SPECTRUM

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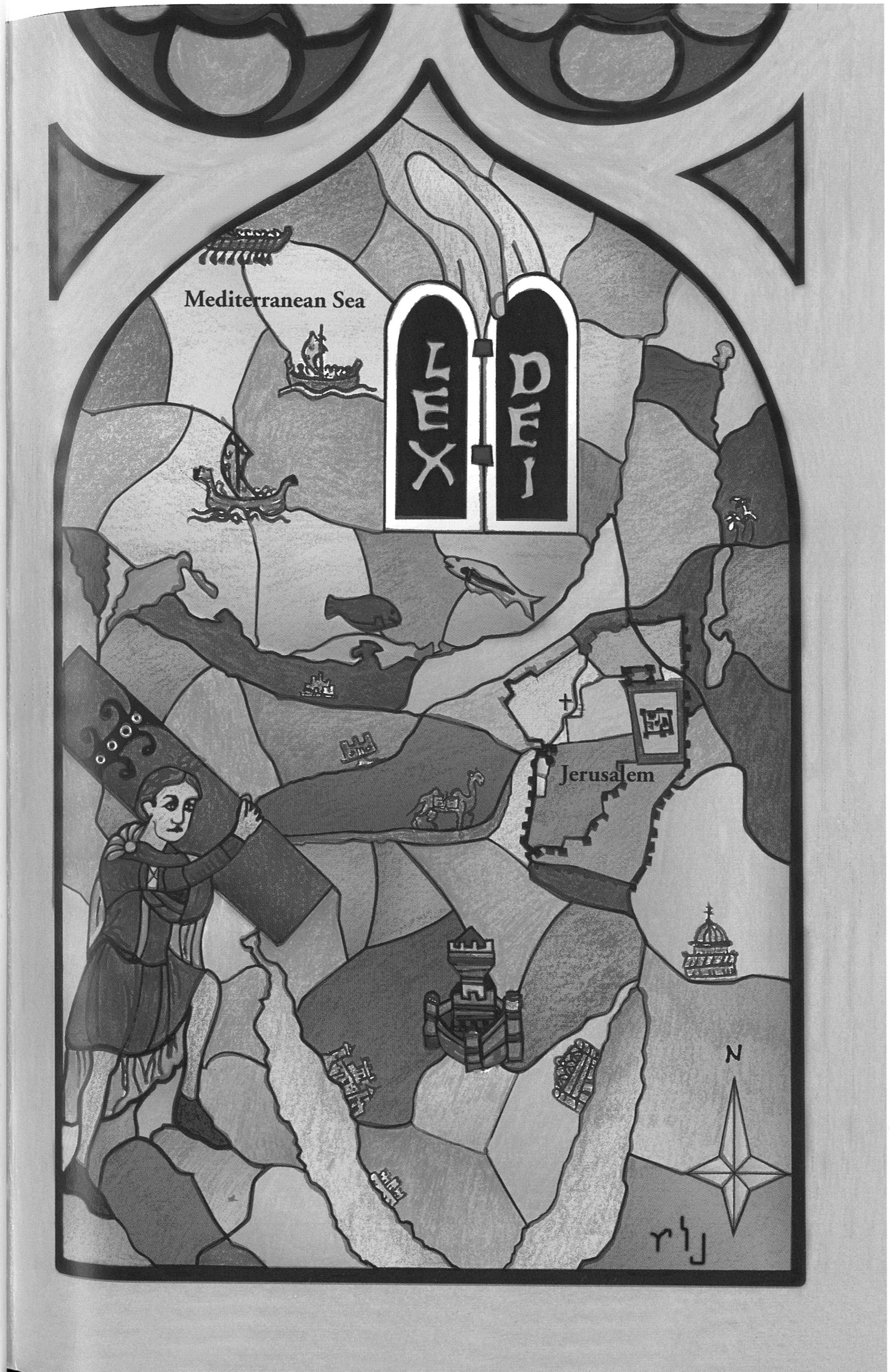

An Interview with Jack Provonsha

The Illusions of Money

From Roland Hegstad to *Rolling Stone:* Reservations About Religious Liberty

Creation and Time

Theology as Topical Bible Study

SPECTRUM

Editor	Bonnie Dwyer
Associate Editor	Leigh Johnsen
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About the Cover

Maps, like theology, contain the experience and observations of earlier pilgrims, and are designed to assist travelers on their own journeys. The cover is designed to be read in three ways: (1) a landscape with a man carrying a beam (or trunk) for work (or travel), surrounded by fields with a horizon behind him and a blue sky overhead; (2.) a stained glass window with the hand of God presenting earth with the Law (Lex) of God (Dei); and (3) A map of the terrain of the Exodus.

The bold lines of lead represent real and imaginary trade routes that intricately weave connections between heaven and earth and allow the various colors of the light to illumine the earth. Stories of divine and human activity are told of many locations on this map: the Nile Delta (Egypt), the Sinai Peninsula, the Red Sea, the Mediterranean with boats and fish (important symbols to the followers of Jesus), the city of Jerusalem (notice Golgotha marked with a cross), the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River, the Dead Sea with the palms of Jericho, and trade routes that connect the various places. The direction indicator supplies *Spectrum*'s customary cover star.

About the Artist

Ronald L. Jolliffe is professor of biblical studies in the School of Theology at Walla Walla College. In his spare time he enjoys reading literature, creating art and photography, jollro@wwc.edu.

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

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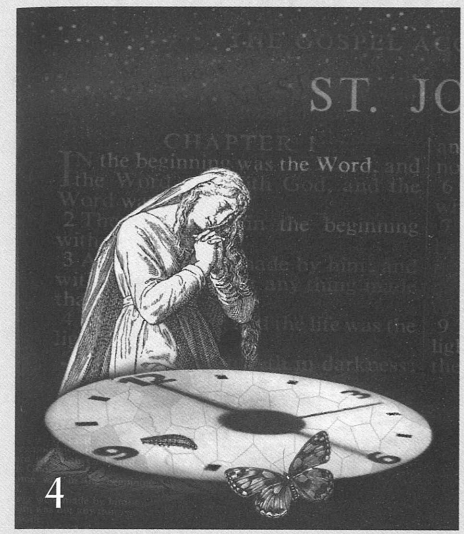

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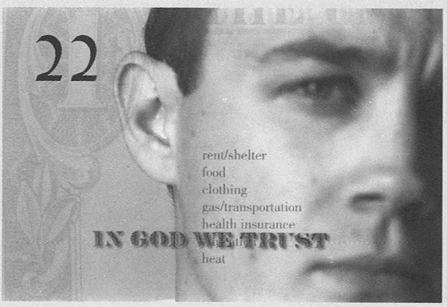

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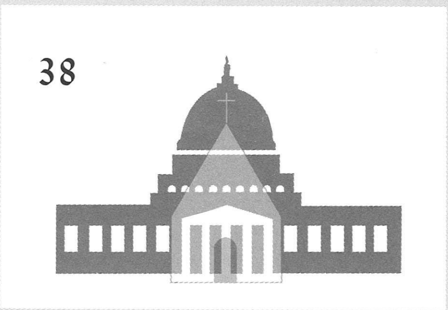

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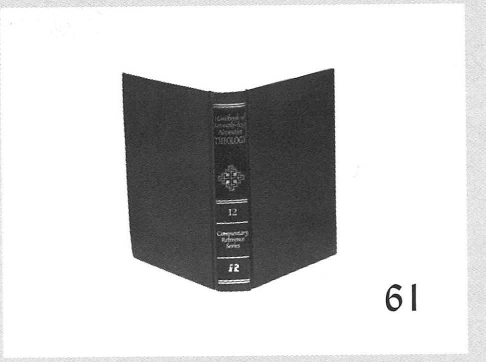
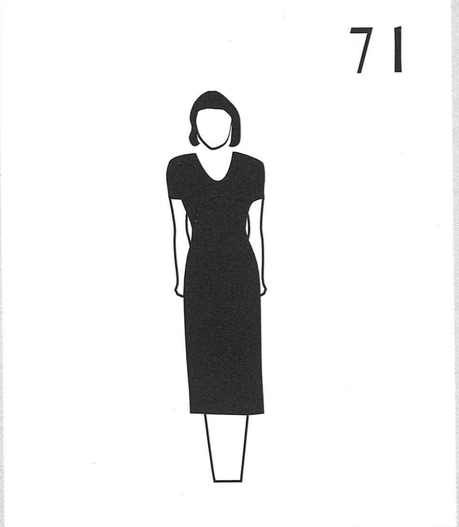




Reviews

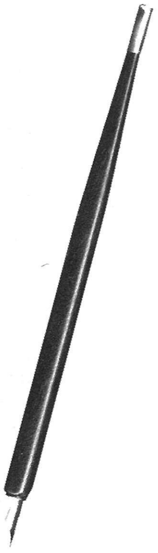
Editorials

The Visual Spectrum: Backgrounds Influence Foregrounds

> *…what we are looking at is always affected by its background, and that holds as much for the way the world appears and feels to us as it does for ocular vision.*
> Huston Smith

In 1998, Sharon Fujimoto-Johnson accepted the assignment of designing *Spectrum*, and totally changed the background for the ideas that appear in these pages. From her first suggestion—that original art be used on the cover—she made *Spectrum* a more visual magazine. The design for each issue began with a discussion of color. Sharon would search for just the right combination of tones to capture the season and the proposed concepts. Finding an artist willing to create art with specific color, size, and topic suggestions came next. As the issue developed, the conversation moved to how to extend visually the ideas in the articles. Considering how to make abstract concepts such as forgiveness, friendship, prayer, and sabbath visual can lead to new angles of understanding, particularly with someone like Sharon, who wanted each page to be fresh; photographic cliches were not acceptable. Through this process stories seemed to come to life. The world of *Spectrum* appeared and felt vibrant. Reader response to the new look was enthusiastic.

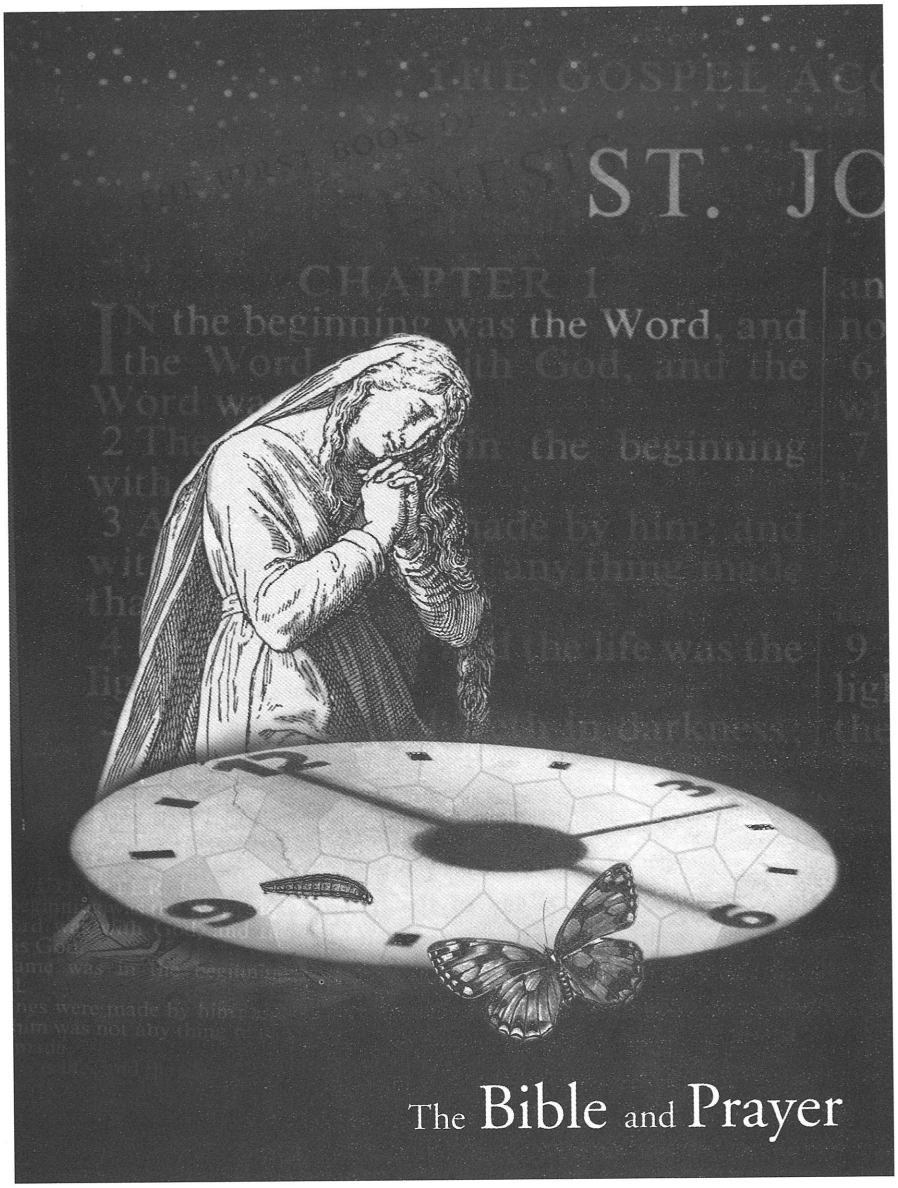
Recently, Sharon decided she wanted to switch her creative energies from art and design to writing; a novel and graduate school will now occupy her time. She has passed the mantel of design to Jennie Auman, another graduate of Pacific Union College's fine graphic arts program. The visual *Spectrum* lives on with new eyes and hands to bring it into being.



Online, the visual *Spectrum* <www.spectrummagazine.org> adds a new feature this month with the posting of Jack Provonsha's comments on prayer. His is an article in a weekly series that will bring noteworthy commentary on the Sabbath School lesson. We can only hope that such online discussions prove as popular as his weekly Loma Linda Sabbath School class of the 1970s and 1980s. In those days, one arrived at the amphitheater early if one wanted a seat. Provonsha's reasoned remarks about God shaped and reshaped many a person's religious experience. In his book *God is With Us*, he wrote, "All men may be instruments through whom God may say something about Himself. But some men possess the gifts to reveal Him more clearly than others"(57). Although Provonsha was not speaking about himself when he wrote that paragraph, it does fit him. We are particularly pleased to have an interview with Dr. Provonsha in this issue and to have his comments on the topic of prayer, as well.

Elsewhere you'll find noteworthy material on wealth and economics, religious liberty, and theology. That's the background for this particular issue of *Spectrum*. I hope it entices you into the foreground of reading.

Bonnie Dwyer
Editor



The Bible and Prayer

Creation and Time: A Biblical Reflection

Thoughts on God's Ongoing Creation and the Six Literal Days of Genesis 1

By Dalton D. Baldwin

Science and the Bible seem to contradict each other regarding the time that life forms appeared on earth. Traditional Adventist biblical interpretation portrays all life forms coming into being within six days at a specific time less than ten thousand years ago. However, scientific interpretation describes life forms coming into being with increasing complexity over millions of years starting millions of years ago.

Ellen G. White summarized early Adventist convictions about the relation between God's revelation in nature and the Bible as follows: "Since the book of nature and the book of revelation bear the impress of the same master mind, they cannot but speak in harmony."[1] She recognized that apparent contradictions arise, but attributed them to "imperfect comprehension of either science or revelation."[2] She also wrote, "The book of nature and the written word shed light upon each other."[3]

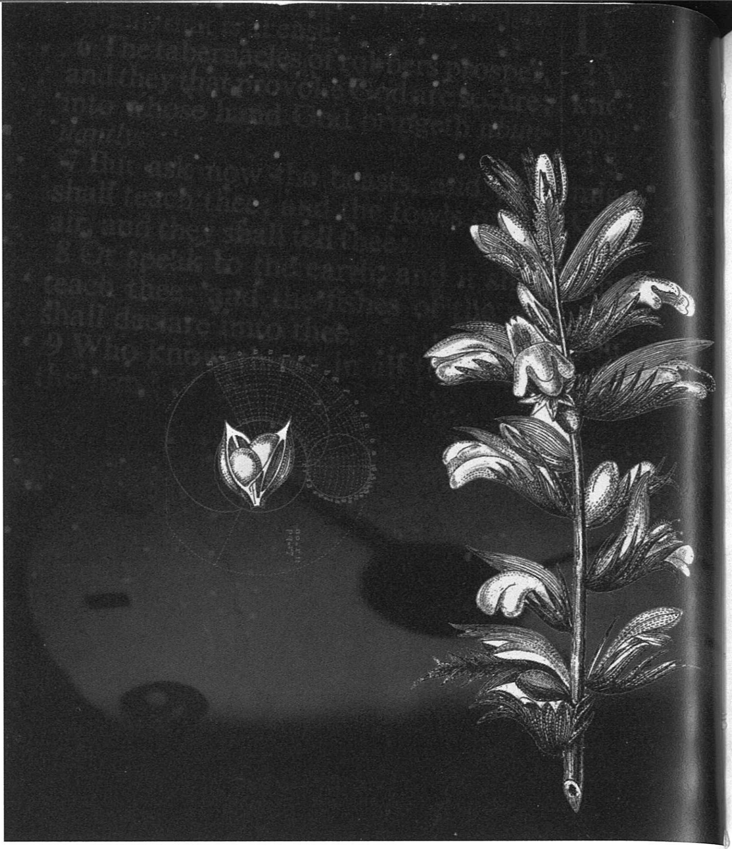
For many years, official Adventism has blamed a faulty interpretation of scientific data for disagreement about the appearance of life forms. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has spent millions of dollars seeking scientific evidence to support a short chronology. However, the results of these expenditures in money, time, and effort have not convinced many scientifically competent Adventists. In a questionnaire sent to college science teachers in the North American Division, for example, less than half of 121 teachers affirmed the traditional Adventist position.[4] Many Adventist young people have found the scientific interpretation more convincing and some have responded by abandoning their beliefs in creation and the inspiration of the Bible.

Adventists need to develop an understanding that supports belief in creation and the inspiration of the Bible. If contradictions arise from a faulty interpretation of either science or the Bible, and if science and the Bible throw light on each other, it might be helpful to reexamine our interpretation of the biblical material. This article is an effort to reinterpret the time factor in the Bible's creation statements.

The first major section of this article cites a number of statements in the Bible in which temporal expressions are related to creation. These statements will be arranged in three groups. First are those that refer to six days in relation to creation. Next are statements that appear to place creation about four thousand years before

Christ. The third group of statements includes a number of biblical passages in which creation is depicted as ongoing.

The second major section of this article discusses the contradiction between the concepts of creation within six days six thousand years ago and creation as an ongoing process. Reasons are offered that support treatment of the six days as having symbolic significance and interpretation of the Bible as portraying an ongoing creation.



Survey of Time Statements
Six-Day Duration of Creation

Three sections of the Bible refer to six days of creation events. The first appears in Genesis 1:1–2:3. The passage emphasizes the day as a unit of time by closing the description of creative activity on each day with a formula that refers to evening and morning and the number of the day. The account says that at the end of the sixth day everything in heaven and earth was completed. This carefully structured creation story is a masterpiece of biblical literature.

The fourth commandment in the Exodus version of the Ten Commandments contains the second description of six days of creation activity. "For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it" (Exod. 20:11).[5]

The third description appears at the end of a collection of statements about the Sabbath: "It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed" (Exod. 31:17).

The Beginning of Creation

The Bible does not contain a chronology that explicitly tells when creation began. The Hebrew word *adam* means humanity. The creation story in the first chapter of Genesis uses *adam* to refer to both male and female humans. Genesis 3:20 reports that the man named his wife Eve, but it contains no statement about the name of the first male human. The Hebrews frequently used meaningful words as names. Genesis 5 uses this word, *adam*, which means human, as the name of the first person in the genealogical list of patriarchs. Archbishop James Ussher (1581-1656) concluded that this *adam* was the first man, whose creation is portrayed in Genesis 1. Ussher added the age of "Adam" at the birth of Seth to the age of each of the patriarchs when their sons were born and arrived at the approximate date of 4000 B.C. for the creation of the first humans.

