period in the context of an enthusiastic community. Probing her visions from both psychological and anthropological perspectives, he described the way the prophet had served as an expression of the ecstatic impulses of early Adventism. But as her community changed, she changed. Order replaced enthusiasm, and White as a more conventional religious leader took over for the trance figure. In making his case, Graybill assumed the naturalistic posture for which Numbers had been excoriated less than a decade before, and he lost his job of thirteen years at the White Estate. Shortly thereafter, an even clearer picture of the ecstatic character of early Adventism emerged with a spectacular documentary discovery by a historian at Loma Linda University. Frederick Hoyt came

upon court transcripts that included testimony placing James White and Ellen Harmon, along with other Adventists, in the midst of tumultuous expressions of enthusiasm. Though Ellen White later disavowed the more bizarre aspects of this phenomena as fanaticism, and had suppressed evidence of her own part in it, the court records told a different story.⁵⁷

Looking back on Adventism in the 1970s and 80s, we see that the church had matured in regard to its understanding of Ellen White as both visionary and writer. And in the middle of this ferment, another astonishing primary source surfaced that went right to the heart of Adventism's spiritual agony over its prophet's authority. Shortly after White's death in 1915, Adventist Bible and history teachers met with churchmen to discuss the role of her writings in Adventist theology, education, and practice. These meetings in 1919 proved so candid

In the middle of the ferment of the 1970s, an astonishing primary source surfaced in Spectrum—transcripts of meetings in 1919 on Ellen White's role in the church. Discussion at these conferences proved so candid, church leaders kept the laity in the dark.

and open, that church leaders saw to it that a more conservative laity was kept in the dark as to what had been discussed. Sixty years later, however, transcripts of the meetings were dredged up and found compellingly relevant to the church's contemporary problems on Ellen White. What made these transcripts so remarkable was that key leaders in the church, including the General Conference president, Arthur G. Daniells, not marginal figures, were seen struggling over questions regarding the prophet. Alongside the churchmen of this earlier time the Adventist academics of the 1970s seemed far less heretical. Bemoaning the fact that Ellen White's writings had assumed canonical status among Adventists and that their new Scriptures were also held to be "verbally inerrant," one delegate insisted, to the contrary, that the value of her writing resided in "the spiritual light it throws into our own hearts and lives [more] than in the intellectual accuracy in historical and theological matters." Another delegate offered this prescient remark: "Is it well to let our people in general go on holding to the verbal inspiration of [White's] Testimonies? When we do that, aren't we preparing for a crisis that will be very serious some day?"⁵⁸

Owing in part to the failure of nerve among the leaders in 1919, Adventist academics faced a spiritual and vocational crisis in the 1970s without the benefit of knowing that at one time the movement's mainstream had experienced a similar turmoil. As a result, they had been forced into an unnecessarily peripheral and isolated position. But contemporary Adventism had undergone a real change, and profoundly altered perceptions of Ellen White lay at the heart of it. The new scholarship had established that the prophet was neither original nor inerrant, neither changeless

nor timeless. To what degree this historical revolution has spread from the academic elite to the rank and file is not altogether clear. Nor is it known to what extent the vast majority of Adventists in the Third World would recognize this "new" Ellen White from North America. What has become obvious, however, is the fact that this historical consciousness-raising, unlike that of the early twentieth century, has reached a wide public, both inside and outside the church. This increases the likelihood that it will last and spread. Indeed, a survey of Adventist opinion after the revelations on White shows that fewer and fewer members equate their faith with belief in her as a prophet. Ellen White's writings can no longer be imposed as a litmus test of orthodoxy with quite the self-assurance they once were. Not even the White Estate projects the defensive posture that it did under

Numbers' father, after poring over the 1919 Bible Conference transcripts, finally understood his son—and proudly displayed his book. On his deathbed he crowed to visitors about his boy, the "author," who had just been awarded a prestigious "Guggenheimer" Fellowship.

the prophet's grandson. Since Arthur White's retirement, the Estate has steadily adopted more open policies on its holdings. In regard to critical transitions in the prophet's role among Adventists, Arthur White's passing from the scene may prove as significant as two previous events: Ellen White's death and her husband's death before hers.⁵⁹