Ongoing Creation

Outside the Pentateuch, the Old Testament describes creation as ongoing. Those who believe that Moses wrote the six-day creation story and that the remainder of the Old Testament was written centuries later usually interpret ongoing creation metaphorically and symbolically. A metaphor uses a word or expression, which previously had a known, literal meaning, to convey a different meaning in a new context. In contrast, most biblical scholars believe the passages that describe ongoing creation were actually written earlier than those that describe creation occurring within a single week. If the concept of creation was understood as an ongoing process, these words were actually used to express divine creation and should not be considered metaphors. To understand what these words meant in their own context let us first analyze a representative sample of expressions in these passages about time in relation to creation.

Ongoing Creation of Humans

A number of biblical statements describe God creating a human when that particular human came into being. For example, the call of Jeremiah refers to God creating him in his mother's womb: "Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations'" (Jer. 1:4-5). The Hebrew word translated here as "formed" is the same word used in Genesis 2:7, where God "formed" the first man from the dust of the ground.

Job speaks about himself being created by God. "Your hands fashioned and made me; and now you turn and destroy me. Remember that you fashioned me like clay; and will you turn me to dust again? Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese? You clothed me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews" (Job 10:8-11). The word translated as "made" in the eighth verse is *asah,* also used in the fourth commandment, which says that "in six days the LORD *made* heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them" (Exod. 20:11).

We can infer from Job's rhetorical question that God creates every human in the womb. "Did not he who made me in the womb make him? And did not one fashion us in the womb?" (Job 31:15). The word translated here as "made" is again the Hebrew word *asah.*

One of the psalmists also refers to this ongoing creation of himself. "For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps. 139:13-14).

Ecclesiastes also suggests ongoing creation: "Just as you do not know how the breath comes to the bones in the mother's womb, so you do not know the work of God, who makes everything" (Eccles. 11:5).

When sons and daughters of Israel were taken captive, a redemptive return was promised to "everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made" (Isa. 43:7). The word translated here as "created" is *bara,* the word used in Genesis 1:1. God's future ongoing creation would produce each one of these individuals, who would later be made a captive and then redeemed from captivity.

Ongoing Creation of Life

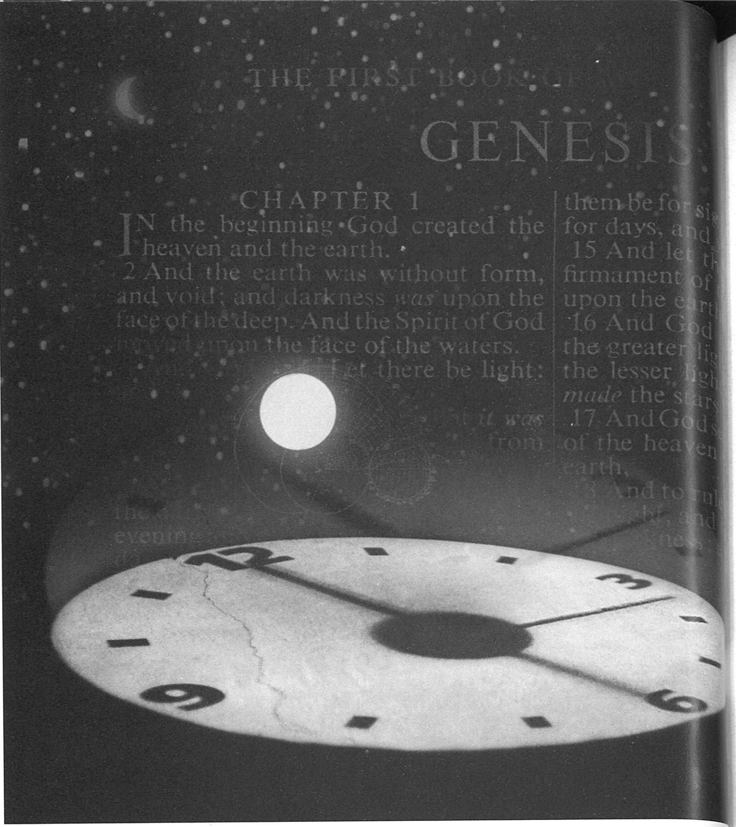
Job uses *asah,* the word that refers to creation in the fourth commandment, to describe God's ongoing creation of all life:

> But ask the animals, and they will teach you;
> the birds of the air, and they will tell you
> ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you;
> and the fish of the sea will declare to you.
> Who among all these does not know
> that the hand of the LORD has done this?
> In his hand is the life of every living thing
> and the breath of every human being.
> (Job 12:7-10)

The creative power of Yaweh has *done* this. He creates life in every living thing.

Isaiah uses *bara,* the word that describes creation in Genesis 1:1, to refer to the creation of heaven and earth, and then describes the ongoing creation of life in humans. "This is what God the LORD says—he who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it" (Isa. 42:5 NIV).

Mitchell Dahood, the author of the three-volume commentary on the Psalms in the *Anchor Bible,* dates Psalm 104 before the composition of the Genesis 1 creation story.[6] This particular psalm is recognized as a hymn to God the Creator. In it, there are references



to the eight creation actions, which are later condensed into the six days of the creation week.[7] The psalm mentions light, firmament, dry land, vegetation, sun, and moon in the same sequence that they appear in the first chapter of Genesis, but it contains no indication that the sequence of presentation is the chronological sequence of their coming into being. The psalm presents God's creation activity as ongoing. God causes the grass to grow for cattle, which already exist, and plants, which provide wine and bread for humans, and which are also already present (Ps. 104:14-15). One passage, which refers to death and renewal, portrays the ongoing creation of life. Referring to the creatures of air, sea, and land that have just been mentioned, the passage says:

> These all look to you
>   to give them their food in due season;
> when you give to them, they gather it up;
>   when you open your hand, they are filled
>   with good things.
> When you hide your face, they are dismayed;
>   when you take away their breath they die
>   and return to their dust.
> When you send forth your spirit,
>   they are created;
>   and you renew the face of the ground.
> (Ps. 104:27-30)

"Created" in the next to last line translates *bara,* which is used in Genesis 1:1. Ongoing renewal parallels the Hebrew term for "created." This renewal is creation. This passage seems to say that each creature comes into being and stays alive as long as God's ongoing creation in it continues, but it ceases to live when God discontinues his creative activity.

Problematic Conflict in Time

When we attempt to interpret the Bible in regard to the relation of time to creation, we have a problem. On the one hand, some passages seem to limit creation to six days at a specific time less than ten thousand years ago. On the other hand, the Bible describes creation as constantly ongoing. How should we respond?

One solution is to acknowledge a conflict, then take the position that the relationship of time to creation is unimportant as long as we affirm creation itself. This approach allows us to decide not to interpret what the Bible says on the subject of time and creation. Most of us deal in this way with chronological conflicts between various Gospel accounts of the cock crowing and Peter's denial. Whether Peter denied three times before the cock crowed twice, as in Mark 14:30, 72, or three times before the cock crowed, as in Matthew 26:34, 74-75, and Luke 22:34, 60-61, is inconsequential.

However, ignoring all time statements about creation is not very helpful because creation is a divine act in time and its temporality is important for human response to it. Furthermore, we cannot ignore time statements about creation because so many people have interpreted the Bible to teach that creation began less than ten thousand years ago and continued for six days. In short, the doctrine of creation is commonly understood to include this time element. Thus, when science presents convincing evidence that life appeared millions of years ago and that it evolved with increasing complexity over millions of years, some people either reject science with hostility or abandon their belief in creation and the inspired authority of the Bible.

A second possible solution regards both positions as literally true because the Bible is inerrant in all its parts. Harold Lindsell, longtime editor of *Christianity Today,* takes this approach to the chronology of

Peter's denial. He combines the accounts of the three gospels and claims no conflict exists if the cock crowed twice and Peter denied his master six times. "The first crowing of the cock would occur after the first three denials and the second crowing of the cock would occur after the sixth denial."[8] This type of solution is so ridiculous that it also leads many to abandon their belief in the inspiration of the Bible.

A third possible solution has often been used in the past. It treats the six days of the creation story and the years of Genesis 5 and 11 as chronological history. This solution interprets the chronological feature of biblical statements that portray ongoing, originating, divine activity as metaphorical references to creation. Metaphorically, creation goes on, and literal creation occurred in six days at a specific time less than ten thousand years ago.

This third solution is problematic because the earliest biblical statements about creation refer to it as ongoing. If the original basic understanding considered creation in this manner, these earliest statements would not refer to creation metaphorically. Most biblical scholars hold that all of the references to six days of creation came into being very late. They come to this conclusion because of evidence largely present in the Bible itself.

However, saying that the first chapter of Genesis was written long after Psalm 104 threatens those who from their earliest years have had assurance in their hearts that Moses wrote the Pentateuch and that the prophets and the Psalms were written centuries later. Time and space do not permit discussion of evidence in support of dating these texts at a time later than often believed, but it should be noted that a powerful conviction exists among some that faith requires us not to engage in historical investigation about the date and authorship of various parts of biblical writings.

If this is true, we should not engage in historical investigation about the development of Scripture, and Ellen White made a terrible mistake when she referred to its development and explained how errors from human tradition have crept into the text.[9] We need to reexamine our views about the value of historical investigation into the authorship, time, and historical setting of various parts of Scripture, and then reexamine the evidence for the late date of references to a six-day creation.

A fourth possible solution to the conflict between ongoing creation and a six-day creation more recent than ten thousand years ago would treat the six days and the years of Genesis 5 and 11 as symbolic and understand God as constantly acting to create and save.

Reasons for Symbolic Interpretation

For a number of reasons, we should not treat the years of Genesis 5 and 11 and the days of the week in Genesis 1 as chronological history.

In 1979, Sigfried Horn, chair of the Old Testament Department and, later, dean of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, read a paper at Loma Linda that asked the question, "Can the Bible Establish the Age of the Earth?" His answer was, "No!" He held that no biblical chronology exists before Abraham and argued that the number of years mentioned in Genesis 5 and 11 are part of a genealogy and should not be viewed as chronological history.[10]

Why don't the "years" in the genealogical lists present chronological history? Analysis of ancient Middle Eastern genealogical lists shows that they were often written to establish the legitimacy and authority of the most recent person mentioned. The name of the first king in the Babylonian list of kings, which contains ten names, means "man." A great flood occurs at the time of the tenth king. Each king in the list reigns for thousands of years. Perhaps these inflated years were designed to enhance authority, but they are certainly useless for chronology. The years symbolize authority and should not be considered chronological history.

The Genesis 5 patriarchal list seems to be influenced by the same tradition. The list begins with the

name *adam*, which also means "man." The list claims that each patriarch lived hundreds of years. Genesis 6:3 portrays the ordinary life span as 120 years. The average life span of the nine patriarchs excluding Enoch is 912 years. This figure represents an average of 792 more years than the ordinary life span at that time. This inflated life span no doubt symbolizes the legitimacy and authority of Abraham and of God's chosen people. Furthermore, the flood occurs during the life of Noah, the tenth patriarch.

Using the "years" in the Genesis lists as chronological history, Archbishop Ussher dated the flood at about 2348 B.C. and creation at about 4000 B.C.. Writing civilizations existed in Egypt and Babylon in 3000 B.C., a date confirmed by astronomical data calculated in recent years. This civilization already existed more than 650 years before Ussher's date for the flood, yet there is no evidence of flood disturbance in the mounds that contain archaeological remains related to this civilization. In the tells below these remains, other, progressively more primitive archaeological ruins can be found through chalcolithic, neolithic, paleolithic, and hunter-gatherer times. Beneath the hunter-gatherer remains are limestone formations that geoscience paleobiologists agree contain remains of living organisms.

Once while attending one of Sigfried Horn's classes, I became concerned about his orthodoxy and asked how much time this accumulation of archaeological artifacts represented. He evaded the question by answering that he was not a paleontologist. However, he had been hinting that these data show the development of this civilization to have taken a long, long time.

An analysis of the pattern of numbers in the list offers further evidence that the "years" in the Genesis 5 and 11 lists represent symbolic rather than chronological history. If the numbers actually portray historical chronology, they would exhibit a random pattern, but the years in the list are actually schematic.[11] Many of the periods are divisible by five and forty.

Differences between the number of years in the Masoretic Hebrew text, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Septuagint furnish more evidence that the numbers do not actually reflect chronological history. The Masoretic text has six of the patriarchs living one hundred years less before the birth of their sons than the same patriarchs listed in the Septuagint. Copyists who either added or subtracted one hundred years from each of these patriarchs must have felt free to make such changes because they knew they were not dealing with chronological history.

Textual critics say the most difficult reading is probably the original from which changes are made. The earliest Septuagint list has Methuselah living fourteen years after the flood. Perhaps the Septuagint list represents the earliest tradition. Later Septuagint and Hebrew manuscripts increase the number of years that Methuselah lived before the birth of his son by twenty years to correct this problem. Perhaps those responsible for the Masoretic tradition subtracted one hundred years from each of the six patriarchs out of discomfort over so much exaggeration.

Sigfried Horn was correct: The "years" mentioned in the genealogical lists in Genesis 5 and 11 do not portray chronological history. We should treat them as symbols for the authority and legitimacy of Abraham and of Israel as God's chosen people.

Symbolic "Days" of the Creation Week

A number of Adventist scholars, who hold an elevated view of Scripture, have revised the chronology for the creation of light, firmament, land, sun, and moon for scientific reasons. They believe that the sun, moon, stars, and earth with its atmosphere were created on or before the first day of the creation week, in contrast to Genesis 1:14-19, which portrays the sun, moon, and stars coming into being on the fourth day—after the earth's creation. If these scholars are correct, we can conclude that the time elements of the first chapter of Genesis do not comprise part of a chronological history of actions by God that brought the heavens and earth into being. If these days are not chronological history, they must have some symbolic function.

Frank Marsh, first director of the Seventh-day Adventist Geoscience Research Institute, held that God created the entire solar system on the first day of creation week. Marsh suggested that light appearing on the first day came from the sun, which was not visible through the fog. By making this suggestion, he

solved the problem of explaining the presence of light before its source existed. According to him, on the second day the sun warmed the air near the surface of the earth enough to form a "clear space" between the water on the surface of the earth and the dense clouds above. The high clouds prevented an observer on earth from seeing the sun, moon, and stars. However, they appeared to a surface observer on the fourth day, when the dense upper layer of clouds cleared. [12] By holding that God created the sun on the first day rather than the fourth, Marsh solved the problem of how the earth remained in orbit without the sun's gravitational pull. However, by doing so, he denied the strictly chronological character of the account.

Rue E. Hoen, for many years chair of the chemistry department at Pacific Union College, took the position that the solar system existed before the first day of creation week. Time calculations would not have been possible for surface observers before the first day because a dense layer of clouds enveloped the earth in total darkness. On the first day, the atmosphere cleared enough so that light, evening, and morning became apparent to an observer on the earth.[13]

Robert Brown, the third director of the Geoscience Research Institute, has written about "the last 4.5 billion years of which discrete entities of the Solar System have been in existence."[14] He has held that radiometric dating and other evidence shows the sun, moon and stars to have been in existence for billions of years. Brown has pointed out that the impact of small particles in the solar wind have eroded the oldest craters on the moon.

Marsh, Hoen, Brown, and other Adventist scholars have suggested changes in understanding about the creation of the firmament, sun, moon, and stars on the basis of scientific evidence known today but unknown when Genesis was written. Making these changes in the chronology of creation solves a number of problems in the Genesis 1 account.

Light is no longer created before the sun, the source of light. Vegetation, which needs sunlight, comes into existence after the sun. A landmass, which experiences evenings and mornings, is no longer created before a sun exists to provide gravitational orbit and light on one side of a rotating sphere, which produces evenings before mornings.

Of course, these writers would deny changing temporal aspects of the creation account. They would interpret the temporal element as referring to the time such aspects appeared to an observer on the earth's surface. However, interpretation that changes "let there be lights" into "let an observer be able to see the lights" actually does revise the chronology of the sun and moon's creation.

At the time Genesis 1 was written, features that are problems for us would have not been problems for the writer or readers. People of that time envisioned the world as a flat disk covered with a solid dome, or firmament, which separated a vast upper sea from another sea under the earth. This dome also provided space for the sun and moon to pass overhead. This dome "proclaims" Gods handiwork, his engineering genius, and provides a "tabernacle" under which the sun, like a "strong man," runs its "circuit" from horizon to horizon (Ps. 19:1-5 KJV).

At the beginning everything is a deep mass of water, it would be logical to create such a dome to hold the waters above the dome away from the waters beneath it. This dome would logically precede the creation of the sun and moon, which would then have a space through which to pass.

Chronological problems in the Genesis 1 account are also present in a Babylonian epic that refers to creation. Alexander Heidel considers the references to creation in Enuma Elish and Genesis 1:1-2:3, so similar that they must have depended on a common tradition. He has published a table that points out the following similarities:[15]

Enuma Elish	Genesis
• Divine spirit and cosmic matter are coexistent and coeternal.	• Divine spirit creates cosmic matter and exists independently of it.
• Primeval chaos; Tiamat enveloped in darkness.	• The earth a desolate waste, with darkness covering the deep (*tehom*).
• Light emanating from the gods.	• Light created.
• The creation of the firmament.	• The creation of the firmament.
• The creation of dry land.	• The creation of dry land.
• The creation of the luminaries.	• The creation of the luminaries.
• The creation of man.	• The creation of man.
• The gods rest and celebrate.	• The Lord rests and sanctifies the seventh day.

Enormous differences exist between Enuma Elish and Genesis 1:1-2:3. The Babylonian story is an epic intended to explain the supremacy of the god Marduk. After a series of battles between various gods, Marduke kills Tiamat, the goddess of the deep, splits her "like a shellfish into two parts," then makes the firmament out of the upper half. The metaphorical picture of a cosmic clam shell dome inverted over the earth to prevent the upper waters of the abyss from crashing down and snuffing out life on earth corresponds to a worldview that many cultures of that period held.

A number of features in the Genesis 1 creation story correct and protest against pagan beliefs at that time. These polemic qualities of the biblical account appear even in Heidel's listing of similarities.[16] Genesis describes a transcendent, monotheistic God creating matter; however, Enuma Elish has cosmic matter eternally coexistent with polytheistic gods. In Genesis, God creates light and the luminaries, but in Enuma Elish, the sun and other luminaries are gods who emanate light.[17] Perhaps because of its polemic intent, Genesis 1 refers to greater and lesser lights rather than using the words for sun and moon, which were also names for gods.

"This inflated life span no doubt symbolizes the legitimacy and authority of Abraham and of God's chosen people."

We can quickly recognize that the idea of a solid dome firmament in the Genesis account can be explained as a product of an erroneous worldview present in the cultural tradition. No such firmament was ever created.

The example of the way Ellen White dealt with errors introduced into the Bible from human tradition is helpful. In her day, some had apparently rejected the Bible's inspiration because they thought it taught eternal misery for the wicked, as suggested in such passages as, "The smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever" (Rev. 14:10). She explained such texts as follows:

> I saw that God had especially guarded the Bible; yet when copies of it were few, learned men had in some instances changed the words, thinking that they were making it more plain, when in reality they were mystifying that which was plain, by causing it to lean to their established views, which were governed by tradition. But I saw that the Word of God, as a whole, is a perfect chain, one portion linking into and explaining another.[18]

Ellen White recognized three important things. First, she saw that the Bible has undergone development. Second, she recognized that in the course of that development errors from human tradition have been introduced into it. Third, she saw that if we study the Bible as a whole we can often find biblical ideas consistent with each other that will constitute an interconnected criterion by which to identify and overcome such errors.

Treating time elements of the first creation story in Genesis as symbolic should be less threatening if we notice that we have been doing this with the time elements of the second creation story, which is found in chapter two. Chapter two is not an expansion or elaboration of the account in chapter one, but a separate story. The first few words of Genesis 2:4, "These are the generations of," constitute a form or pattern used nine times in Genesis to introduce an account that follows.[19] In Genesis 1, God creates by speaking the creative word; in Genesis 2, God works as an artisan on preexisting materials.