But if, with the changing perceptions of Ellen White among Adventists, heresy has been the mother of orthodoxy, the heretics themselves have been largely lost to the community. A review of many of the names identified with advances in Ellen White studies—William Peterson, Roy Branson, Herold Weiss, Ronald Numbers, Donald McAdams, Ron Graybill, Jonathan Butler, Desmond Ford, Walter Rea—reveals that none of them is now employed by the church (with the exception of Graybill who was forced to change jobs within it), and most of them are no longer active church members. Within Adventism, the prophet had been lethally radioactive to many of those who have handled her. Numbers is neither a believing nor a practicing Adventist, but, because friends have urged him to, he allows his name to remain on the books of his former church at Loma Linda University. And from time to time, its pastor (under pressure from the church board) has written to him with inquiries about the disposition of his membership. Numbers also maintains a place among the consulting editors of *Spectrum*. Given his limited editorial contributions to the journal of late, he recently asked his cousin, Roy, to drop his name from the list of editors. Branson pleaded with him, however, "*Spectrum* is your one link to the church; don't make me take your name off the masthead."⁶⁰

His father could not let him go

either. As Ray Numbers read the 1919 Bible Conference transcripts, they changed his view of Ellen White in a way that his son's book could not do on its own. The testimony of past General Conference officials, as they searched their souls over prophetic authority, gave the father permission to reach out to his son. Because he never questioned the boy's honesty, yet he knew he could not be telling the truth about Ellen White, he had concluded that Satan had taken possession of Ron's mind.

Embarrassed by his son's apostasy, he refused for years to be seen in his company if Adventists were around. Shortly after the publication of *Prophetess of Health*, Ron had chided him for sequestering his complimentary copy of the book out of sight. But after poring over the 1919 record, he finally understood his son—and proudly displayed his book in the living room. On his deathbed, he crowed to visitors about his boy "the author," who had just been awarded a prestigious "Guggenheimer" Fellow-

ship. He was still far from seeing eye to eye with his son on the prophet. But, for the first time in his life, he had acknowledged her problems. Just days before his death in 1983, he said, "Ronnie, I want you to know that I believed everything I taught you about Mrs. White. As for the mistakes in her writings and the influences on her, I recognize now that there are some problems. But *then*, I told you what I believed." With these words, a historian and a believer had never been closer.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

This study relies on both the "outer" history found in key published sources and the "inner" history uncovered in personal letters, memoranda of conversations, reports, oral tapes, and transcriptions of lectures. These latter unpublished materials were generously provided to me by Ronald L. Numbers from his own extensive collection. Unless otherwise designated below, the unpublished sources may be found among his papers in Madison, Wisconsin. The personal conversations between Numbers and others are reported in memos by Numbers. In addition to drawing on these materials, I also interviewed several of the principals. My most important and extensive interviews were of Numbers himself, February 26, March 5, and April 19-21, 1990. But I benefited as well from conversations with Eric Anderson, Roy Branson, Vern Carner, and Ronald Graybill.

1. R. W. Numbers to Carolyn [Numbers] Remmers, July 20, 1976.

2. Interview of Ronald L. Numbers, March 5, 1990; R. W. Numbers to Charles Houck, May 13, 1979.

3. Jack Provonsha, an ethicist, and Brian Bull, a pathologist, discussed *Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1976) in taped Sabbath School classes at Loma Linda University in the spring of 1976, in which they attributed flaws in the book to the

personal and theological inadequacies of its author. General reference to such responses, itself critical of them, is found in Fritz Guy, "What Should We Expect from a Prophet?" *Spectrum*, VIII (January, 1977), 22.

4. Interview of Ronald Numbers, February 26, 1990.

5. Canright lambasted Adventism and its prophet in two works: *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1889); and *Life of Mrs. E. G. White, Seventh-day Adventist Prophet. Her False Claims Refuted* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co., 1919). Branson's refutation was *Reply to Canright: The Truth About Seventh-day Adventists* (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1933).

6. Glenn and Ethel Coon to Ronald and Diane Numbers, January 28, 1975; Ronald Numbers to Glenn and Ethel Coon, February 15, 1975; Glenn and Ethel Coon to Raymond and Lois Numbers, December 13, 1976; Roger A. Wilcox to R. W. Numbers, June 15, 1976.

7. *Spectrum*, II (Autumn, 1970), 30-33.

8. In encyclopedia entries on Seventh-day Adventists, the earlier generation of Adventist apologists ignored or played down Ellen White's role in the church. The prophet is not mentioned in the following encyclopedia articles: *Collier's Encyclopedia*, 1960,

ed., s.v. "Seventh-day Adventists," by LeRoy E. Froom; *The World Book Encyclopedia*, 1967 ed., s.v. "Seventh-day Adventists," also by Froom; and *Merit Student's Encyclopedia*, 1967 ed., s.v. "Seventh-day Adventists," by Francis D. Nichol. For another entry in which Ellen White is noted but not as a prophet, see *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1962 ed., s.v. "Seventh-day Adventists," by Nichol. For his comments on ethnic religion, see Martin E. Marty, *A Nation of Behavers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 158-77; quotation on p. 160; I first applied Marty's view of ethnicity to Ellen White and the Adventists in Jonathan Butler, "Reporting on Ellen White," *The View*, I (Winter, 1981), 1, 11.

9. Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1989), p. 268.

10. The book was reviewed in "Prophet or Plagiarist?" *Time* CVIII (August 26, 1976), 43; a three-part response to *Time* by Kenneth H. Wood appeared in *Adventism's* official church organ *R&H*, CLIII (August 19, 1976), 2-3; (August 26, 1976), 2, 11-16; and (September 2, 1976), 2, 13-14.

11. See, for example, EGW, *Selected Messages* (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1958), I, pp. 41-42.

12. Both White's domestic life and

her public career are dealt with in Ronald Graybill, "The Power of Prophecy: Ellen G. White and the Women Religious Founders of the Nineteenth Century" (Ph.D. diss., John Hopkins University, 1983); see also Steven Daily, "The Irony of Adventism: The Role of Ellen White and Other Adventist Women in Nineteenth Century America" (D.Min. diss., School of Theology at Claremont, 1985).

13. Canright's *Life of Mrs. E.G. White* prompted a systematic rebuttal from the church's best-known apologist more than three decades later in F. D. Nichol, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics* (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1951).

14. Kenneth Wood believed that the church's answer to Numbers had been already rendered in its answer to Canright a quarter of a century earlier, *R&H*, CLIII (August 19, 1976), 3; Numbers's expressed intent to write non-polemical history appeared in his preface to *Prophetess of Health*, p. xi; Numbers's three books were not published in the order they had been written: *Prophetess of Health* appeared first, in 1976; the dissertation, which had been written earlier, was released as *Creation by Natural Law: Laplace's Nebular Hypothesis in American Thought* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977); his third book, begun on a fellowship at Johns Hopkins while revising the Ellen White book, was entitled *Almost Persuaded: American Physicians and Compulsory Health Insurance, 1912-1920* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978). The quick succession of two scholarly books after *Prophetess of Health* made it difficult for Adventists to categorize Numbers as an in-house polemicist.

15. Jerry Gladson, then an assistant professor of religion at Southern Missionary College, Numbers's alma mater, remarked on the book in *Unlock Your Potential*, XI (October-December, 1976), 6; Numbers provoked a more systematic response to his study from within Adventism than Fawn M. Brodie did from Mormons for her *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet* (2nd ed.; New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1971).

16. Prior to Numbers's book, the latter view remained largely the unexpressed opinion of a handful of hereti-

cal Adventist academics. The former view, of a prophet ahead of her times, was the openly orthodox position offered to the Adventist public; see *Medical Science and the Spirit of Prophecy* (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1971).

17. In an interview after the book's publication, Numbers conjectured that White may have copied other writers and denied it due to mental problems; *Wisconsin State Journal*, July 31, 1976.

18. From the review of *Prophetess of Health* by James Harvey Young in *American Historical Review*, LXXXII (April, 1977), 464.

19. For Arthur White's discussion of the custody of Ellen White's writings, see his *Ellen G. White: Messenger to the Remnant* (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1969), pp. 68-98; the entire episode of Numbers coming up against the White Estate is reminiscent of Janet Malcolm, *In the Freud Archives* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984).

20. Peterson's study, which appeared in the same issue of *Spectrum* as the Branson-Weiss article, proved so controversial that it eclipsed an important theoretical discussion of Ellen White and revelation, also in that issue, by Frederick E. J. Harder, "Divine Revelation: A Review of Some of Ellen White's Concepts," II (Autumn, 1970), 35-56. For Peterson's article and the various replies and counter-replies in *Spectrum*, see Peterson, "A Textual and Historical Study of Ellen White's Account of the French Revolution," II (Autumn, 1970), 57-69; W. Paul Bradley, "Ellen White and Her Writings," III (Spring, 1971), 43-64; Peterson, "An Imaginary Conversation on Ellen G. White: A One-Act Play for Seventh-day Adventists," III (Summer, 1971), 85-91; John W. Wood, Jr., "The Bible and the French Revolution: An Answer," III (Autumn, 1971), 55-72.