In the creation account of Genesis 1, the temporal factor is expressed with events on each of six days. In the second account, temporal expressions that relate the various events to each other express the order of creation. When vegetation was not "yet" on the earth (2:5), God formed man out of the dust and breathed into him the breath of life, and man became a living person. Then God created vegetation for beauty and for the man's food (2:9). Announcing that he would make a helper appropriate for this lonely man (2:18), God formed animals and birds out of the ground (2:19) and presented them to the man. According to the account, after the man named the living beings there was still no partner appropriate for him. Then God created the woman. The chronological sequence of male humanity, vegetation, animals and birds, and finally Eve's creation from the man's rib after it was found that he had no mutually helpful partner among the previously created birds and animals is required to bring out the point that husband and wife are equal and mutually dependent. God inspired the imagination to develop a story of creation that would communicate a very important truth about the relationship between male and female humanity.

The following table portrays the very different chronological order of key features of creation in the two stories:

Genesis 1	Genesis 2
1. Light	1. Male humanity
2. Firmament	
3. Dry land	
4. Vegetation	2. Vegetation
5. Greater and lesser lights and stars.	
6. Sea creatures and birds	3. Animals and birds
7. Land animals	
8. Humankind	4. Female humanity
9. Divine rest and consecration	

The writer who placed these differing creation stories next to each other certainly knew they were not historical accounts because the actions of God on preexisting materials in a different order in the second account is so different from the order of the fiat creation acts in the first. It seems that God inspired the development of the second story in a way that used the time elements symbolically to show the mutual dependence and equality of men and women.

If God's creating activity is ongoing, as shown in the many texts cited, God inspired the development of the first story to correct errors in the creation tradition represented in Enuma Elish. Light is not an emanation from the gods, but a creation of God. The sun and moon are not gods, but creations of God. There is no conflict between gods in creation. God does not depend on preexisting material, but creates out of nothing. Treating the time features in the first creation story as symbolic should be no more of a problem than doing so in the second creation story.

Origin of the Sabbath

Changing the chronology of the events of creation from a duration of six days to ongoing creation for millions of years might seem to threaten confidence in the divine origins of the Sabbath as an institution. Biblical scholars point out that the Bible contains laws that prescribe work for six days and rest on the seventh day, which is a Sabbath of the Lord, known long before the composition of the creation story in Genesis 1:1-2:3. God revealed the value of the Sabbath before the truth of creation. These oldest Sabbath laws contain no reference to creation, nor do early references to God as Creator suggest that he needs rest or takes time out. Isaiah reassured Jews in the Captivity that God as Creator works constantly to create life and salvation without becoming weary or taking time out to rest (Isa. 40:26-31). It is interesting to note that when Jesus was attacked for healing on the Sabbath, he explained that God works constantly (John 5:17). This means that God's creation of life and salvation continues twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

We might ask why God rested or desisted on the seventh day in the first creation story in Genesis. The only answer the Old Testament gives is because the seventh day is the Sabbath. The divine rest on the seventh day in Genesis 2:1-3 depends on the Sabbath. The Sabbath does not depend on six historical days of creation activity followed by one day of divine rest. Perhaps the story in Genesis 1 arranged the eight or more features of creation listed in Psalm 104 into six days of creation activity and one day of rest because existing Sabbath laws provided for six days of work followed by one day of rest, and the creation tradition, which included a solid dome firmament, described the gods resting when creation was completed.[20]

The older edition of the Ten Commandments provides additional evidence that the Sabbath does not depend on a literal seven-day creation week. Biblical scholarship shows that most of the material in Deuteronomy was written some time earlier than the creation story in Genesis 1:1-2:4 and the Exodus edition of the Ten Commandments. According to the fourth commandment as recorded in Deuteronomy, the reason to remember the Sabbath differs significantly from that given in the later Exodus edition. Instead of urging readers to remember the Sabbath because God created heaven and earth in seven days—as related in Exodus 20:11—Deuteronomy 5:15 says, "Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day." This different wording does not amplify explanation

of the Exodus 20 fourth commandment, but refers to the wording of the fourth commandment at the time Deuteronomy 5 was written.

The next verse after the Deuteronomy Ten Commandments says, "These words the LORD spoke with a loud voice to your whole assembly at the mountain, out of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, and he added no more. He wrote them on two stone tablets, and gave them to me" (Deut. 5:22). This statement suggests that the earlier wording of the fourth commandment connects the Sabbath with the saving liberation of Israel from Egyptian slavery. The Exodus wording of the fourth commandment includes this significance when it broadens the meaning of the Sabbath to commemorate the saving liberation of all of humanity from *tohu wabohu* (formless void, Gen. 1:2).

Summary and Conclusion

This article began with a reference to the conflict between biblical interpretation, which portrays a six-day recent creation, and scientific interpretation, which envisions long ages of development for life forms. We assumed that God's revelation in nature does not conflict with his revelation in the Bible and that when conflict seems to arise it comes from a misinterpretation—either of data from science or the Bible. The Church has spent many years seeking an interpretation of scientific data that would harmonize this conflict, but has not produced results that are very convincing to most of its scientists.

The author decided to collect a representative sample of statements throughout the Bible that deal with time in relation to creation and then reinterpret them, seeking to use the Bible as a whole as its own interpreter. In these statements, we found a conflict between a group that, taken literally, describes creation as ongoing, and another group that describes creation beginning less than ten thousand years ago and being completed in six days.

In the past, Adventists have taken the six-day creation statements as the earliest original statement of creation and, therefore, interpreted them as symbolic and metaphorical expressions of ongoing creation. However, because the earliest statements that relate time to creation express ongoing creation, they cannot be taken as metaphors. The author has offered reasons to support treatment of the statements as symbolic and metaphorical descriptions of a six-day creation.

One of the most important reasons that supports this conclusion involves the late date of the six-day creation statements. Because our community has held for years that faith requires us not to engage in historical investigation of authorship, date of writing, and historical setting of biblical material, giving a late date to the six-day creation statements is very controversial. With mutual respect for the integrity of one another, we need to discuss whether we should engage in such investigation and then examine the data that support the late date of the six-day creation statements.

This study proposes that we treat the six days of the creation story in Genesis 1 as symbolic and think of God's creative saving activity as constantly ongoing. The primary authority for this conclusion is the Bible. When we use the Bible this way, we strengthen confidence in it as inspired authority.

Notes and References

1. Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1903), 128, hereafter cited as Ed.

2. Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1890), 114.

3. Ed 128. I do not cite Ellen G. White here to give the impression that she would have supported my treatment of the "six days" and the "six thousand " years as symbolic. The White Estate distributes a compilation entitled "Ellen G. White Statements Touching on Geology" that contains eighteen different statements (*Spiritual Gifts*, 3:92; *Testimonies to the Church*, 2:172, 3:138, 3:492; *Spirit of Prophecy*, 2:93, 4:371; *Great Controversy*, x, 518, 552-53, 656, 659, 673; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 51; 342; *Counsels on Health*, 19; *Desire of Ages*, 413) that refer to the age of the earth as six thousand years, and fourteen statements (*Great Controversy*, vii, 328, 546; *Selected Messages*, 1:267, 269, 280, 2:88; *Review and Herald*, July 18, 1874; manuscript 14, 1897, Ellen White Estate; *Desire of Ages*, 48, 117, 652, 759) that refer to creation about four thousand years before Christ. I have found five other statements (*Signs of the Times*, May 8, 1884; *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists* [Basle: Polyglotte, 1886]; 133; *Story of Jesus* [1896; reprint, Nashville, Tenn.:

Southern Publishing, 1949], 183; *Manuscript Releases* [Silver Spring, Md.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1981-93], 1:61; *Counsels to Teachers*, 467) in her writings that portray the age of the earth as six thousand years. There are also at least thirty-nine instances of these basic statements quoted in compilations and republications. She interprets the seven days of Genesis 1, Exodus 20:11, and 31:17, as literal twenty-four-hour days (*Spiritual Gifts*, 3:90-93; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 111; *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, 135-36; *Selected Messages*, 3:317). I use this statement about the book of nature and the Bible throwing light on each other to show that she treats truths from scientific investigation as valid for theological reflection. She herself used scientific evidence to revise an impression conveyed by a portion of her account of her 1863 health reform vision. She had written, "I was shown that more deaths have been caused by drug-taking than from all other causes combined" (*Spiritual Gifts*, 4:133). She had also written that "Drugs never cure disease" (ibid., 134). She had classed quinine with calomel (HgCl) and strychnine as "poisonous mixtures" (ibid., 139). Because of this statement and others like it, many early Adventist physicians refused to use quinine for cases of malaria. Doctor S. P. S. Edwards, practicing on the Mississippi River, found that he could not assist his patients to remove malaria plasmodia from the blood stream with hydrotherapy alone, but that hydrotherapy used together with quinine proved successful. When he told Ellen White about his experience, she approved. Later, Elder J. E. Fulton wrote to Ellen White, asking for counsel because missionaries in the South Pacific were dying because they refused to use quinine to treat malaria. She asked Edwards to describe his medical experience, then wrote across the bottom of his letter, "If quinine will save a life, use quinine. Ellen G. White." Edwards to Joe S. Haskell, Mar. 29, 1956; Edwards to F. D. Nichol, Nov. 24, 1957, both in White Document File 111-b, Heritage Room, Vernier Radcliff Library, Loma Linda University.

4. Floyd Petersen, "Science Faculty Vary in Views on Creationism," *Adventist Today* 2 (Nov./Dec. 1994): 19.

5. Unless otherwise indicated, biblical quotations in this article are taken from the New Revised Standard Version.

6. Mitchell Dahood, *The Anchor Bible: Psalms III, 101-50* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970), 33.

7. Light, v. 2; firmament, v. 2; dry land, v. 5; vegetation, v. 14-16; moon and sun, v. 19; air and water creatures, v. 12, 17, 25-26, 29-30; land animals, v. 11, 14, 18, 20-22; humans, v. 14-15, 23, 33-35. Richard Hammill first called this observation to my attention in a Sabbath School presentation.

8. Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1976), 175.

9. See note 18, below.

10. Sigfried H. Horn, "Can the Bible Establish the Age of the Earth," *Spectrum* 10 (Nov. 1979): 15-19.

11. Colin L. House, "The Successive, Corresponding Epochal Arrangement of the 'Chronogenealogies' of Genesis 5 and 11B in the Three Textual Traditions: LXXA, SP, and MT" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 1988); Donald E. Casebolt, "The Genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11: A Statistical Study," *Origins* 9 (1982): 30; James L. Hayward and Donald E. Casebolt, "The Genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11: A Statistical Study," *Origins* 9 (1982): 75-81.

12. Frank Lewis Marsh, *Studies in Creationism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1950), 210-18.

13. Rue E. Hoen, *The Creator and His Workshop* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1951), 17.

14. Robert H. Brown, "Geo and Cosmic Chronology," *Origins* 8 (1981): 31.

15. Alexander Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis: The Story of the Creation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), 109. Heidel explained that the Hebrew *tehome* is derived from the same word as the Babylonian *Tiamat*.

16. For the polemic qualities of the Genesis account, see Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Polemic Nature of the Genesis Cosmology," *Evangelical Quarterly* 46 (1974): 81-102.

17. We have noticed that Psalms 104 influenced Genesis 1. It is interesting to note that instead of speaking about God creating light, Psalms 104:1, says of God, "You are clothed in light as with a garment." Perhaps the reason that Genesis 1:3-5 describes light being created on the first day, before the sun (which came into being on the fourth day), was the mention of light at the beginning of this psalm before the moon and sun, as discussed in Psalms 104:19. There may have also been a polemic against thinking about light as a divine emanation.

18. Ellen G. White, *Early Writings* (1882; reprint, Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1945; 220-21.

19. Gen. 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 11:27; 25:12; 25:19; 36:1; 37:2.

20. See the last event in Heidel's table of creation events of Enuma Elish, note 15.

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Teach Us to Pray

By Jack W. Provonsha

For an unabbeviated version of this article, see <www.spectrummagazine.org>

The first thing we must learn about prayer is that prayer is not a means of maneuvering God, but the possibility of more adequately allying ourselves with God. It makes no sense in a moral universe to ask God to move mountains when those mountains belong precisely where they stand at the moment. What kind of a universe would it be if people were able to make 2 + 2 = 5 all over the place simply by repeating prayer formulas? Undoubtedly those intrusions into the natural order would come into conflict with each other at least on occasion.

Mark Twain in *The Innocents Abroad* wrote, "There they are, down there every night at eight bells, praying for fair winds—when they know as well as I do that this is the only ship going east at this time of year, but there's a thousand coming west—what's fair wind for us is a head wind to them." You've probably heard of the English clergyman who intoned at prayers during World War II, "Dear Lord, we English are praying for victory, and the Germans are praying for victory. It seems the best you can do is to keep out of it." The moral universe itself would be in jeopardy if God gave an affirmative answer to all the prayer requests sent his way.

"Whatsoever ye ask" includes, according to John, "in my name." We read in Ellen White's *Desire of Ages,* "But to pray in Christ's name means much. It means that we are to accept His character, manifest His spirit, and work His works"—and not our own (668). Which means that not all our prayers will be answered in the way we wish—God not only knows better than that, he is better than that.

Jesus asked whether good earthly parents would give their children stones when they asked for bread or serpents when they requested fish. "How much more shall your father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him" (Matt. 7:11), good things like giving us bread even when we ask for stones—and fish when we ask for serpents, and good things like being able to be responsible.

> When we come to Him we should pray that we might enter into and accomplish His purposes and that our desires and interests might be lost in His. We should acknowledge our acceptance of His will, not praying Him to concede to ours. It is better for us that God does not always answer our prayers just as we desire, and in just the manner we wish. He will do more and better for us than to accomplish all our wishes; for our wisdom is folly.[1]

Jean Ingelow once wrote, "I have lived to thank God that all of my prayers have not been answered."

There is one kind of prayer, however, that God will always answer just as we wish, and that is the sincere prayer for forgiveness and for the grace of his acceptance—because that's his will too. "When we pray for earthly blessings, the answer to our prayer may be delayed, or God may give us something other than we ask; but not so when we ask for deliverance from sin. It is His will to cleanse us from sin. It is His will to cleanse us from sin, to make us His children, and to enable us to live a holy life."[2]

God is not in the business of making tricks, but of making people. George Meredith in *The Ordeal of Richard* says, "Who rises from prayer a better man, his prayer is answered." Wrote Walter Mueller, "Prayer is not merely an occasional impulse to which we respond when we are in trouble. Prayer is a life attitude."

(You may have heard of the atheist roofer who was nailing shingles on the top of a high-rise apartment when he lost his hold and started to slide toward the edge. He had been loud in his denial of God's existence but was now heard to utter a prayer for help. Fortunately his trousers caught on a nail before he reached the edge and he was pulled back to safety. His friends, however, taunted him. "What was that we heard you say as you were sliding down the roof? We thought you didn't believe in God." "Well," he replied, "if there is no God there ought to be one to help a fellow out of a fix like that.")

Prayer is not so much something you say (even when sliding off a roof) or do, as it is something you are. When you've said the words the larger prayer begins. The words are, for the most part, the way one strengthens and reinforces that larger reality. Prayer is a life—a life lived out not just in practicing the presence of God, but in realizing that presence and behaving appropriately.

The prayer of magic is essentially idolatrous. It assumes that man can make the Almighty God conform to man's wishes. The prayer of faith, on the other hand, involves a life lived out according to the divine will—a life that takes hold of God's hand and employs those small whispered moments throughout a day for remembering that God cares very much and is very near to each one of us. And perhaps sometimes prayer may even send an expression of gratitude heavenward for the fact that we live in a moral universe where 2 + 2 always equals 4, where you can depend on God because he is running an orderly ship, and because you can always trust him to answer the true prayer of faith—for cleansing, for forgiveness, and for strength to live the life of prayer.

Finally, prayer is the possibility of community. People as well as families who pray together stay together. This is the primary meaning of intercessory prayer. People who become concerned about each other and express that concern in praying for each other belong to each other in very special ways. Man who was made for community was also thus made for intercession. These are the real mountains that prayer moves—those that separate us from each other. In response to the disciples entreaty "Teach us to pray," Jesus began, "Our Father which art in heaven." No man can pray that prayer without discovering that he is a part of every man for whom he prays because God is in fact our Father.

In a world where people not only need God but desperately need other people, never was it so important that we all learn to pray. "Lord, teach us to pray.

Jack W. Provonsha is a Seventh-day Adventist minister, physician, teacher, philosopher of religion, medical ethicist, author, artist, and sculptor who taught in the Loma Linda University faculty of religion for almost thirty years.

Notes and References

1. Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Health: And Instruction to Medical Missionary Workers* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1923), 378.
2. Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1925, 70.

An Interview with Jack W. Provonsha

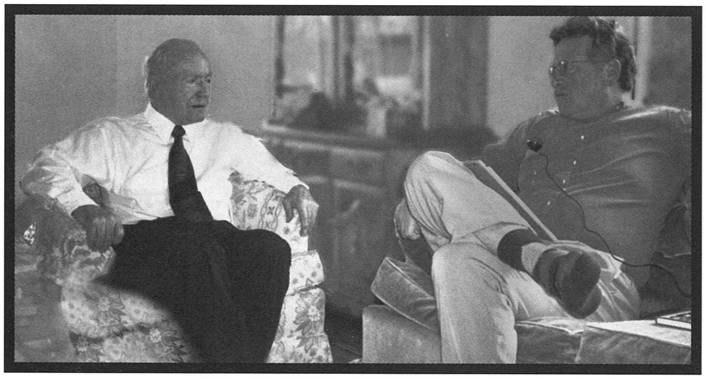

Photo: Bronwen F. Larson

By David R. Larson and Bronwen F. Larson

Hypnosis, abortion, the Church as a prophetic ministry, keeping human life human, the eschaton, an ethic of responsibility– Jack W. Provonsha has written on many subjects for *Spectrum,* beginning with its first volume. But it has been seven years since his byline last appeared. We were delighted that David R. Larson was able to arrange for an interview with Dr. Provonsha in February of this year. David and Bronwen Larson went to Provonsha's home in Arcata, on the coast of Northern California, and recorded the following conversation:

Good morning, Jack! How are you feeling today?
A little weak.

Is that typical for your situation in the mornings?
Yes, pretty much.

This is caused by?
Parkinson's Disease.

Did your awareness that you have Parkinson's Disease emerge suddenly or gradually?
It came on gradually and it still surprises me on occasion!

Now that you are living here in Arcata, California, near your eldest daughter and her family, are you able to continue with your daily routine?
Not much chance for a daily routine! That does not mean I am inactive, but each day is sufficiently different that the word "routine" does not quite capture it!

Thank you for letting us interview you for Spectrum. *What are your recollections of its early days?*
It grew out of the Forum organization. It provided a medium within which to discuss things that were going on, particularly with those involved in AAF.

Was it thought that Spectrum *would be a scholarly journal, a popular magazine, or something else?*
It was aimed at the scholarly community, particularly for those in graduate studies in universities, but it took a direction that was not wholly anticipated at the outset: a broadening of the journal's role. The term "scholarly" itself was rejected by the founders of *Spectrum.*

Why?
It was too narrow in scope. It was thought that we needed to have a journal that would be intellectually stimulating, but not so scholarly in a narrow way that it could be dismissed as trivial.

Over the years you often published articles in Spectrum, *didn't you?*
At first we did not have a lot of material and so I wrote some!

That's too modest! In any case, your publishing continued. Wasn't God Is With Us *your first book?*
Yes. But that book was not related to *Spectrum.* It was a Review and Herald Publishing Association venture.

Wasn't there some commotion surrounding its publication?
Some ultraconservatives thought that the book was expressive of naturalism and rationalism.

How was the matter resolved?
There was a committee meeting conducted by leaders of the General Conference at which my detractors and I faced each other across a table.

My! That's high drama, Jack! Where was the meeting held?
At the Portland Adventist Medical Center.