21. For Numbers's account of these events, see the transcript of his San Bernardino County Museum lecture, May 29, 1976; see also Arthur L. White, "A Review of the Ron Numbers Matter" (unpublished typescript, Ellen G. White Estate, n. d.); White to Numbers, July 3, 1973; and Numbers to White, July 15, 1973.

22. Graybill's response to Peterson appeared in "How Did Ellen White

Choose and Use Historical Sources? The French Revolution Chapter of *Great Controversy*," *Spectrum*, IV (Summer, 1972), 49-53; Graybill ingratiated himself to Arthur White, and earned a position at the White Estate, with his sympathetic treatment of *E.G. White and Church Race Relations* (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1970).

23. Numbers's memo of conversations with Graybill, July 26, June 28, and September 29, 1976; Numbers to Graybill, May 11, 1976; the first volume of "Studies in Adventist History" belatedly appeared as Gary Land, ed., *Adventism in America* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986); Numbers gave his reasons for writing the book in his lecture of May 29, 1976.

24. Graybill to Numbers, June 10, 1973; Numbers's memos of conversations with Graybill, January 22, and February 10, 1975; and June 9, 1976.

25. Walter C. Utt, "Utt Critiques New E. G. White Book," *Campus Chronicle*, LII (May 20, 1976), 3; Judy Rittenhouse made the comment about the "two Rons" in conversation with the author in 1974.

26. Graybill to Walter C. Utt, July 7, 1976.

27. Numbers's memo of conversation with Graybill, February 10, 1975.

28. See note 57 below.

29. Joe Willey to Numbers, n. d.; "Three Elder's Report" (Society of Concerned Adventists Nonrestricted and International, n. d.), p. 14; Numbers's memo of conversation with Neal Wilson, July 4, 1974.

30. This entire squalid if by now somewhat humorous episode is detailed in "The Three Elder's Report"; a meeting called by Neal Wilson on August 31, 1976, with most of the principals was summarized in "Notes of Harvey Elder"; a conversation among Gary Stanhiser, Arnold Trujillo, J. W. Lehman, and A. Graham Maxwell may be found in a synopsis by David R. Larson.

31. In addition to "The Three Elder's Report," the story was covered by Mike Quinn in "Book Criticizing Adventist Founder Fires Controversy at Loma Linda," *Riverside Press Enterprise* (September 19, 1976), B-1, B-4. See also memo of conversation between Num-

bers and Bruce Branson, November 2, 1976; and Bruce Branson to Numbers, February 15, 1977.

32. Rene Noorbergen, *Jeane Dixon: My Life and Prophecies* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1969), and *Prophet of Destiny* (Canaan, Conn.: Keats Publishing Co., 1972); memo of conversation between Roy Branson and Numbers, November 4, 1974; memo of conversation between Numbers and Noorbergen, November 7, 1974; memo on discussion between Numbers and Robert Olson, October 26, 1974.

33. Note 14 above recounts when Numbers wrote his three books, Numbers to Jonathan Butler, June 10, 1975; James R. Nix to Numbers, July 9, 1975.

34. Bull and Lockhart describe the vocational conflicts of an Adventist educator in *Seeking a Sanctuary*, pp. 230-43; on the criticisms of Numbers by his fellow academics, see p. 237.

35. Godfrey T. Anderson registered this criticism to me and to Numbers on separate occasions; the infamous line appears in *Prophetess of Health*, p. 146.

36. To counter this mindset among his colleagues as well as church members at large, a junior historian argued, in the year Numbers published *Prophetess of Health*, that historical and theological explanations of a phenomenon, even with reference to a prophet, need not exclude one another; Gary Land, "Providence and Earthly Affairs: The Christian and the Study of History," *Spectrum*, VII (April, 1976), 2-6.

37. Numbers describes this aspect of his relationship with the White Estate in his lecture of May 29, 1976.

38. Numbers's memo of conversation with Graybill, December 29, 1974; two letters crisscrossed in the mail from Arthur White to Clayton Carlson, February 6, 1975; and Carlson to White, February 6, 1975.

39. The Madison weekend is described in a memo from Graybill to Arthur White and the White Estate Board of Trustees, May 11, 1975, see also Numbers's lecture of May 29, 1976; Schwarz to Pastor and Mrs. Raymond W. Numbers, March 11, 1975.

40. Longer in words, not pages, the reply of the Ellen G. White Estate appeared as *A Critique of the Book Prophetess of Health* (Washington: Ellen G. White Estate, 1976); for the ex-

changes on permission to cite Numbers's book, see Arthur White to Numbers, April 21, 1976; White to Numbers, April 29, 1976; Numbers to White, May 6, 1976; White to Numbers May 24, 1976; and Numbers to White, June 18, 1976.

41. Ernest R. Sandeen, "The State of a Church's Soul," *Spectrum*, VIII (January, 1977), 15-16.

42. W. Frederick Norwood, "The Prophet and Her Contemporaries," *Spectrum*, VIII (January, 1977), pp. 2-4; R. W. Schwarz, "On Writing and Reading History," *ibid.*, 20-27.

43. Ronald L. Numbers, "An Author Replies to His Critics," *ibid.*, esp. 34-36; and memo of conversation among Numbers, Schwarz, and Gary Land, September 17, 1977.

44. The Estate's summary comment appears in *Spectrum*, VIII (January, 1977), 4-13; it condenses a 24-page document entitled "A Discussion and Review of *Prophetess of Health*," as well as its longer study, *A Critique of the Book Prophetess of Health*. For Numbers's comment, see *Spectrum*, VIII (January, 1977), 29.

45. Fawn M. Brodie, "Ellen White's Emotional Life," *ibid.*, 13-15. *Spectrum* continued as an independent journal within Adventism, but its editor, Roy Branson, on leave from the SDA Theological Seminary at the Kennedy Center for Bioethics, subsequently lost his seminary appointment and his ministerial credentials.

46. D. E. Robinson, *The Story of Our Health Message* (3rd ed.; Nashville: Southern Publishing Assn., 1965); Ellen G. White Estate, "Twelve Outline Studies for *The Story of Our Health Message*" (Nashville: Southern Publishing Assn., 1976). For traditional Adventist studies of health after Numbers's book, see Richard A. Schafer, *Legacy: The Heritage of a Unique International Medical Outreach* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1977), and George W. Reid, *A Sound of Trumpets: Americans Adventists and Health Reform* (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1982). Coverage of the Prophetic Guidance Workshop at Andrews University appears in *Andrews University Focus*, XII (August-September, 1976), 9, 11; the *Time* citation is in note 10 above.

47. Gary Land, "Faith, History and

Ellen White," *Spectrum*, IX (March, 1978), 51-55; Benjamin McArthur, "Where Are Historians Taking the Church?" *Spectrum*, (November, 1979), 11-14; Eric Anderson, "1979 Presidential Address, AWAH" (unpublished paper).

48. A general sampling of favorable reviews of the book may be found in *The Zetetic*, I (Spring-Summer, 1977), 100; *Christian Century*, XCIV (February 16, 1977), 157; *Isis*, LXIX (1978), 147; *Church History*, XLVII (June, 1978), 243.

49. Martin E. Marty, in *Context* (December 15, 1977), 2, and *Journal of Religion*, LVIII (1978), 340; Martin Kaufman, *Journal of American History*, LXIV (June, 1977), 179-80.

50. James C. Whorton's review appeared in *Journal of the History of Medicine*, XXXIV (1979), 239-40; he further elaborates on the book in *Crusaders for Fitness: The History of American Health Reformers* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 201-2.

51. For the reviews, see Gerald N. Grob, *New England Quarterly*, L (June, 1977), 361-63; John B. Blake, *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, LX (Spring, 1977), 250-51; Henry D. Shapiro, *Reviews in American History*, V (June, 1977), 242-48. Examples of books that draw upon Numbers are Jane B. Donegan, *"Hydropathic Highway to Health": Women and the Water-Cure in Antebellum America* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), esp. ch. 7; Susan Cayleff, *Wash and Be Healed: The Water-Cure Movement and Women's Health* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), pp. 115-17; Martha H. Verbrugge, *Able-Bodied Womanhood: Personal Health and Social Change in Nineteenth-Century Boston* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 125; Martin E. Marty *Pilgrims in Their Own Land* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1984), pp. 321-24; Norman Gevitz, ed. *Other Healers: Unorthodox Medicine in America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), pp. 26, 69-70, 80; Robert C. Fuller, *Alternative Medicine and American Religious Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 33-34; Harvey Green, *Fit for America: Health, Fitness, Sport, and American Society* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986);

Catherine L. Albanese, *American Religions and Religion* (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1981), pp. 146-47; Martin E. Marty, *The Irony of It All, 1893-1919*, vol. 1 of *Modern American Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 256-57.