Did you feel a little bit like Martin Luther being taken to the emperor for questioning?
I asked for this meeting. I had already indicated to the Loma Linda University president that if this book was not acceptable my teaching would not be acceptable because the book summarized what I was saying in the classroom.

If this meeting had not gone well, might you have found it necessary to serve elsewhere?
That's conceivable.

You were at one end of the table and your detractors were at the other. Were any others present?
Fifteen or so.

How many of them were theologians?
You are asking for an answer that presupposes a definition hard to provide!

How many of these other people were teachers and how many were administrators, in rough proportions?
Two-thirds were administrators. Elder Neal C. Wilson, who was the president of the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church at that time, chaired the meeting.

What happened?
We spent nine hours exploring my position. At the end of this time the conclusion was that the persons who had been most unhappy with the book really did not understand it.

At what point did you feel that everything was going to turn out OK?
In the interim, and during the rest stops, expressions of friendship came my way that indicated all would turn out well in the end. At the conclusion of the meeting, Elder Neal Wilson went to the telephone and called Elder Robert Pierson, who was then the president of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, to report that the group thought the book should be published.

Looking back from this vantage point, what strikes you as the primary misunderstanding of your position?
Language. People had not read the books I had been reading and therefore did not know how I was using the terms.

At the end of the meeting do you think there was 100 percent agreement, or did any of the detractors still have any reservations?
As the meeting broke up, even though the group had made its decision and Elder Wilson had reported it to Elder Pierson, one detractor murmured, "I still say this is naturalism."

What if someone had said to this person, "Well, what is wrong with naturalism?" What might he have said?
I am not sure what this individual would have said. I got in the last word!

That was your first book. After that you published several more. Did this much commotion surround any of them?
No.

You recently published a book titled A Remnant In Crisis. *Its title sounds ominous.*
One woman who looked at this book, a very thoughtful person, said that its cover scared the hell out of her!

How did you respond?
I just laughed with her.

Was the book meant to shake us up a little?
I don't think of it so much as laying down the gauntlet, as expressing the truth of the Advent movement, as I understand it.

The Adventist movement has a past. In your judgment, does it have a future?
Of course. But it may be a different Adventism than many of us are now stuck with.

Is the Adventism you know today the same Adventism you knew as a youngster?
No, it is not.

Your family has been with the Adventist movement for how many generations?
Depending upon which side of the family we look at, the answer is different; but I myself am a fourth-generation Adventist.

When you think back on the Adventism you knew in your youth and the Adventism you know now, what are the primary differences?
There are many ways to answer that question, but one of the differences between the Adventism of my youth and the Adventism of today is the level of education at present among Adventists, particularly among professional Adventists.

On the whole, has more education been helpful or harmful for Seventh-day Adventists?
Necessary. And with it comes a number of changes.

Are these changes with respect to beliefs or practices or both?
They are changes in worldviews. It's a different world now. The intellectual presuppositions are different.

In what ways?
Such matters as understanding more completely the large universe of which we are a part, as made possible by the Hubble Telescope, for example.

How have such things impacted the way Adventists understand themselves?
There is a difference in the task and in the approach in fulfilling that task. Adventism is different today primarily because of the discovery of how vast and wonderful the universe is, and also how vast and wonderful are the numbers of people within it.

As you think about Adventism in the twenty-first century, do you anticipate further changes?
Yes, I do. These changes are inevitable. There is no way that any generation can flourish by simply repeating what previous generations said.

Are there some changes that you anticipate with good feelings, thinking they will be positive?
Yes, but one thing does concern me: our sense of mission.

That worries you?
Yes, it does. Our sense of vocation, mission, is slipping through our fingers.

What might be done to revitalize an Adventist sense of mission?
Huston Smith's most recent book, *Why Religion Matters: The Fate of the Human Spirit in the Age of Disbelief,* represents a highly sophisticated philosophical and theological response to a widespread sense of loss of purpose, on the part of Adventists even. One of the things that occurred in this process of change is that Adventists learned they really have no corner on the market. By that I mean it was a monstrous arrogance to claim to have the whole truth, and yet we seemed to have assumed that this was the Adventist message, namely that we have the truth. In those days

the word "truth" was understood as something that was clearly attainable, even attainable at a certain address at which the Adventist Church was located.

And now we think of truth in what way?
We now think of "truth" in terms of a process, not an attainment.

As we go into the future, will the writings of Ellen White be of help to us, or a hindrance?
First of all, the impact of Ellen White is inevitable. There is no escaping the influence of her writings on Adventists. If we misuse Ellen White and her writings, we run the risk of losing the essence of what we have to say.

If someone asked you today, "Do you think I should be a Seventh-day Adventist?" how would you answer that question?
First I would have to ask, "What do you mean by being an Adventist?" and go from there.

Are there some types of Adventism you could recommend and others that you could not?
That is correct.

As we think about your careers, many of us think that A. Graham Maxwell often speaks of the truth about God and that you often speak of the truth about human nature, and yet the two overlap quite considerably. Would that be one way of thinking about the essence of what Adventism has to say?
Yes. Nevertheless, Dr. Maxwell and I see things differently in one regard, and the implications of this difference are far–reaching. The difference has to do with what Richard Rice has called the "openness of God." I take very seriously the notion of human freedom as a basis for understanding human life and how God relates to it. My position on divine foreknowledge has implications that reach for miles down the road, and it is a position closer to that of Richard Rice than of Graham Maxwell. This position regarding the openness of God, which allows for genuine novelty to occur in the life of the universe, is a very crucial matter for how we understand God's own nature.

This matter for you is not a trivial academic quibble, but one that goes to the heart of how we understand God's own self?
It goes to the very nature of things. Even though all through the years Dr. Maxwell and I have maintained the greatest possible respect and affection for each other, I still hold that this is a difference with great significance. It goes to the core of how we understand the very nature of God.

Is there more you would like to say about this?
We should be discovering that God has children who do not attend our church, or who may not attend any church. What matters most profoundly to God is our honesty in the presence of truth. God would prefer us to be honestly in error rather than to participate in something without honestly affirming it. It is an issue of integrity.

John Calvin said that everything we know pertains to God, on the one hand, and ourselves in our world, on the other. Do we Adventists have anything to say about these issues?
We do. I think it is high time we accept the responsibility for our truth. This does not mean that we have a corner on the truth. It does mean, however, that we have something to offer.

Is there anything else you would like to say?
I am sorry that in the history of our church and in the history of individuals we have sometimes had to learn things the hard way. I am sorry that I can no longer write, something I really enjoy. I did not ask for this disease, but I will carry the load as best I can.

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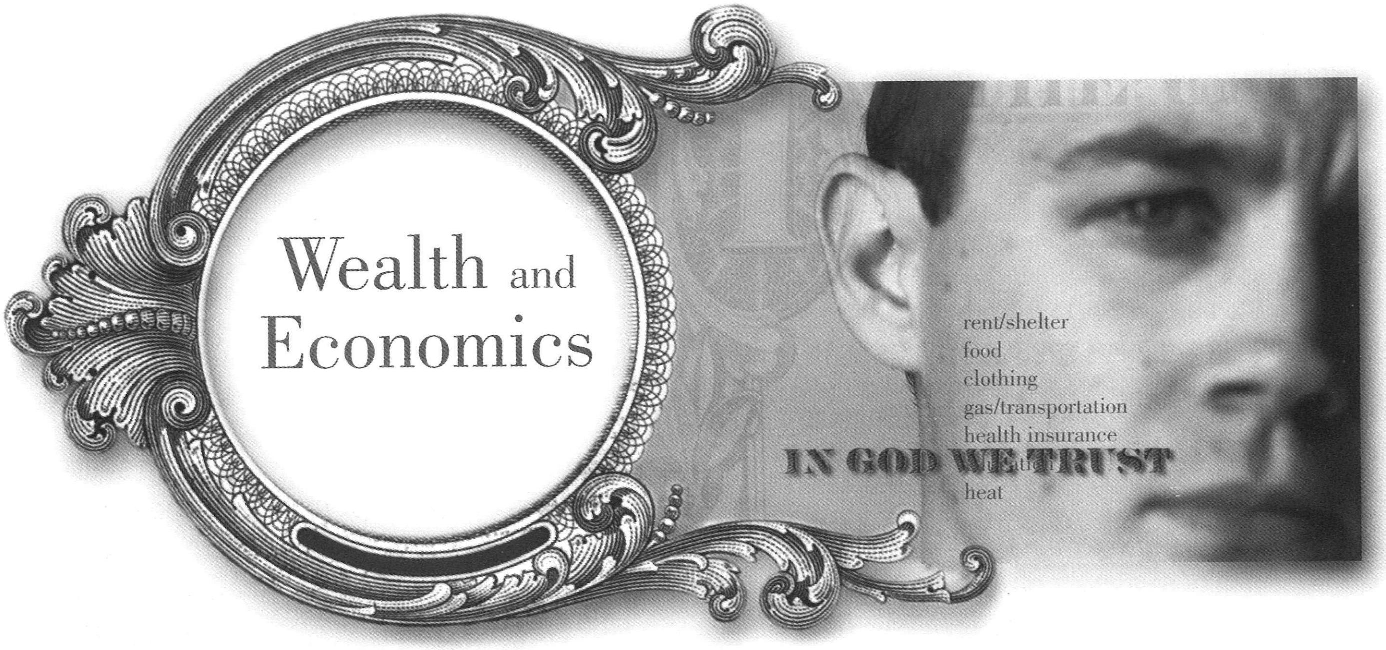
Wealth and Economics



Oh Lord, you made many, many poor people

I realize of course it's no shame to be poor

But it's no great honor either

So what would have been so terrible if I had a small fortune?

"If I Were a Rich Man" – Topol

Freedom from Anxiety: A Theology of Wealth

By Ann Gibson

Does God bless us individually and collectively with wealth, as he did Abraham and Job? Can Christians expect wealth as a "right"? If so, is our only concern the responsible use of our wealth? Is that sufficient? In formulating an adequate theology of wealth, we begin with certain concepts about money. Money is neither respectable nor contemptible. Money is useful, but it is not inherently good. It can be evil whether or not one has wealth because, either way, money can possess us and spoil our relationships with people. Each of us, then, must examine how we relate to our wealth and our belongings.

Perhaps our wealth is, in fact, a product of true Christianity. We have John Wesley's warning in his sermon *Causes of the Inefficacy of Christianity* (1789):

> Wherever true Christianity spreads, it must cause diligence and frugality, which, in the natural course of things, must beget riches! And riches naturally beget pride, love of the world, and every temper that is destructive of Christianity. Now, if there be no way to prevent this, Christianity is inconsistent with itself and, of consequence, cannot stand, cannot continue long among any people; since, wherever it generally prevails, it saps its own foundations.

Jacques Ellul, in his book *Money and Power* argues that the problem is much deeper. It is in fact a problem of who controls us, who possesses us, rather than merely a matter of choosing what to get, save, use, control, and give.[1] I am persuaded by Ellul's view that the problem is actually a spiritual one and that it is linked to the question of who controls us.

The Old Testament

The Old Testament, in contrast to the New Testament, appears to support the argument that wealth and riches are results of God's blessing. Certainly, some honored men in the Old Testament (for example, Abraham and Job) were wealthy. Ellul argues that wealth in the Old Testament was a sign, a symbol from God, tangible evidence, a down payment so to speak, of his grace and spiritual blessing to those who chose to follow him and embrace righteousness. It was the righteousness of these men that gave meaning to their wealth, not the other way around.

Abraham and Job were well aware that their wealth came from God and not from their own success (Deut. 8:18).[2] For example, Abraham demonstrated great detachment from his wealth by giving Lot, the younger man, first choice over the land of Canaan to prevent strife. Abraham refused to take wealth from the King of Sodom after freeing the people of Sodom from captivity. "I have raised my hand to the Lord, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, and have taken an oath that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the thong of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, 'I have made Abram rich'" (Gen. 14: 22, 23).

Satan argued to God that if Job lost his wealth, he would stop being righteous. Job's response, even while expressing great grief, was to say "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised" (Job 1:21). These men recognized that wealth belongs to God, and that God is the one who makes the choice as to whom it will be given.

Although the Old Testament gives examples of wealthy men who exhibit righteousness, it also contains warnings against those who do not tie righteousness to wealth, but seek wealth without acknowledging God. Ezekiel speaks directly against the King of Tyre because "by your wisdom and understanding you have gained wealth for yourself and amassed gold and silver in your treasuries. By your great skill in trading you have increased your wealth, and because of your wealth your heart has grown proud" (Ezek. 28). Israel, too, falls under condemnation because in its plenty it forgot God (Hos. 13:4-9). The warnings of Moses (Deut. 30:15-20) are unfortunately fulfilled.

Perhaps Jeremiah best sums up the Old Testament position on wealth. "This is what the Lord says: 'Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom, or the strong man boast of his strength, or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,' declares the Lord" (Jer. 9:23-24).

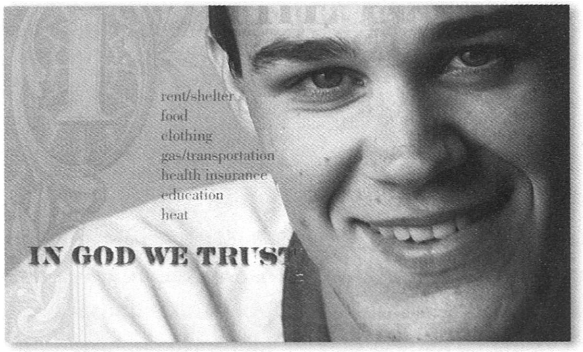
The New Testament

With the coming of Christ, God's blessings reached their fulfillment. In Christ, God has given the world all of heaven's riches. Wealth is no longer a sign of God's blessing, for the Ultimate Blessing has arrived. The symbol of blessing used in the Old Testament passes away. As a result, we see in the New Testament many warnings against wealth; we do not see examples of individuals who were wealthy because of God's blessings. Rather, we hear a call to disavow wealth and, in fact, in one instance, to give it all away.

The New Testament is quite clear about the impossibility of holding allegiance to, or serving, both God and Mammon (Matt. 6:24; Luke 16:13). Although the New International Version translates "Mammon" as money, William Manson adds a deeper meaning by noting that Mammon is "an Aramaic expression, literally signifying 'entrusted thing' and used in a semi-personified sense to indicate money or wealth."[3]

Ellul builds on this concept of an "entrusted thing" by identifying money as Satan's symbol of control over us—the opposite of love—which is the symbol of God's control over us. In Ellul's view, these symbols of control are not passive; rather they possess us totally. If we are possessed by one, we cannot be possessed by the other.

These symbols are also powerful, spiritual, and personal. If we are possessed by the love of God, we seek our security and our control over the future by resting in that love and thus give evidence of who controls us. On the other hand, if we seek our security and our control over the future by amassing money and wealth, we give evidence that we are possessed by Mammon and have given our allegiance to Satan through the adoption of his symbol as our god. We cannot do either halfway. Hence Christ's admonition: "You cannot serve both God and Mammon" (Luke 16:13).



Hence, also, Christ's strong comment to the Pharisees in the next two verses in Luke 16: "The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. He said to them, 'You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight'" (14-16).

Detestable! Strong, harsh words! The New Testament continues the warnings. In the parable of the sower, Jesus states that among those who did not bear fruit was the "man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making the field unfruitful (Matt. 13:22). James 5:1-6 has strong condemnation for the wealthy who have hoarded wealth in the last days and failed to pay proper wages to their employees. Specific instructions are given several times that leaders in the church must not be greedy for money (1 Pet. 5:2; 1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7). One of the descriptors of individuals who should be avoided in the last days are the "lovers of money" (2 Tim. 3:2). Paul warns Timothy that "the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" (1 Tim. 6:10).

Perhaps the strongest statement about riches is made by Christ to the Rich Young Man (Matt. 19:16-26), who told Jesus that he had kept the commandments since his youth, and wondered what he still lacked to inherit eternal life. Jesus told him to sell his possessions and give to the poor and then come and follow him. The young man declined, and went away sad. Then Jesus said to the disciples: "I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." The disciples were shocked! They asked: "Who then can be saved?" Jesus responded: "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

As is true in any area of our lives, we cannot save ourselves from our fascination with Mammon, nor can we, of ourselves, escape its power, for we are sinful beings. We live after the fall. We need a savior to break its grip of our minds and hearts as much as we need a savior in every other area of our lives. Unless we recognize this fact, we will believe that by "doing good" with our wealth, we somehow have it under control.

However, "doing good" can be a trap in which pride in our accomplishments begs the question of who controls our life. We can be as proud of our "works" with our wealth as we can with our "works" in any other area. We must recognize that no matter what WE do, Mammon holds control unless God has set us free. That is the message of the Rich Young Man. Jesus passes judgment on the power of money over our lives. Unless we submit to that judgment, we will not be free.

What Then Shall We Do?

We may have submitted to the judgment of Christ, recognized his call to "seek first the kingdom of God" (Matt. 6:33), and believe that God cares about our material needs. However, we live in a world of Mammon and we are already increased with goods, particularly if we live in the Western world. Our society demands that we use money every day.

Is it wrong to be wealthy? If Mammon is a symbol that represents Satan, how do we demonstrate that we have chosen God's symbol rather than Satan's? Must we sell all that we have and give it to the poor? How can we act in a way that demonstrates we have chosen to be possessed by God rather than Mammon?

Ellul categorizes three areas for an appropriate response. Many other writers support these broad categories, and their ideas are incorporated under his basic outline.

1. In all dealings, put the person and personal relationships ahead of money.

The Bible gives us many commands that flesh out what this concept means in everyday life. In the Old Testament, instructions are explicit about lending money (without interest) and not using daily necessities or livelihood as pledges (return the cloak by sunset so the individual has a covering for the night; do not take even one of the millstones) (Exod. 22:25-26; Deut. 24:6, 10-13). The Old and New Testaments both caution employers about paying fair and timely wages (Deut. 24:15; James 5:4). Ellul states: "In our money dealings with others, money pushes us to put its interests (which we assimilate as our own interests) before those of the person with whom we are doing business. Scripture tell us how we must choose: we must decide in favor of the person and against money."[4]

In his discussion of the permission granted to Israel to charge interest to the stranger but not the brother Israelite (Deut. 23:19-20), Ellul expands on the concept of close relationship, or being a neighbor. His book is written particularly to business people, and he maintains that "we must abandon the impersonal attitude which treats all business contacts as strangers. We must instead make the money relationship secondary in order to establish proximity. When we see someone as our neighbor, he is once again fully human, an individual, a person to whom we are responsible."[5]

2. Choose not to love money.

Knowing that the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil (1 Tim. 6:10) leaves us little choice about how we must feel about money. However, we can love money whether or not we have it, and thus how we choose not to love it must relate to our particular financial circumstances.

In Luke 12:13-21, Jesus tells the story of a rich man who was concerned that he had insufficient storage facilities for his excellent crop. He decided to tear down his barns and build bigger ones and then relax and enjoy life. Specifically, he said "I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'" But God said: "You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you."

If we have money, it is easy to assume that money will buy us security and control over the future. We place our trust in our money. We forget that our souls may literally be demanded at any moment regardless of the size of our bank account. Instead of hoarding our wealth (for example, building bigger barns for our excellent crop), we must choose to accept the God-given grace of simplicity.

Richard Foster notes that the grace of simplicity "allows us to see material things for what they are—goods to enhance life, not to oppress life. People once again become more important than possessions. Simplicity enables us to live lives of integrity in the face of the terrible realities of our global village."[6] Simplicity also forces us to place our trust in God; to believe that he is interested in our material happiness and understands our material needs and that it is unimportant for us to create our own security through hoarding our wealth.

When a young man, John Wesley determined that he could live on 28 pounds a year (about 65 dollars at that time). When he first made that decision, his income was about 30 pounds a year. There was little inflation during his lifetime, but his income increased substantially because of his book sales. Some years he earned as much as 1,400 pounds. But no matter what his income, he lived on 28 pounds a year and gave the rest away.

Wesley was single most of his life and did not have children, so his example is unrealistic for those whose needs change as their family situation changes. However, the principle remains: Is it necessary to change our "needs" solely because of changes in our income? Ellen White states that "the means over and above the actual necessities of life are entrusted to man to do good, to bless humanity."[7] Foster suggests that if both the husband and wife work, they should discipline themselves to live on one salary and give the other away, or alternatively, simplify their lifestyles so they can live on half of what they make, and give the other half away.[8]

If we do not have money, we are tempted with worry and discontent. The Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 6:25-34) speaks specifically to this temptation. Again, the question is whether we believe that God cares about our material needs, but since we do not possess the money to solve the question ourselves, we worry our way through life. Worse, we may be tempted to act in evil ways.

The writer of Proverbs records a prayer that speaks specifically to this issue: "Two things I ask of you, O Lord; do not refuse me before I die; Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise I may have too much and disown you and say, Who is the Lord?' or I may become poor and steal and so dishonor the name of my God" (Prov. 30:7-9). Jesus also taught us to pray for our daily bread, and we have the Old Testament lesson of the manna falling daily as an example of God's concern over our daily needs. The writer of Hebrews reminds us that contentment with what we have is based on God's assurance that he will always be with us and grant us his care (13:5-6).

> "'Doing Good' can be a trap in which pride in our accomplishments begs the question of who controls our life."

3. Take away money's power by returning it to a role of a simple exchange medium.

Ellul characterizes Satan's world as a world of buying and selling, whereas God's world is a world of giving. He notes that God loves to give. His gracious invitation to those who are thirsty and who have no money (Isa. 55:1) is given in the Old Testament. His gift of his only Son (John 3:16) so that all who believe might have the gift of eternal life is the theme of the New Testament. This grace must "invade the power of money, for when Mammon is destroyed by grace, it is no longer a formidable power.[9] We can grant this grace to the world around us through the act of giving. Mary's gift of the ointment to Jesus, which Judas criticized sharply, immediately comes to mind when we think of "wasteful giving." Yet how effectively this gift epitomizes the gift of Jesus to the world, which largely ignores his love. Do we ever choose to give to God in ways that almost appear wasteful?

Our gifts to others are without doubt more justifiable in today's society. However, such gifts often come with strings that ultimately control receivers, or at least put them in our debt. Such gifts have the potential to dehumanize receivers, and certainly do not destroy the power of money over mankind. Gifts given through charities or organizations are easy ways to allow us to "give" without being personally involved, but they rob us of understanding and empathizing with the needs of our neighbor, and again allow us to depersonalize the needs of those around us. Through this means we never make a gift of ourselves.

Paul told Timothy to "Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way, they will lay up treasure for themselves as firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life" (1 Tim. 6:17-19). Paul even went so far as to suggest that we will be made rich in every way so that we can be generous on every occasion (2 Cor. 9:6-11).

This text speaks directly to me as an American. Perhaps in an incredibly rich society like America, gifts of time are actually more costly to us individually than gifts of money. It is relatively easy to write a check to a charity; it is difficult to find the time to spend an afternoon at the local soup kitchen. For many, even a check of a few thousand dollars to Habitat for Humanity is less costly than spending time building a house for one's neighbors. Time requires a gift of ourselves; we can avoid individual involvement with our neighbor when we only write a check.

As Seventh-day Adventists, we ought to be particularly ready to return money to its normal role as a medium of exchange in recognition of God's love as the controlling power in our lives. We have discussed how, through wealth, we seek in the fullest sense to control future time. However, through the Sabbath, Seventh-day Adventists already recognize God as the controller of time.

We often cite the giving of the manna to Israel as an example of sabbath keeping. Those who went out to gather the manna on the Sabbath day were disappointed, whereas those who had gathered the day before found no spoilage of their food over the Sabbath. The attempt to work every day to sustain material needs was rebuked by the miracle of the manna. The people were taught that God is the giver of material goods—even food—and their work is useless when used to store up for the future. Rather, the people were to rest (Exod. 16:13-30).

David Neff defines wealth as "stored-up work."[10] He notes:

> Wealth is an attempt to build a bridge across time, to store up the potential of labor to exercise control over the future. The Sabbath is a disciplined attempt to release control over time and to depend on grace. Wealth is an attempt to gain independence from the community and from spiritual reality: He who has the gold makes the rules. But the jubilee and the sabbatical year teach that in reality interdependence and trust in God reflect the true character of existence.[11]

God seeks to give us freedom. He granted the Israelites freedom from physical slavery, but most of us today need freedom from the slavery of worry over the future, and freedom from seeking to control the future by ourselves. We are tempted to use our money to buy our freedom, but God wishes to give us that freedom without money and without price. He has already given us a gift in time, the Sabbath, which we often mistakenly see as a command to keep rather than a freedom to enjoy. How much easier our lives would be if we would see the Sabbath as a sign that we are free to exit anxiety and enter into grace and trust in every area of our lives. The Lord of time, whom we already recognize, is also the Lord of our specific futures, and we can live freely and generously in all areas of our lives, even with our money, because he recognizes our needs and seeks to bestow true freedom in all areas to his children.

Notes and References

1. Trans. LaVonne Neff (Downer's Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1984).
2. All biblical references come from the New International Version
3. Quoted in W. Taylor Stevenson, *Soul and Money* (New York: Episcopal Church Center), 12.
4. Ellul, *Money and Power*, 99-100.
5. Ibid., 101.
6. Foster, *Freedom of Simplicity* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981), 3.
7. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1900), 370.
8. Foster, *Freedom of Simplicity*, 131.
9. Ellul, *Money and Power*, 97.
10. Neff, "Fallow Time: An Exploration of the Sabbath and Wealth," in *The Midas Trap*, edited by J. Isamu Yamamoto (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Publications, 1990), 52.
11. Ibid., 52.

**Ann Gibson has ample opportunity to contemplate wealth and other money-related matters as dean of Andrews University's School of Business.
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The Illusions of Money: Spiritual Economics

By Gail Catlin

Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain.
(Prov. 31:30)

When I was six years old, my family moved from the inner city to the bucolic countryside of my Western town. It was a monumental shift, a tear in the fabric, designed and crafted and worked on for decades by my family—the shifting of social class. And now, reflecting back, I realize that even at that tender age, I understood that some new reality now held me and that I must be different in it.

I remember the first time I saw our sprawling country house on nearly two acres in the neighborhood with horse stalls and riding paddocks and quaint winding roads. Our new station was appointed with all the symbols of affluence of the era—wall-to-wall carpeting, two stories, my own room. On the first morning I went out to play in the neighborhood I even wore a little "tennis dress" (not that I played tennis), a conscious shift from my flannel-lined dungarees, and I told my new friend that my father was a golf pro. (It's still not clear to me how I knew there were such things as golf pros, but I must have been clear that golf pros and this new life went together.)

In fact, my father was a physician, new to private practice. This, though, after the most spare of beginnings. He was the son of Scandinavian immigrants, raised along the train tracks, and he worked on the railroads to put himself through medical school. My mother, too, was the daughter of immigrants. Her father had left a string of foster homes in Toronto and traveled at the age of fourteen to Chicago to find a better life. My grandmother emigrated from Switzerland during World War I, proud to be an American, and tutored students at night in French and German so her own children could take violin lessons and be in school theater productions. She wrote in her travel diary in 1917 that her heart was heavy as she left her family, but also that she was hopeful for the better life that might be awaiting her in America.

So here I was, at six, the fulfillment of those immigrant dreams. A child of the privilege that had required great courage and sacrifice by my ancestors. My life ahead was filled with opportunities and I had all the advantages to seize them: the best suburban schools, the music lessons, the private college. Sure I had talent, but I stood on these hard-won bricks of the Old World, and I was clear on the day when I was six years old that my ability to apply and build upon that privilege was a promise I must keep to those who had sacrificed. For this reason, I have no shame about the affluence in my life. But I do recognize that my privilege was a gift, and, more importantly, the use of it an act of integrity.

I worked hard in the corporate world for twenty years and now enjoy an early retirement as my husband manages an extensive real estate company. As a granddaughter of immigrants, I have not lost sight of the spiritual dilemma that comes from wealth. Some years ago, when the accumulation of wealth was obvious, I took a good friend aside and said, "What am I to do with this? What are my responsibilities and obligations? What is God calling me to do today or any day?"

My friend counseled me to begin a process of philanthropy, to meet with wealthy socialites and discuss what a person of means might do or, more accurately, "give." For the next four years I had many experiences with this tradition, most of which were unsatisfying to both me and "the recipient." Quite frankly, they seemed flamboyant and spiritually void. Suffice it to say that I had experiences where I donated money with little involvement with the cause; I invested in businesses with time and money that resulted in strained relationships and accusations; I underwrote salaries and bought artwork and gave loans that mostly made everyone feel awkward. I became a gold sponsor, silver donor, honor roll representative, and found myself on dozens of contributor lists printed in minuscule type.

In short, I have found that the issue of what to do with one's wealth—oh, let's say it—money, is a big problem. And I have found that there are no collective answers and only some deep and soul-searching questions in the dark. When asked to write this reflection piece, I balked, realizing I had few answers myself.

At the root of my trepidation is my ambivalence with the money to begin with. Perhaps it's because of the cultural myths that prevail, including the mythical righteousness of poverty and the criminal myth of wealth. At most times, it feels like the act of convenience would be to shed the money in any way possible. One of my favorite spiritual guides is St. Francis. He was a wealthy young man who fell into a fever for days and emerged from his spiritual crisis with a calling to an oath of poverty. Throwing off his clothes, he walked from his life naked and lived in poverty from then on. This story has both called and haunted me. Is this what is required of me? Is poverty more righteous than affluence? Can I be spiritual and wealthy at the same time?

But then I become aware that such simplistic equations of righteousness and evil can be deceptive and deceitful, and I remind myself that the spiritual domain is the complex discernment of the circumstances that face me and the revelation of God's face in them. So, these past weeks my stomach has been in knots while I've tried to make some meaning about this topic of wealth.

What could get me off the hook here is to speak about the ethics of wealth and not the spirituality of wealth. Ethics are meaningful because they give us action-oriented guidelines for our behavior and are best when they make manifest our deeper spiritual beliefs. After these recent experiences in philanthropy, I have created an ethical construct for myself, which I call "spiritual economics," that guides me in considering options and challenges my ethical and spiritual compass.

First, I have learned the perils of one-sided giving. One-sided giving can be controlling and condescending, and can eliminate the involvement of the recipient. More importantly, it takes me out of the role of recipient as if I'm not in need of anything. A slippery slope indeed. What would it mean if I had to put myself on the same plane as that person whom I'm helping? Philanthropy intrinsically risks creating two tiers, and that is a treacherous threshold.

Second, I have learned that both parties must be helped in the relationship, otherwise it becomes an obstacle between them. There grows an awkwardness and then, worse, a shame if one person is being helped and the other is always helping.

Third, I am keen to the discernment of who ultimately is being helped in the endeavor. My desire to be acknowledged or thanked or seen as compassionate is a tricky addict and must be watched at all times. Am I sincere or am I seeking credit or acclaim? I am particularly cognizant of this peril in the realm of public giving, when I might be tempted to use wealth as a proxy for righteousness, and suspicious of easy guidelines or dogma for defining the "charitable" or "giving" person because I feel it takes my own personal spiritual struggle and discernment out of the picture. If I am always giving the upper limit of some category of giving or tithing, am I more righteous for it? Have I sat with what is in my heart, or have I, instead, acted in a "politically correct" way? Searching my heart, I find that motivation and intent are far more important than the size of the gift and that unconsciously buying one's redemption is a true sin.

Additionally, I observe and monitor my attachment to the outcome of my giving, careful to determine if I'm trying to control a person or program through economics. I also remember that there are many ways of giving and contributing and the least satisfying is the rendering of capital alone. I can give of my time, my skills, my support, my listening. I can give financially in ways that are not very visible, as when I am generous the salaries I pay to my staff or the benefits and flexibility I provide for family matters. There are many ways to give and only writing checks can be a real cop-out. Mother Teresa once said, "It's not how much we give, but how much love we put in the giving—that's compassion in action."

These might be words of wisdom for the right use of power in making contributions of wealth, but what is the deeper spiritual territory?

Upon reflection, I clearly see that wealth is a deceptive symptom for true spiritual challenge, not any different from the core spiritual struggle in any worldly thing. This is the struggle of temptation. What wealth does is tempt us in so many ways. And the more wealth we have, the more tempting it is. A multitude of temptations:

> I can now believe I am secure because of my own doing.
> I can now indulge my wants without discernment.
> I can buy power and influence and privilege.
> I can buy a place where my voice is heard above others.
> I can buy my way out of dilemmas and problems.
> I can act without adverse financial consequences.
> I can believe I'm worth my bottom line.
> I can manipulate affiliations and friendships through economic control of another.
> I can medicate my pain with material things.
> I can create my own rules.
> I can hoard in times of scarcity.
> I can break rules to protect my hoarding.

All the temptations of wealth are the creation of material power to replace divine power—or, more succinctly, the creation of God as expanded ego. This is the spiritual challenge that lurks in every corner of our faith. It is only ignited and spotlighted by wealth. Wealth eliminates many of the day-to-day, practical struggles. When I am faced with such freedom and choice, will I still choose God?

This temptation is no different from drugs or sex or materialism, or even other great gifts such as beauty or special talent. In all spiritual things, I must not go to sleep. I need to remember that I reaffirm my relationship with God in every decision I make. In this way my spiritual struggles are ever present and ever green. Our material condition can be a plague or a blessing, either way. Christ knew we all struggle with the same soulful condition of wealth or poverty, regardless of our means. He walked a doctrine of love because of it. Love transcends all material conditions and elevates our motives above and beyond the incentives that might tempt us in any particular act.

How do I check myself in this realm? Like any other humble child, I have to be conscious, mindful, and ever aware of the potential to fall. I have to watch my transactions and make sure that I'm not selling out or loving money.

In the end, the error is to make the distinction that there is a spiritual difference between wealth and poverty. In making this error we will be distracted by a discussion of circumstances that takes our time and effort, similar to the blather about how many angels sit on the head of a pin. We risk debating dogma, stepping outside the more central personal inquiry of intent. What do I intend to do with my life that reflects my relationship with God? This is a question that transcends any material condition, be it class, race, health, sexuality, education, locality, or profession.

When I moved from the inner city to the country at six years of age, the illusion was that some shift had happened; that I was someone different and needed to be and do something different. In fact, I was a young woman standing in my life, watched by God. My ancestors had done their best. Now what would I do? The tennis dress had little to do with it.

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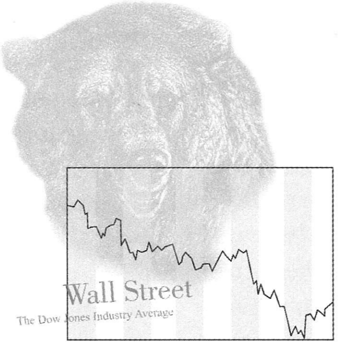
Musings on the Market and an Old Memory Verse



By A. Gregory Schneider

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities,
against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world,
against spiritual wickedness in high places. (Eph. 6:12 KJV)

This old memory verse is one of dozens my grade school classmates and I recited to each other in anxious anticipation of upcoming Bible quizzes. I imagined the "principalities and powers" as sinister, invasive, smoke-like beings lying in wait to invade my body and devour my mind. They were crafty, though, and could turn themselves into angels of light the better to lure me onto dangerous ground. I learned to fear the evil empire of Satan and his angels, who lurked in places and objects off limits to any proper young Seventh-day Adventist with a care for his soul: in séances and Ouija boards, in theaters—maybe, there was growing debate even in 1959, in bars and taverns—certainly, and in whatever else that Adventism's forces of social control sought to warn me against.

I think the religion of my grade school memory verses was mostly an individualistic coping religion, one with a heavy moralistic cast, to be sure, but still designed primarily to inspire and guide my single soul through this dark world to the gates of light. That kind of religion is well and good, I suppose, but since at least my college years, I have been seeking also a religion that can guide me as a citizen of this world. How can my faith inspire and guide me as I consider "big picture" policy questions in my country, state, or local community? I am concerned, then, with what my graduate school professor, Martin E. Marty, has been calling "public religion."[1]

With this concern for public religion in mind, what can we say about these "principalities and powers," after all? First, the Greek words translated "principalities" (*arche*) and "powers" (*exousia*) are used the vast majority of the time to refer to human institutions and rulers, not otherworldly or supernatural powers. Second, as the book of Colossians asserts, they are created by and for Jesus Christ and "hold together" in him (Col. 1:16-17). Third, they are heavenly and earthly, divine and human, spiritual and political, invisible and visible. An important implication of this third point is that the various social sciences study the outward, visible, human aspects of powers and thus can give us important insights into the visible effects of the spiritual principles that actuate the powers. Fourth, and most important, the powers are good, the powers are fallen, and the powers are to be redeemed.

To say that the powers are good, is to say that they are part of the creation that God declared good at the foundation of the earth. To say that they are fallen means that they are subject to "the flesh" (*sarx*) rather than "the spirit" (*pneuma*). The flesh in the apostle Paul's understanding is not about the pleasures and impulses of the body. Rather, to be subject to the flesh means to be in bondage to a whole way of living that places "I," the flimsy but overweening human ego, at the center of the cosmos and at the top of all scales of value. Finally, the idea that the powers are to be redeemed suggests that they are part of the orders of creation without which we cannot be what God designs us to be. They are thus necessary to the salvation God has in store for us. All creation, including humanity and the powers that shape humanity, groan for God's redemption (Rom. 8:22-23). These powers, then, are not necessarily destined to be consumed in an apocalyptic lake of fire.

The "Ism Powers"

What are some examples of "the powers"? There is, for instance, the ordering, categorizing power of racism. Racism begins in a necessary and innocent activity of the mind. To notice similarities and differences, to group like with like and contrast one category with another is a fundamental and indispensable power that underlies the languages and other symbols with which we connect our minds with those of others. Indeed, Plato and Aristotle built comprehensive philosophies on this capacity of mind. Racism, however, classifies people by skin color or other visible traits and infuses the classification system with the principle that says, "I and the cleaner, stronger, purer types who look like me over those who look different." In its extreme form, racism is an alternative plan of salvation, an idolatrous and murderous belief in salvation by skin color. Other "-isms" are only variations on the theme:

Class: "I and the 'better sort' of people over the 'lower' class across the tracks or downtown."

Sexism: "I and the other strong and wise men over the weak, foolish women."

Professionalism: "I am my career and my career is everything." Redemption through prestige.

Consumerism: "I want, therefore I am." Redemption through shopping.

The Primary Power of Today

This last example of the powers connects especially closely with the market, the primary fallen power, the dominant idol, that determines our existence today.

What does the spirit of the market say? In its fallen aspect, it promises redemption through acquisition and ownership, and it rationalizes its promise in language that is subtle and appealing:

> Let all people become self-interested buyers and sellers. Set them all free to compete for advantage under the universal laws of supply and demand. They will learn that goods and services are scarce, but that their needs and wants are limitless. They will work hard, then, because they will feel they have to. They will be inventive too, because they have to be in order to get ahead and stay ahead of their competitors. They will produce more and more, and they will consume more and more, and prosperity will increase. They will become better people because they will have to cultivate the virtues of hard work and self-discipline, creativity and self-confidence. Believe the cardinal dogma of our market religion: that economic success or misfortune is the responsibility of the individual and his or hers alone. Accept the corollary: economic success or misfortune is therefore the mark of individual virtue or vice. Let the spirit of the market rule, and all will be well.[2]

Now this is a promise worthy of a medieval alchemist. The market claims to turn the base metal of human selfishness into the precious substance of individual virtue and public good. Viewed with certain kinds of blinders on, this rationale sounds plausible, and when supported by the extraordinary levels of hype that we have heard for the last quarter century this gospel of the market has almost been enshrined as common sense. Yet Christians should be wary of being taken in by the Spirit of the Age. Claims for the beneficence of the market, especially in these times when it has no serious rival, should not be given the benefit of the doubt; they should be tested, skeptically.