52. Numbers's parallel columns appear in *Prophetess of Health*, p. 232, n. 15; McAdams wrote a 250-page document on his discoveries, which remains unpublished and housed at the Estate. Eric Anderson provides a synopsis of his manuscript in "Ellen White and Reformation Historians," *Spectrum*, IX (July, 1978), 23-26.

53. Rea couched his literary analysis in a provocative book entitled *The White Lie* (Turlock, Calif.: M & R Publications, 1982); his story appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* (October 23, 1980), sec. 1, pp. 1 ff. For scholarly responses to Rea, see Jonathan Butler, "Prophet or Plagiarist: A False Dichotomy," *Spectrum*, XII (June, 1982), 44-48; and Alden Thompson, "The Imperfect Speech of Inspiration," *ibid.*, pp. 48-55. The church appointed Fred Veltman, a New Testament expert in textual criticism, to do further literary analysis of Ellen White; a summary of his work may be found in Veltman, "The Desire of Ages Project: The Data," *Ministry*, LXII (October, 1990), 4-7; and "The Desire of Ages Project: The Conclusions," *Ministry*, LXII (December, 1990), 11-15; see also Robert Olson, "Ellen White's Denials," *Ministry*, LXIII

(February, 1991), 15-18.

54. Joseph Battistone, "Ellen White's Authority as Bible Commentator," *Spectrum*, VIII (January, 1977), 37-40; Butler, *Spectrum*, X (August, 1979), 2-13.

55. On the Ford controversy, see Walter Utt, "Desmond Ford Raises the Sanctuary Question," *Spectrum*, X (March, 1980), 4-5; Edward E. Plowman, "The Shaking Up of Adventism?" *Christianity Today*, XXIV (February 8, 1980), 64-67.

56. For their discussion, see "Ellen White on the Mind and the Mind of Ellen White," in Ronald L. Numbers and Janet S. Numbers, *Prophetess of Health*, 2nd Ed. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992), p. 202.

57. See Ronald Graybill, "The Power of Prophecy: Ellen G. White and the Women Religious Founders of the Nineteenth Century" (Ph.D. diss. Johns Hopkins University, 1983), esp. pp. 84-112. See also Bonnie L. Casey, "Graybill's Exit: Turning Point at the White Estate?" *Spectrum*, XIV (March, 1984), 2-8; the Hoyt material appears in Frederick Hoyt, ed., "Trial of Elder I. Dammon: Reported for the *Piscataquis Farmer*," *Spectrum*, XVII (August, 1987), 29-36. See also Rennie Schoepflin, ed., "Scandal or Rite of Passage? Historians on the Dammon Trial," *ibid.*, 37-50; White's early years as a visionary within an enthusiastic context are dealt with in Butler, "Prophecy, Gender, and Culture: Ellen Gould Harmon [White] and the Roots of Seventh-day Adventism," *Religion and*

American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation, I (Winter, 1991), 3-29.

58. The published version of the minutes may be found in two sections: "The Use of the Spirit of Prophecy in Our Teaching of Bible and History," and "Inspiration of the Spirit of Prophecy as Related to the Inspiration of the Bible," *Spectrum*, X (May, 1979), 23-57.

59. Donald R. McAdams, "Shifting Views of Inspiration: Ellen White Studies in the 1970s," *Spectrum*, X (March, 1980), 27-41; and McAdams, "The Scope of Ellen White's Authority," *Spectrum*, XVI (August, 1985), 2-7; Herold Weiss, "Formative Authority, Yes; Canonization, No," *ibid.*, 8-13. Adventists have been polled through the Valuegenesis Research Project, described in general terms in V. Bailey Gillespie, "Nurturing Our Next Generation," *Adventist Review*, CLXVII (January 3, 1991), 5-11. See also Gary Land, "Coping with Change 1961-1980," in Gary Land, ed., *Adventism in America* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986), pp. 219-23. For changes in White Estate policy, see Ronald Graybill, "From Z File to Compact Disk: The Democratization of Ellen White Sources," unpublished paper, 1988. Arthur White stepped down as head of the White Estate in 1978; he died on January 12, 1991.

60. Numerous letters to Numbers from successive pastors at the University Church were written between February 20, 1975, and June 23, 1983.

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