Christians who take the Bible seriously should be able to see through the idolatry of the market. From the foundations of Israelite society in the laws of Leviticus and Deuteronomy through the testimonies of the prophets to the message and ministry of Jesus there is a consistent message that extremes of inequality are not good and that God cares especially for the poor, the marginalized, the "widow, orphan, and alien." Leviticus 25 and Deuteronomy 15, for instance, make it quite clear that the Israelite society, although allowing for something like the market's games of acquisition and ownership, should not allow the game to harden into disparities of wealth that were wide or permanent.

> "With every credit card transaction, every writing of a check, every phone order or computer catalog that clogs my mailbox, I partake of the market's means of grace."

However, most Christians do not read their Bibles in a way that unmasks the idolatry of the market. I confess it is hard for me to do so. I think it may be because the rituals and sacred tokens of market religion are such pervasive and insistent parts of my daily life. With every credit card transaction, every writing of a check, every phone order or computer order catalog that clogs my mailbox, I partake of the market's means of grace, and by identifying with the commodities I buy, I learn my worth and meaning in the eyes of the market deity. The market's grace is not free, however; it must be earned. The anxiety that comes with the getting and spending is a major motive for my persistent tendency to narrow my reading of Scripture into a quest for personal reassurance, peace, and comfort. Prophetic calls to seek justice in my community and society are not so welcome to people in my anxious class.

We are, in the words of the book of Hebrews, "held in slavery by [our] fear of death" (2:15 NIV). It is the bondage dictated in our age by the market. When we allow the gospel of Jesus Christ to free us from our fear, however, we will have grace and peace of mind enough to take a sober and compassionate look at the human condition as the market has helped construct it in our time.

We know, for instance, that economic inequality is becoming ever more extreme, both in the United States and across the globe.[3] Evangelists of the market like George Gilder, sage of the 1980s Reagan Revolution, say that such inequality can be an advantage to society, spurring people on to greater aspirations and achievements.[4] Seventh-day Adventist Christians, with their traditions of health reform, might take note, however, of the growing body of research that identifies inequality in industrial societies as a public health hazard with a power to shorten a population's life expectancy equal to cigarette smoking.

For example, Japanese men who smoke, living in a society with low inequality, have longer average life spans than American men who do not smoke.[5] Apostles of economic growth as the preeminent cure for social ills repeat the snappy promise, "A rising tide lifts all boats!" But the majority of wage earners in the United States have seen the real, inflation-adjusted value of their earnings decline for about the last twenty-five years. Only the top 10 or 20 percent of income earners in the "general public" has benefited in any substantial way.[6] It would seem that our recent rising tides have lifted mostly the yachts, while raising storms that poke holes in many of the canoes and rowboats.

But the powers, I have argued, are redeemable. What can that mean? One of the most fruitful features of the Biblical theology of the powers is the idea that each of them has its vocation, its calling, in God's order of creation. The general calling of all the powers, as of each human being, is to praise God and serve humanity. The specific divine callings of each of the institutions that structure our common life must be thought out within those two great stipulations.

Health care powers are called to nurture and to heal; public media are called to propagate truthful information about all our other institutions and to provide a forum for discussion of policy options. The market is called to produce and distribute the goods and services that human communities need to promote healthy and dignified lives among families and individuals. The great virtues of the market system are the unparalleled efficiency and productivity it has achieved for certain portions of the global human community. Its great vices are the inequality, privation, injustice, and corruption of humane values briefly mentioned and illustrated above, vices that result from its inner fallen spirit that claims supremacy over all other principalities and keeps vast numbers of people in bondage through fear of death. How may Christians, as citizens of their nations and members of the world community of Christian faith, participate in God's call to the market to return to its true vocation?

One small, local example I am aware of is the Dwelling House Savings and Loan Association, which has helped significantly raise the ratio of homeowners to renters in the poor, mostly African-American Hill district of Pittsburgh. Dwelling House has been lender of last resort in a neighborhood that was long a victim of redlining, the practice of denying loans to people of certain racial groups or living in neighborhoods considered poor economic risks. Robert R. Lavelle, son a poor black preacher, took over the savings and loan in 1957 as part of a strategy to help his struggling real estate business get off the ground. Since then, operating on the principle that Christians are to love their fellow beings and use their money, he has made 1,154 mortgages and 300 home improvement loans, many to people whom most commercial banks would never consider.

Dwelling House carries a huge 30 percent delinquency rate due to a policy of not foreclosing until there is no other option. "We don't give up on them until they give up on themselves," Lavelle said. Instead Lavelle has taken on the role of preacher and pastor to his delinquent customers—exhorting, counseling, teaching, praying—all for the sake of leading them into the joys of personal responsibility and respectable home ownership. He lives in the neighborhood where he does business, and lets his nice home speak tangibly about what people can achieve by learning to play by the rules of the capitalistic system, a system in which he fervently believes. What makes Robert Lavelle's capitalism markedly different from the vast majority of enterprises, however, is the determination to be proft-sensitive but not profit-motivated, to serve people and his local community rather than the fallen Spirit of Self-Interest. Many more development projects and enterprises are now flowing into this community to build on the foundation Lavelle has laid.[7]

This small-business example can inspire our imaginations, but wistfully imagining what the marketplace might be like "if only" more individuals were like Robert Lavelle will do little to call the market back its proper vocation. The modern corporate, bureaucratized structures of finance and capital are vast, impersonal, and increasingly unaccountable to any groups or institutions that stand for values other than efficiency, productivity, and profit. In most places in the market, behavior like Robert Lavelle's is swiftly punished and usually extinguished.[8] Therefore, realistic initiatives to call the fallen market back to its true vocation must take into account the need for countervailing powers.[9] The idea is to balance and control the market and its centers of corporate power, to resist their natural fallen tendency to dominate and corrupt the other principalities and powers that have their own proper vocations.

Church Power, State Power, and Labor Power

Some segments of the wider Christian church are in a position to be "conscience" not only to government, as our new President George W. Bush would have it, but also to certain corporate actors in the market. I recently had the privilege to participate in conversations about "public religion" in connection with business and heard a story about how certain professors and consultants in business from the University of Notre Dame were able to counsel some major business executives in the midst of the Tylenol scare some years ago.

Some capsules of the over-the-counter pain killer had been discovered to be laced with cyanide, a malicious tampering by a person entirely unconnected with the company, which nevertheless had injured and killed a small number of people. The question before the executives was whether to limit their voluntary recall of the product to the areas where the tampering had been discovered and then put their public relations "spin machine" in full operation to protect the company from public pressure, or to take a more proactive and costly approach of a nationwide recall. The Notre Dame consultants, drawing on the Roman Catholic faith and the longstanding personal relationships they shared with these corporate executives, persuaded their friends to take the latter course on grounds of keeping faith with a consumer public that trusted the corporation and its products.

I would hope that all denominational communities within the larger Christian church, especially the Seventh-day Adventist community, would become increasingly self-conscious about developing an active "conscience" function for market activities in which they have influence. For those who have control of capital and must manage its investment, for instance, there is the now quite easy step of seeking "socially responsible investment" opportunities where the conduct of companies toward communities where they are located, toward the environment, toward employees and so on is monitored for its adherence to high ethical standards. This is one small but growing way in which not only churches, but also individuals and other nonmarket and nongovernment organizations can begin to exert some balancing force on the market's runaway irresponsibility.

There is no escaping, however, the need for the state to play its appropriate countervailing role. What that role is, of course, is a matter of fierce debate, with sincere and reasonable Christian folk on all sides of all issues in dispute. My contribution here to these debates is twofold. At the level of general principle, I would plead that even the state has its vocation, a vocation to pursue justice—not just retributive justice—distributive and substantive justice, as well. It must see that the God-given rights to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness are not abridged by the coercions of deprivation and desperation so readily imposed by "market discipline." I reject the extremes of the "neocapitalist" ideology that has harped ever more stridently on "big government" as the source of all social ills.

At the level of a somewhat more concrete policy proposal, I would join those who are urging government at both federal and state levels to rethink the corporate charters that define the corporation as a private enterprise. This vision of the corporation is a product only of the nineteenth century. It was established against public resistance that clung for decades to the understanding that these concentrations of capital and power were creations of governments, were obliged therefore to serve the public interest, and were therefore subject to constant supervision by legislatures and other agencies of government.[10] If we retrieve some of our lost history, we might find ways to make these major agents of the market more accountable to the wider human community. It is, of course, not the business of churches to engage themselves directly in this kind of policy advocacy, but it is the business of church members to draw upon the spiritual resources and ethical guidance of their religious communities in seeking, as citizens, a world more in accord with what they understand to be God's will.

Related to the defense of basic human rights by the state is the power of labor, especially organized labor, which also has a vocation. Labor's calling includes defending the honor and integrity of good work, uniting workers across divides of religion, nation, race, and gender for the sake of a joint struggle for justice, furthering democratic participation in the workplace and in the labor organizations themselves, and other tasks yet to be thought of. Churches, especially those whom history and divine providence have placed in positions to serve laboring segments of the nations, have roles to play in helping maintain a spirit of hope among these peoples. Churches may also serve as "conscience" to labor, to help guard against the excesses to which any of the fallen principalities are liable.[11]

"...even the state has its vocation, a vocation to pursue justice–not just retributive justice–distributive and substantive justice, as well."

A Balance of Powers

The way to call the fallen powers to their vocations, I am suggesting, is through seeking a balance of powers, none dominating, none suppressed, each exercising checks over the others. In a fallen world, this is likely the best that can be hoped for. I can imagine readers objecting to any endorsement of the state or labor based on the evils and corruptions of which they have been guilty. Certainly they are fallen. So is the church. The church is often self-absorbed, more concerned for its own power and survival than its call to serve humanity; it is divided and compromised by the powers of race, class, and gender.

Nevertheless, I cling to the church because I believe it is the power in this fallen world that God has chosen above all others to spread his grace and communicate his callings to the rest of the world. The church is called to be the keeper of Jesus's vision of the Kingdom of God and to seek in each generation the best ways to bring the world closer to that vision. I have no illusions about establishing some kind of utopian reign of God in present human history, before the coming of Christ. I do know, however, that if I am not discerning and allying myself with God's redemptive actions in our present historical moment, I will not be ready for the fullness of his reign when it does come.

Notes and References

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4. George Gilder, *Wealth and Poverty* (New York: Basic Books, 1981).
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7. Deborah Mendenhall, "Making His Word His Business," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Oct. 1, 2000, C1-C2.
8. Lavelle has sustained Dwelling House against shutdown threats from bank examiners largely because of his fiscally prudent management, which keeps reserves in excess of federal capital requirements, but also because his mission and ministry have attracted depositors from all over the world, including those with religious affiliations as various as Buddhism, Judaism, Catholicism, and various forms of Protestantism—including at least one Seventh-day Adventist depositor.
9. Charles Derber, *Corporation Nation: How Corporations Are Taking Over Our Lives and What We Can Do About It* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1998), 30-41.
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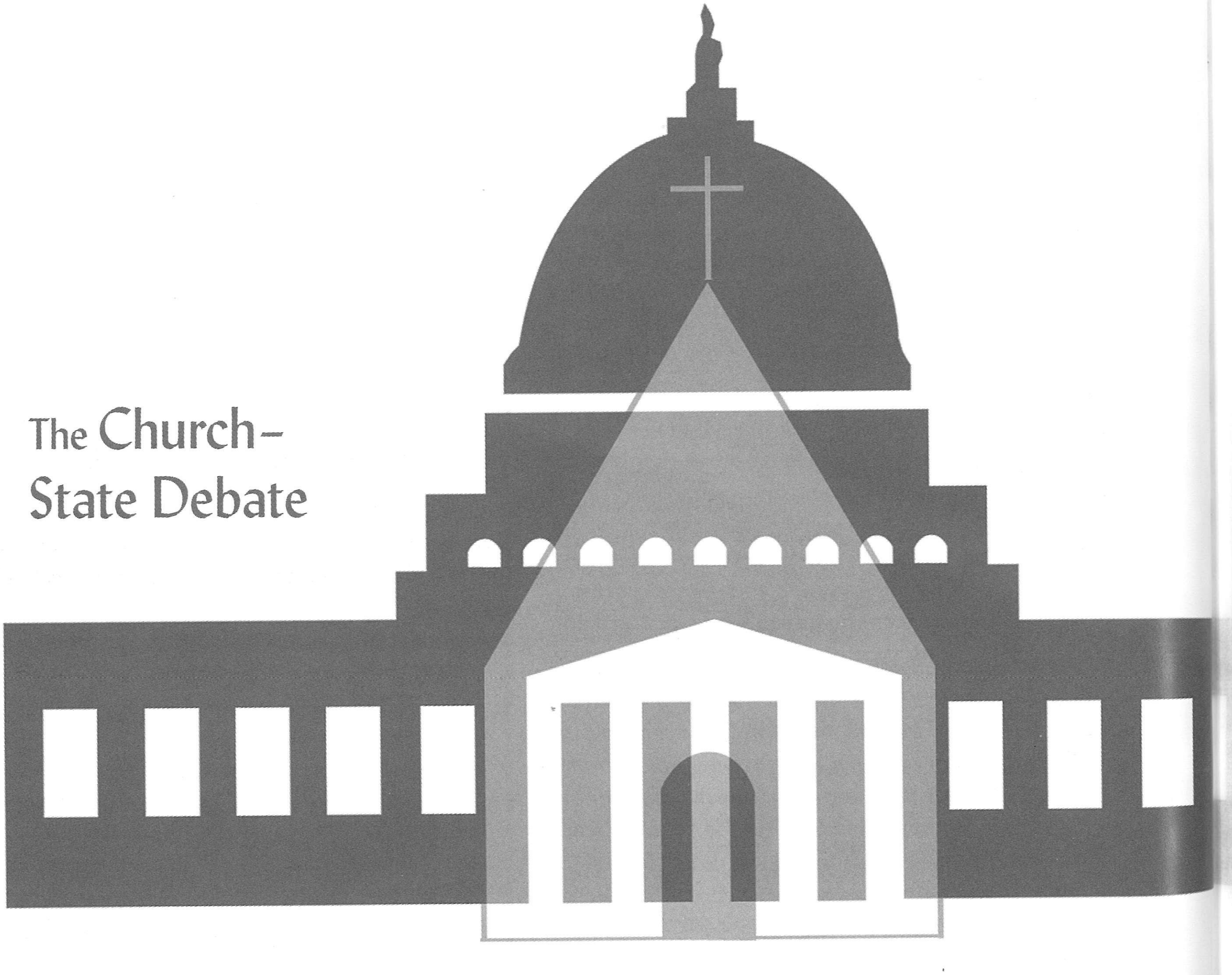
The Church–State Debate



George W. Bush's Faith-Based Initiative:

Responses from the Administrative Committee of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, *Christianity Today*, and *Rolling Stone*

As part of his campaign for the U.S. presidency, George W. Bush expressed his intention if elected to launch a major national effort to direct taxpayer money into churches and other religious groups to provide social services. On January 29, shortly after his inauguration, Bush followed through by forming a new federal agency, the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, through executive action. The office has a commission to expand government aid to religious ministries and to create church state "partnerships."

Churches, lobbying groups, and the media have responded to this unprecedented step on the part of the president. On March 6, 2000, the Administrative Committee of the Seventh-day Adventist Church worldwide considered, adopted, and entered into its minutes a statement of principle, partly in response to the initiative, regarding government funding of religious organizations.

According to Clarence Hodges, public affairs and religious liberty director for the Adventist Church in North America, "This working statement is a step toward developing guidelines for properly evaluating funding programs that may impact the relationship between church and state." John Granz, Hodges's counterpart for the worldwide church, does not see the statement as "the end of the road," but as guidance for future discussions about this issue.

To provide perspective for the Adventist Church response, we have gathered comments from several other sources: Americans United for Separation of Church and State, a self-described "religious liberty watchdog group" based in Washington, D.C., *Rolling Stone* magazine, and *Christianity Today.*

The Seventh-Day Adventist Church Consensus Statement Regarding United States Government Funding of Religious Organizations

VOTED, To record the following statement which will serve as a guide to the ongoing conversations concerning the funding of faith based initiatives as proposed by the administration of the United States government.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes both the natural involvement of religious groups and the necessary and proper involvement of government in seeking solutions to social problems. Religious groups are required by faith to be of service, to heal the wounds of society. Government must, to fulfill its responsibility, address the same issues and search for solutions to the same problems. Neither may properly look to the other to take the entire burden. Addressing the needs of people is a shared responsibility. Therefore, religious groups and government should cooperate in seeking solutions to social problems, each doing so with mutual respect for the role of the other.

The church also recognizes the fragility of religious freedom and the necessity of giving careful attention to every aspect of any proposal or program that might change the relationship between religious organizations and government that has been so carefully developed over the centuries of the American experience. While the relationship is ever changing, as it exists in an ever changing society, certain aspects of that relationship, made clear from experience, must be safeguarded. The following aspects of this relationship require special attention in the context of governmental funding of any function of any religious or religiously affiliated organization.

1. *Autonomy.* The church must remain free to be who and what it is. Cooperation between government and religious groups should not compromise the right and freedom of those groups to manage their own affairs. The mission and voice of the church must not be diminished or circumscribed by governmental intervention. If a church, in order to participate in government programs, gives up the right to hire only those who share its convictions, it gives up too much. A delicate balance must be maintained between the internal autonomy of religious groups and the necessity to avoid governmental funding of religious functions.

2. *Dependence.* Religious groups must beware of becoming so dependent on government largess that their independence, the authenticity of their witness and voice, and indeed their very survival, are threatened.

3. *Neutrality.* The genius of the American relation ship between religion and government has been the requirement of governmental neutrality. Government must never be allowed to differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable religions. The state knows and establishes no religious orthodoxy. Few things could be more destructive of the fragile relation ship that has produced so much religious freedom in the United States than to allow government to evade the requirement of neutrality.

Source: Adventist News Network

Americans United for Separation of Church and State -- The Bush "Faith-Based" Initiative: Why It's Wrong

1. *Bush's plan violates the separation of church and state.*

   According to Americans United, "Bush's faith-based plan turns the time-tested constitutional principle of church-state separation on its ear.... Forcing taxpayers to subsidize religious institutions they may or may not believe in is no different from forcing them to put money in the collection plates of churches, synagogues and mosques."

2. *Federally funded employment discrimination is unfair.*

   Bush's proposal would allow churches to use taxpayer money, yet to discriminate on the basis of religion. In effect, a U.S. taxpayer would be forced to provide funding for a job for which he or she could be considered ineligible because of religious beliefs.

3. *Religion could be forced on those in need of assistance.*

   Bush's approach would allow religious institutions that receive taxpayer support to provide social services, yet also give the same organizations freedom to proselytize among those who receive assistance provided by the same money.

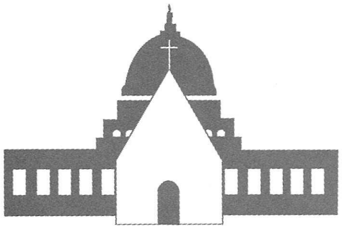
   "Bush's policies will put the disadvantaged in an impossible position," Americans United points out. "They will either submit to religious coercion or go without food, shelter or other needed services to which they are legally entitled."

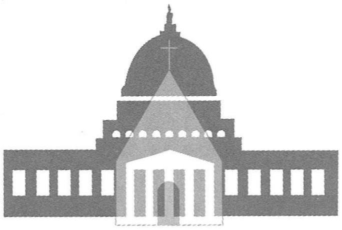
4. *Bush's plan opens the door to federal regulation of religion*

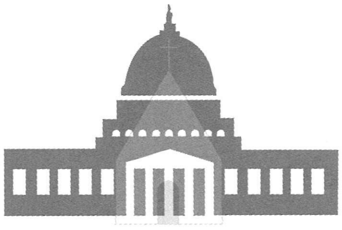
   Public officials have a responsibility to account for funds expended under their jurisdiction, which almost inevitably leads to greater government scrutiny and regulation. On this point, Americans United quotes the Rev. Wanda Henry, a Baptist minister: "Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said the church is not the master of the state, nor the servant of the state, but the conscience of the state. Charitable choice threatens to make religion the servant of the state, rather than its conscience."

5. *The vitality of our faith communities will be hurt.*

   For centuries, religious organizations in the United States have depended on voluntary contributions for support. "Once religious institutions are working in tandem with the federal government and receiving tax dollars to provide services," warns Americans United," members may be less







inclined to 'dig a little deeper' to help with expenses.... Once these contributions drop off, the attendant spirit of volunteerism may also wither away."

6. *Bush's plan pits faith groups against each other.*

In the United States, government has traditionally remained neutral on religious issues, neither favoring or supporting any particular faith tradition. However, Bush's plan would require those groups to "battle it out for a piece of the government pie. Pitting houses of worship against each other," cautions Americans United, "is a recipe for divisive conflict."

7. *Some religions will be favored over others.*

Bush has promised not to discriminate against "Methodists or Mormons or Muslims or good people with no faith at all," yet he has also announced his intention to exclude the Nation of Islam because it "preaches hate." According to Americans United, Bush has suggested that his administration "may also discriminate against groups affiliated with the Wiccan faith."

Americans United sees Bush's proposal "on shaky legal ground," even without this consideation. Yet "once the president starts picking and choosing which faiths will get government aid and which ones won't, the plan quickly starts to drown in constitutional quicksand."

8. *There's no proof that religious groups will offer better care than secular providers.*

"Few studies have examined whether religious ministries are more successful than secular groups in providing aid or producing better results," according to Americans United, "and it is unwise to launch a major federal initiative with so little research in the area."

9. *Both liberals and conservatives are concerned about Bush's plan.*

Opponents of the Bush proposal range from Americans United, to the NAACP, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Education Association, the American Counseling Association, and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

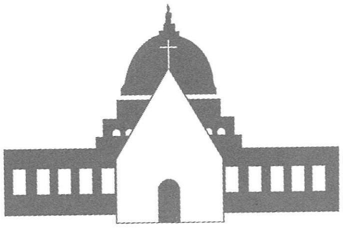
The conservative Cato Institute and Capital Research Center have also expressed reservations. Americans United quotes Cato Institute's Michael Tanner as saying that the Bush plan "risks destroying the very things that make private charity so effective."

10. *If it ain't broke, don't fix it.*

The present system permits religious organizations to provide services using public funds, but requires strict safeguards to protect taxpayers and the religious liberties of those who receive service. "Bush's plan radically alters that set-up by allowing churches and other houses of worship to preach, proselytize and discriminate while providing public services," warns Americans United.

Source: Americans United for Separation of Church and State. For an unabbreviated list, see <www.au.org/press pr22001.htm>

State, Meet Church. Church, State.



By P. J. O'Rourke

Every politician experiences mindless brainstorms. LBJ had the Great Society—now late great. Reagan was intent on Star Wars, a technology he'd discovered reading X-Men comic books. Clinton proposed health-care reform—medical treatment delivered by the government with the same zealous efficiency with which the government delivers mail. Now, from the thoughtless cogitation of George W. Bush comes the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. In an executive order, Bush decreed that the OFBCI shall "eliminate unnecessary legislative, regulatory and other bureaucratic barriers that impede effective faith-based...efforts to solve social problems."

This means religious charities will be eligible to run tax-funded government programs no matter how religious the charities are. They can keep the homeless up all night singing hymns at the shelter. They can refuse to feed the hungry at the soup kitchen because it's the Ramadan fast and they're supposed to be hungry. They can festoon their day-care centers with pictures of Beelzebub sacrificing naked virgins. Because Satanism is a religion, isn't it? Religion is "belief in and reverence for supernatural power accepted as the creator and governor of the universe," says Webster's. I look forward to all sorts of amusement as the snake-handling fundamentalists of West Virginia distribute free rattlers to drug addicts.

Unfortunately, that won't happen. What will happen is a plethora of lawsuits. John DiIulio, Bush's head of OFBCI, actually digs this. "We ought to sue each other," DiIulio says. "Because when Americans are serious about something, they will sue each other. So we ought to sue each other until we drop. And when the suing is over," DiIulio continues, "let the message go forth that...we found a way to find common ground."

Finding common ground with DiIulio himself, however, is no easy matter. A blue-collar Democrat with a Ph.D. in political science, DiIulio was the policy wonk behind mandatory-minimum prison sentences for drug offenders and the man who coined the phrase "superpredators" for the ghetto youth whom DiIulio described as "fatherless, godless and without conscience." Then DiIulio, in an apparent attempt to exhibit some conscience of his own, got involved with inner-city religious congregations and became a convert to "faith-based initiatives." Having sent everyone to jail, he now wants to send everyone to church.

Or something. It's hard to tell what DiIulio means to do. "We're not talking about giving government money to religious groups," he told Bryant Gumbel. "We're talking about making it possible for groups that are out there performing valued social services to compete...."

Can the Catholic Church compete for the $176.5 million in government funding that Planned Parenthood received in 1999? "Your abortion procedure will take nine months to complete."

Faith-based initiatives (which is almost impossible to say if you've been into the communion wine) get religion involved in government. I foresee problems with NASA launches blowing the wings off angels and spewing rocket-fuel fumes on the Pearly Gates. And faith-based initiatives get government involved in religion. Why not in bowling, bridge clubs, pet care and all the other nongovernmental aspects of life? Do you realize there's no Cabinet-level position responsible for hooking you up on a Saturday night?

Government involvement—no matter how much red tape Bush snips—means grant applications to scribble, forms to blot, reports to hunt-and-peck at. Federal bumf-juggling will drain sources from volunteer agencies. To make up for that, the government will give the volunteers cash. Except, as DiIulio mentioned, it won't. Bush's faith-based initiatives plan contains no money for increased social services. In fact, there's some un-money involved, at least from a general revenue perspective. Bush will introduce legislation allowing people who don't itemize their taxes to deduct up to $500 for charitable contributions. Who won't? "There's the twenty-five cents I gave the drunk panhandler last winter, plus five dollars to the big guy outside the sports arena who 'watched my car,' plus the pennies in the Save the Lemmings jar at the health-food store. That's...$500!"

And here's the really bad news: Government red tape is a good thing. Niggling regulations, overfed bureaucracies and endless paperwork are what keep the brute force of government in check. The U.S. Army is powerful. The Salvation Army is not. The Salvation Army already receives eighteen percent of its funding from the government. Red tape prevents those street-corner Santas from being drafted into the regular Army and sent to stand with their kettles on the boulevards of Kosovo. When a politician promises to cut red tape, he's promising to let government run wild. (Although this can be hard to remember when the DMV insists that you produce proof of chickenpox vaccination and spell *rhinoceros* before they'll register your car.)

And what kind of charity is this, anyhow, where you give away other people's money instead of your own? Faith-based initiatives are part of an ugly trend in modern philanthropy that confuses hogging at the federal trough with altruism. Lutheran Services in America currently gets thirty-nine percent of its budget from the government. For Catholic Charities, the figure is sixty-two percent. These congregations are giving until it hurts—me. Those are my tax dollars they're paving their way to heaven with.

The liberal Americans United for Separation of Church and State opposes faith-based initiatives; so does the conservative Heritage Foundation, so does the libertarian Cato Institute, and so, as a matter of fact, does Pat Robertson. When you find all of these people in bed together on a matter of faith—you'd better pray.

Source: Reprinted, with permission, from "P. J. O'Rourke's Washington Diary," *Rolling Stone*, Apr. 12, 2001, 49.

No More Excuses

Bush's faith-based initiative should reinvigorate our mission of service

By the Editors of Christianity Today

We like President Bush's plans to enlist churches and faith-based organizations in combating social ills like poverty, addiction, unemployment, and literacy. It is apparently necessary to start our editorial by stating that clearly and prominently. Otherwise people will say we oppose it.

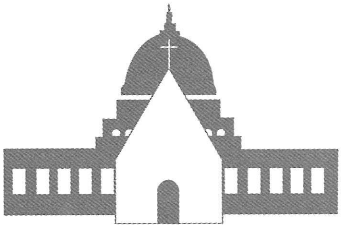
Pat Robertson went on CNN to say he thought Bush's plan was "an excellent idea," adding, "but if somebody said well, you can't ever tell them about Jesus, we'd say no way, we won't take your money." The press was soon abuzz over Robertson's "opposition" to the plan. Likewise, Bush adviser Marvin Olasky and the Hudson Institute's Michael Horowitz issued a statement that was characterized as warning "that government grants could sap the vitality of religious social programs." Their statement more prominently said, "We support President Bush's agenda for action, and also take this opportunity to insist that any federal program to support faith-based institutions must vigilantly preserve the independence of America's religious institutions."

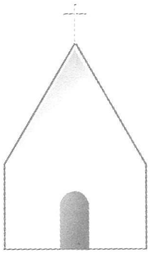
Likewise, Catholic Charities USA (which has received federal funding for years) was lumped in with critics despite its statement that it "is enthusiastic about sponsoring and operating such services." Even those religious groups that actually have voiced serious concerns have also voiced praise. "We're heartened that President Bush says he wants faith-based organizations to have a place at the table, but we hope that the government will not vacate its essential seat at that table," says a press release from Lutheran Services in America.

So we'll say it again. Bush's plan to remove bias against religious organizations in federal contracts for social services is great.

Encouraging Debate

That churches and religious organizations are expressing concerns while praising the program in principle is also encouraging: this shows the idea is being taken seriously, and indicates that churches and organizations are thinking about getting involved. During these initial months, we should be voicing concerns about diluting the





evangelistic message and mission of the church. We should also be concerned about the possibility of tax dollars helping to fund proselytism by Scientology, the Unification Church, and other sects. And we are right to warn that discretionary government grants covering overhead costs or salaries would likely make the church too dependent on the state, and open the door to excessive regulation.

We have confidence that the White House Office for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives will come up with a system that will neither coopt nor excessively limit churches. With John Dilulio, Steve Goldsmith, Don Eberly, and Don Willett, Bush has assembled a kind of dream team to tackle these concerns. Meanwhile, our hope at *Christianity Today* is that the easing of official government hostility to religious organizations will reinvigorate Christian thought and action on service, community action, and action in the world. When the welfare state "ended as we know it" through the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act in 1996, many Christians cheered an end to "welfare moms" and "government handouts" that had lulled the poor into abandoning their initiative. But the welfare system had lulled the church, too. We knew we should be feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and serving the poor—but we knew Uncle Sam would pick up the tab if we didn't. No more. Bush's plan inadvertently reminds us of a key biblical teaching: everyone has a duty, not just an opportunity, to serve the needy.

While sometimes we've abdicated to the state, at other times we've pointed to our struggling church budgets. Those are no longer adequate excuses (if they ever were). We now have an unprecedented opportunity to serve the poor in our communities. We'll only be limited by our imaginations (and, to be extremely pragmatic, our ability to write grant proposals).

That's not to say that all faith-based organizations will want to sign up for federal funds. Organizations that can't separate their evangelism from their social work probably won't want to if it means they will have to forgo evangelism or make evangelistic efforts optional.…But most evangelical churches probably won't be tempted to trade their evangelism for a few government grants. More likely, some may be enticed to use any regulations on evangelism as an excuse to exempt themselves from social services.

"We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Eph. 2:10, NIV). We do not serve the needy as a means to proclaim the gospel but out of a love for Christ. As Bob Pierce famously prayed: "Let my heart be broken by the things that break the heart of God." We should seize this opportunity to launch new faith-based social programs and enhance the ones already in place. Must we silence ourselves on why we do these good works? Certainly not. And if Dilulio and his coworkers are to be believed, we won't face that dilemma. But if churches have put off aid programs because they can't find the budget for it, they've just lost their excuse.

Source: Reprinted, with permission, from *Christianity Today*, Apr. 2, 2001, 38-39.

Reservations About Religious Liberty

Reviewing the Adventist Concept of Separation of Church and State during the Eisenhower and Nixon Era

By Douglas Morgan

Reprinted with permission from *Adventism and the American Republic: The Public Involvement of a Major Apolyptic Movement* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001), by Douglas Morgan

"Bewilderment" was not a state of mind usually associated with Adventism's self-assured apologist, F. D. Nichol. But in a 1963 editorial, the *Review* editor indeed confessed "bewilderment at times as to just how the principle of separation of church and state applies." The source of his perplexity was the sharply increasing government involvement in such realms as welfare and education that were major facets of the church's ministry.[1] And his unusual uncertainty reflects the magnitude of the growing challenge confronting Adventism's traditional commitment to strict separation of church and state as the postwar decades progressed.

The challenge came from several angles. The radical pluralism and societal fragmentation emerging out of the upheavals of the 1960s raised the question of whether public morality could thrive under separation of church and state. Would it be possible to maintain a common set of values around which a society could cohere?[2] The rapid social changes prompted many conservative Christians to a new activism on behalf of traditional religious morality in the nation's public life.

Controversial cases involving the free exercise and establishment of religion began to come before the Supreme Court in unprecedented volume. The court interpreted the significance of the First Amendment for a vast range of issues, including prayer, Bible reading, and the teaching of evolution in the public schools, government aid to church-related schools, Sunday laws, unemployment and public assistance entitlement rights for religious minorities, chaplains in state legislatures, and religious displays on public property. The "free exercise" and "establishment" clauses now often appeared to be in tension and holding together commitments to separationism and religious rights, as Adventists had always tried to do, became a more complicated matter. An "accommodationist" or "non–preferentialist" approach that defended positive cooperation between government and religion, so long as one religious group is not favored over others, became more influential among interpreters of the First Amendment.[3]

The expanding role of government referred to by Nichol, combined with Adventism's deepening institutional stake in society, led to conflict within the Church over whether and to what extent government funds should be used for church institutions. While the leaders of the Church's work for religious liberty continued to uphold the separationist banner, others, particularly administrators of educational institutions, advocated a more accommodationist approach that would allow the Church to accept some government funds.

The sometimes wrenching conflict was never fully resolved, but the Church as a whole made a major shift toward selective acceptance of government benefits. Adventist leaders, broadly speaking, came to conceive of the wall separating church and state as flexible enough to allow openings for the Church to take advantage of some provisions of the welfare state. Indeed, one of the principle contributions of the Church's activism in this period came in helping to define how the principle of religious liberty would be applied to citizens' claims on the entitlements of the welfare state. At the same time Adventists continued to defend with zeal the concept of a separating wall as developments relating to education, Sunday legislation and ecumenism seemed to provide new signs of the necessity to forestall the ultimate demise of liberty.

Their understanding of separation of church and state continued in this period to distinguish Adventists from religious liberals who sought to transform society through political action. But though a conservatism linked with church-state separationism remained the prevailing political orientation in Adventism, voices calling for a new and progressive involvement with social issues made themselves heard. Moreover, that progressive influence, along with the sustained commitment to separation of church and state, contributed to the emergence of an even more significant distinction: that between Adventists and premillennialists of the developing New Christian Right.

Separationism and the Government Aid Controversy

Qualification of the Church's adamant stance against accepting government funds began to appear at least as early as the 1930s. The growth of the federal welfare state in America began to create unprecedented and what proved to be irresistible funding opportunities for the Church's institutions that conflicted with the traditional stand on separation of church and state.[4]

The conflict sharpened in 1943 when Paradise Valley Hospital in San Diego accepted a grant of $136,000 through the Federal Work Agency to build an addition to the hospital and a new dormitory for nursing students.[5] Vociferous protests from C. S. Longacre were viewed as a hindrance to raising additional funds for the project within the Church and drew a sharp rebuke from J. L. McElhany, the General Conference president. McElhany cited Ellen White's opposition to A. T. Jones's criticism of the Church's acceptance of a land grant from the British South Africa Company in the 1890s.[6] Here was clear evidence, McElhany declared, that Mrs. White favored acceptance of gifts from government. Longacre responded that Mrs. White nowhere endorsed direct "government" aid to churches, but only that which the rich and powerful were moved to bestow out of their own resources. The land grant in southern Africa that the Adventists received fit the latter category since it came from Cecil Rhodes and the British South Africa Company, not from a government.[7] The ambiguity of this crucial precedent in Adventist history contributed to making the Church's twentieth-century struggle with the issue of government aid a protracted and messy one.

Two more developments in the 1940s prompted church leaders to seek a definitive policy on government aid. Under the provisions of the Surplus Property Act of 1944, the Adventists' Central California Conference in 1948 acquired Camp McQuade, a large former military base, for one dollar and turned it into a denominational high school. H. H. Votaw decried this move as inconsistent with the Church's long-held position and urged that the camp be returned to the government.[8] Meanwhile, the Hill-Burton Act of 1946 made available funding for private hospitals, and Adventist administrators were eager to take advantage of it.

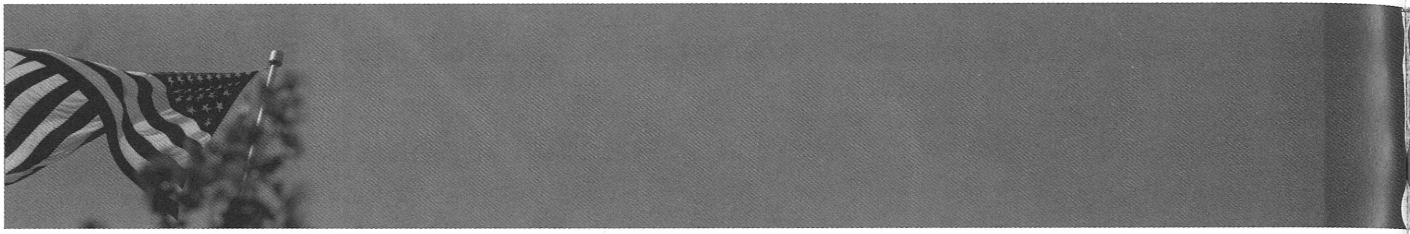
At the Autumn Council of 1948, church leaders voted to "reaffirm our full belief in the historic doctrine of the separation of church and state." They passed resolutions against accepting free textbooks from the government or public funds for teachers' salaries or school maintenance.[9] The council also declared that Adventist medical institutions in the United States, as "an integral part of our denominational program," should not accept government funds for operation or maintenance.[10]

The unyielding policy didn't last long, however. The very next Autumn Council brought a crucial change, opening the door to capital funds from the government for medical institutions and to war surplus such as Camp McQuade. Acceptance of funds for capital development of hospitals, available through the Hill-Burton Act of 1946, was justified on the grounds that Adventist institutions "render a recognized service to the medical needs of the communities in which they are located" that was not specifically sectarian in nature.[11]

Meanwhile, a theory on which to base the accommodationist stance toward government aid was gaining acceptance among some Adventist leaders. J. I. Robison, who had served the church for many years in Africa and Europe, argued in a position paper circulated in the late 1940s that a distinction should be made between religious liberty and separation of church and state. Religious liberty, he maintained, is basic, unquestioned Adventist doctrine. Separation of church and state, on the other hand, was an arrangement particular to the American government and not the only system under which religious liberty could be enjoyed. And now, the development of the welfare state in America had led to a "twilight zone" in the realms of education and social welfare where state and church have overlapping interests. The claims of both are legitimate, he argued, and he therefore called for "a plan of mutual agreement as to how each shall cooperate with the other."[12] Changes in the American government made mandatory an accommodation in which strict separationism is abandoned but the principle of religious liberty is maintained.

A change in the Religious Liberty Association's Declaration of Principles in 1956 reflects a consensus that separation of church and state, while ideal, was one particular means for realizing the more fundamental principle of religious liberty. Thus, the RLA no longer declared separation of church and state as its first principle but rather affirmed belief in religious liberty, which "is best exercised when there is separation between church and state."

Nonetheless, the strict separationists were far from accepting Robison's prescription for the American context. Controversy deepened despite the policy voted in 1949 as the church's institutions of higher education began to push through the door cracked open by the provision for limited acceptance of government aid for the Church's medical institutions. Many Adventist educational administrators were eager to take advantage of the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1958 that offered government funds for one-third of the cost of new buildings, and other legislation for various forms of aid such as scholarships, fellowships, equipment, and training programs in specific areas. Also, numerous acquisitions of government surplus property were made in the 1950s. Thus, by 1963, Seventh-day Adventist institutions were listed by Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State among the violators of the "moral, spiritual, and constitutional aspects of the principle of Church-State separation."[13]



Such departure from the separationism so long advocated in the pages of *Liberty*, significant enough to prompt criticism from an organization in which Adventist leaders themselves had a high profile, understandably sparked intense debate within the Adventist community. Many Adventists wondered if their own church was now entering the very sort of illicit union with the state that it had frequently attributed to others.[14] For their part, the Church's religious liberty leaders, reluctantly conceding defeat on the issue of Hill-Burton funds, fought to maintain the policy against acceptance of government aid for capital improvements at Adventist colleges, even while adherence to the policy was in fact rapidly eroding.[15]

The debate continued through the 1960s and the controverted issues were aired in an unusually frank public manner in a panel discussion printed in the *Review* in 1968. Moderated by Neal C. Wilson, vice president of the General Conference for North America, the panel included Robert H. Brown, a vice president of Walla Walla College; Herbert Douglass, president of Atlantic Union College; and F. E. J. Harder, chairman of the Department of Education at Andrews University. As educators, these men favored a relatively liberal policy on government aid. Also included were Roland Hegstad and attorney Warren Johns, who were concerned with upholding a separationist policy.[16]

The educators developed the themes adumbrated by Robison. Harder emphasized the point that separation of church and state should be seen as a policy rather than a doctrine. While a doctrine of "personal and religious freedom" could be derived from the Bible, he argued, separation of church and state was "not exemplified, described, or prescribed" therein.

Hegstad and Johns agreed with their brethren that complete separation of church and state was not possible and that the counsels of Ellen White made room for some forms of government aid. But they argued for adherence to separationist principles, based on the Church's apocalyptic identity as "remnant," that would strictly limit the forms and conditions under which aid was accepted. Hegstad cited the Adventist interpretation of Revelation as depicting the emergence of an oppressive union between church and state to suggest that separationism was indeed a biblical principle. In view of such apocalyptic understanding, he asked, "can we hasten the erosion of the wall of separation for the sake of financial subsidy, or for any other reason, and yet claim to act in a principled way?" In fact it would be "criminal," he added, "for men with the prophetic insight of the Adventist ministry uncritically to involve the church in confederacy with government for the sake of financial aid."

"Changes in the American government made mandatory an accommodation in which strict separationism is abandoned but the principle of religious liberty is maintained."

Again here, the issue turned in part on how much emphasis would be placed on the church's "remnant" status. Johns maintained that the very survival of Adventism as a "viable 'remnant'" was at stake. If the Church that claims to be the "remnant" of faithful believers described in Revelation "unites with government for economic gain," then, he suggested, "the prophetic term 'remnant' as applied to the Seventh-day Adventist Church would face redefinition."

For Hegstad and Johns, the twin dangers of governmental control and secularization highlighted the need for maintaining a critical perspective on government aid. As evidence of the danger of secularization, Hegstad pointed to the many church-related colleges, particularly Roman Catholic, that "were altering their organizational structure and admission requirements to allow for the secularization that will bring government subsidy." While many of the constitutional issues remained unresolved, he feared that with federal aid, Adventist schools would face similar pressure toward secularization.

Controversy over the issue of government aid continued to simmer until external and internal pressures prompted the Church to another attempt at resolving it in 1972. Cuts in government appropriations by the Nixon administration and a general dip in enrollment created financial distress for colleges. Then, passage of the Higher Education Omnibus Bill in 1972 offered relief by extending old programs and funding new ones. Adventist educational administrators sought to take advantage of the programs, but there was some confusion as to what was allowable under church policy.[17] Moreover, some administrators were less conscientious than others about following denominational policy. Neal Wilson observed that numerous violations of existing policy were occurring and expressed the desire of church leaders that policy and practice be consistent within the denomination.[18]

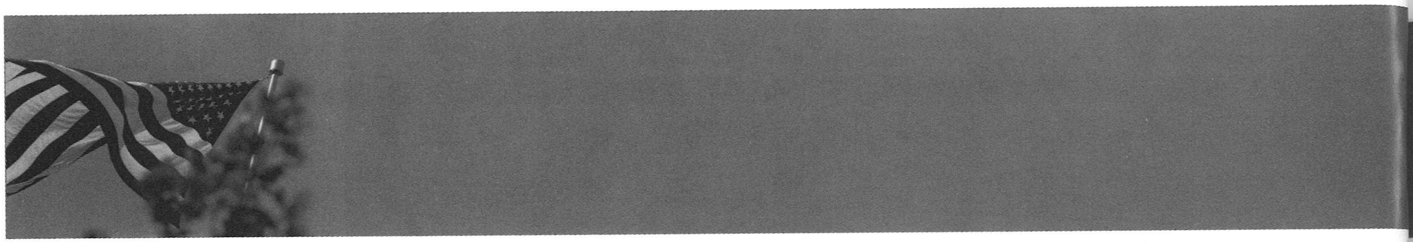
The new policy proposed at the 1972 Autumn Council was more permissive in that it no longer categorized some forms of government aid as inherently unacceptable. Government funds for capital improvements, equipment, general operating, and salaries might now be approved. However, a set of guidelines was established to restrict the conditions under which aid might be received. The guidelines stipulated that any participation in aid programs should not compromise the independence of Adventists schools, deflect them from their purpose of inculcating

Christian principles, or weaken the "historic position" of the Church that "religious liberty is best achieved and preserved by a separation of church and state." A system of monitoring and evaluation by church boards external to the institutions receiving aid was set up in an effort to avoid inconsistencies and violations.

In the floor debate at the Autumn Council, W. Melvin Adams registered sharp opposition. "This new policy is dishonest," he declared. "It begins by maintaining our historic position of separation of church and state and then turns 180 degrees." Adamant opponents of the policy turned out to be a small minority, however. Hegstad's somewhat reluctant support reflected the position of many whose views could allow for government aid under some circumstances but remained highly concerned about its potential threat to the church. "This has been a traumatic issue for me," he observed, "but I am not afraid to depart from the policies of the past." The council eventually approved the new policy overwhelmingly.[19] The denomination appeared to have achieved relative consensus on a policy that could be squared with the actual practice of its educational institutions, though concern continued to be expressed occasionally about the government funding reaching such an extent that it threatened the autonomy of Adventist schools.[20]

Hegstad put the best face possible on the new policy, defending it in *Liberty* as an "uncompromising Declaration of Independence." Though editor of the publication subsidized by the Church "to advocate continued separation of church and state," he recognized that the separation could not be absolute and that "Caesar's sphere and God's sphere sometimes overlap." On the specific matter of government aid to church-related colleges, Adventist leaders declared that "they could not make the constitutional judgments necessary" and thus accepted the Supreme Court's ruling in *Tilton* v. *Richardson* (1971) that permitted some forms of such aid. In earlier eras Adventists had rarely been so timid about expressing their judgment on constitutional issues of church and state. But Hegstad believed their principles were safeguarded by the stipulations of the new policy. He claimed that it was strict enough to ensure that the amount of government aid would "not exceed a trickle," and affirmed his conviction that "the First Amendment still stands as a desirable wall between tax dollars and the kind of schools Adventists are determined to maintain."[21]

Despite Hegstad's efforts to reconcile the new policy with separationist principles, the Adventist solution to the problem of the expanding role of government and growing needs of its own institutions came at the price of a loss of clarity in the Church's stand on separation of church and state. Adams's objection seems irrefutable. While on the one hand continuing to affirm separation as the best way of achieving religious liberty, the Church had given official approval to forms of cooperation with government of the sort that it had condemned in earlier years as an egregious trespass of the wall of separation.



Regarding the "wall of separation," it was Bert B. Beach who perhaps best expressed the position to which Adventism, by and large, had come: Separation of church and state must at times be an invulnerable wall, but on occasion it must also be a permeable honeycomb allowing legitimate cooperation and even government regulation.... Think of church schools and state education laws, church construction and building codes, church financial operations and laws affecting them, to name but a few spheres of joint influence where ironclad separation is out of the question.[22] Adventists still wanted the barrier between church and state to be strong where necessary, but less uniformly absolute than they had previously envisioned it.

Free Exercise in the Welfare State

While the issue of how to handle the provisions of the welfare state in regard to the Church's institutions created a crisis for Adventism, church leaders had little hesitation about asserting the right of individuals—Adventists and others—to claim the entitlements and legal protection afforded by the state without suffering discrimination because of their religious practices. Here Adventist activism contributed to extending the principle of religious freedom in the new historical context brought about by the progressive social legislation of the twentieth century.

Workplace conflicts created by their distinctive practices constituted one of the most difficult challenges faced by Saturday sabbatarians in a society where Sunday is the recognized day of rest. Faithful Seventh-day Adventists insisted on abstaining from work for the entire twenty-four hour period from sundown Friday evening to sundown Saturday evening, and frequently found it necessary to give up jobs that demanded Saturday work in order to be faithful to their beliefs.[23] As government expanded its role in providing for the needs of the unemployed, disputes arose concerning whether Adventists who were out of work solely because of their sabbatarianism were entitled to unemployment benefits. Could Adventists claim benefits on the basis of their right to the free exercise of religion, even though the state was doing nothing directly to restrict their practices? Or would the payments in effect subsidize the practices of a particular group and thus be an unconstitutional establishment of religion? This convergence of Adventist practice, the welfare state, and the Constitution led to a Supreme Court decision in 1963 that came to be regarded as one of the most significant interpretations of the First Amendment in the court's history.[24]

> "The RLA no longer declared separation of church and state as its first principle but rather affirmed belief in religious liberty, which 'is best exercised when there is separation between church and state.'"

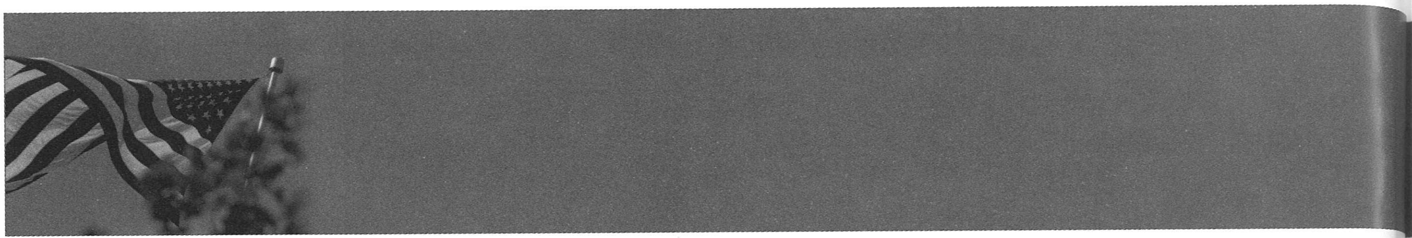
The issue of the Sabbath and unemployment compensation surfaced as early as 1948. Several Adventist women in Battle Creek, Michigan, initially denied benefits, appealed their case successfully to higher state officials. Frank Yost described the incident as "an important precedent in favor of liberty of conscience."[25] The issue was far from settled, however, and with other cases arising, church leaders voted the following spring that the denomination should bear the expenses of members seeking legal redress.[26] In 1954, laws that stipulated denial of unemployment benefits to those refusing work on either Saturday or Sunday were tested in the state supreme courts of Michigan and Ohio. Alvin Johnson argued in *Liberty* that such laws exhibited a governmental hostility toward religion in violation of the "free exercise" provision.[27] Both courts agreed, ruling in favor of the sabbatarians claim on benefits, as did the North Carolina Supreme Court in 1956.[28]

In South Carolina, however, a legal battle began over the issue in 1959 that eventually reached the United States Supreme Court. Mrs. Adell Sherbert, who had been employed for over thirty years in Spartan Mills, a textile mill in Spartanburg, converted to Seventh-day Adventism in 1957. At this time the mill was operating only five days per week, thus she had no Sabbath work conflicts. In 1959, however, the mill shifted to a six-day work week, and Mrs. Sherbert lost her job for refusing to work on Saturdays. After failing to find work that accommodated her convictions at three other mills in the area, and filing unsuccessfully for unemployment benefits, she took her case to court.[29]

The Supreme Court decided in favor of Sherbert in 1963 by a 7-2 majority. In the majority opinion, Justice William Brennan held that the government was imposing on Sherbert a choice between practicing her religion and accepting work, which was equivalent to fining her for her worship on Saturday. Thus: "To condition the availability of benefits upon this appellant's willingness to violate a cardinal principle of her religious faith effectively penalizes the free exercise of her constitutional liberties." Such a burden to free exercise could be constitutional only if necessitated by some "compelling state interest," and Brennan could find none in this case. His ruling did not foster the "establishment" of Adventism in South Carolina, Brennan further argued. Rather, providing those who worshiped on Saturday and Sunday alike with access to unemployment benefits constituted "nothing more than the governmental obligation of neutrality in the face of religious differences."[30]

Adventists naturally celebrated the decision as a vindication of "equal justice for all" and reason to "thank God anew for His protecting care over those who conscientiously witness for the truth of the Sabbath at the risk of discrimination in the matter of unemployment compensation."[31] The landmark application of the free exercise clause that they embraced in the Sherbert decision was perhaps an indirect part of a process leading Adventists toward a more nuanced view of the relationship between church and state. In an era when the role of government was expanding, "neutrality" was becoming at least as important as "separation."

In the 1970s another dimension of the welfare state, namely, its regulations protecting civil rights, came to prominence in connection with Sabbatarian employees. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and its 1972 amendments forbade job discrimination on the basis of religion. Guidelines issued by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission stipulated that employers "make reasonable accommodations to the religious needs of employees and prospective employees where such accommodations can be made without undue hardship on the conduct of the employer's business." When Edward Shaffield, an Adventist helicopter mechanic employed at Northrop Worldwide Aircraft Services in Alabama, was fired for leaving work early on Fridays to avoid working after the Sabbath began at sundown, he filed a suit charging religious discrimination in federal court. Northrop claimed that its policy was to treat all employees alike, thus it could not give preferential treatment to Shaffield. But the court ruled in Shaffield's favor, arguing that the company had "numerous opportunities to effect an accommodation with only minimal disruption of business." *Liberty* columnist Elvin Benton, in an appreciative analysis of the decision, commented that treating everybody alike would only be fair if "all people were identical."[32]



Here it must be noted that when it came to application of Title VII to church institutions, Adventism's top leadership put up trenchant resistance. In 1973 Merikay Silver filed a suit alleging sex discrimination in hiring and payment practices against the Church's Pacific Press Publishing Association. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and Department of Labor filed related suits on behalf of Silver and another female employee of Pacific Press, Lorna Tobler. The Department of Labor also filed a complaint in 1975 against the Pacific Union Conference, an umbrella organization for the Church's associations, schools, and colleges on the West Coast, which charged that unequal pay for basically equal work had been rendered to employees of different genders.

The fundamental contention made by the defense in these cases was that the First Amendment placed church institutions beyond the jurisdiction of the state. The defense in the Pacific Press cased declared that "in doing its work, the church is free to ignore, even to flout, measures which bind all others" and that "[t]he church claims exemption from all civil laws in all its religious institutions." In both the Pacific Press and Pacific Union cases, the Church's sweeping claims to freedom from government regulation was rejected in federal court. The ruling in the press case declared that it was the job of the courts, not the Church, to interpret the Constitution, that workers in religious institutions had the right to protection against discrimination, and that it was the clear intent of Congress that Title VII apply to religious organizations, with the only permissible form of discrimination being the practice of hiring church members exclusively.[33]

In the secular arena, however, Adventist activism contributed to a broadening of the state's role in protecting workers against religious discrimination. This point was true not only in regard to Sabbatarian accommodation and unemployment compensation but also in regard to yet another employment-related issue—compulsory labor union membership.

In the late nineteenth century, Adventists viewed unions as "combinations" that repressed individual freedom through coercive collective action. Labor violence was expected to lead to the final apocalyptic conflict, with the strong Roman Catholic influence helping to make unions appear a likely instrument of the last conspiracy. Unions thus posed a fundamental challenge to the believer's loyalty to God and the Church, and Ellen White urged Adventists to avoid them and "stand free in God." It should also be reiterated that White and other Adventist writers at this time were just as severe on the large trusts for conspiring to deprive individuals of economic rights and thus prompting social upheaval.[34] In the years following White's death, Adventist spokespersons continued to dissociate the Church from the strikes and violence of the labor movement, point out the guilt of capital in establishing unjust economic conditions, and urge that those injustices be redressed through legal means.[35]

> "Government funds for capital improvements, equipment, general operating, and salaries might now be approved."

It was not until the late 1930s, however, that union membership became a personal, ethical dilemma for many Adventists. As the number of Adventists living in cities increased, both through conversion[36] and the nation's general trend toward urbanization, and organized labor made advances under the New Deal, more and more faced pressure to join unions. They were confronted with the perplexing choice between retaining their jobs in a union shop and defying the church's historic position, which was given prophetic authority through Ellen White's admonitions.

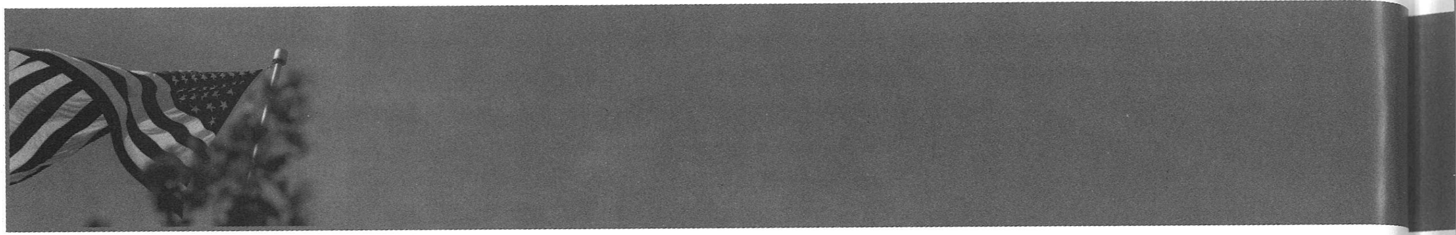
For over two decades the Adventist leadership took the approach of negotiating agreements with labor unions. Some unions accepted a document, called the "Basis of Agreement," that committed the unions to certify Adventist workers for employment if they would contribute the equivalent of union dues to union-supported charities and not cross picket lines in the event of a strike. In a manner similar to their "conscientious cooperation" with the military, Adventists could thus avoid direct, personal involvement in actions violating their beliefs while not interfering with and in some ways supporting the unions. However, these agreements were not sufficiently lasting, widely accepted, or consistently applied to resolve the problem.[37]

In the early 1960s, church leaders sought new ways to apply their two-pronged approach of encouraging members to "stand apart" from unions while negotiating ways for them to keep jobs normally requiring union membership. While reiterating the long-standing position that union membership was not a barrier to Adventist membership,[38] church leaders continued to emphasize the spiritual perils of unions. Rather than fading away as an issue, union membership continued to be strongly and repeatedly discouraged, if not absolutely forbidden.

Neal C. Wilson, then the Church's vice-president for North America, drew on numerous arguments from the past in summarizing the case against unions in 1969. He cited the teachings of Jesus on treatment of enemies, and the inclusive nature of Christianity that makes impossible affiliation with organizations that divide and create conflict along social and political lines. The capstone of his biblical argument was chapter 5 of the epistle of James, which had become a favorite in Adventist polemics against unions. The epistle pronounces judgment on the wealthy who have made their fortunes by fraud and oppression, and then calls for patience until the coming of the Lord. "James does not advocate a workingman's confederacy," commented Wilson, but instead "cautions all Christians to be patient and not retaliate." This passage seemed useful in not only justifying the Adventist position but also to distinguish it from support for the interests of big business.

Wilson also found Ellen White's warnings concerning the apocalyptic threat of unions still pertinent. The papal support for labor exhibited since the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* in 1891 was evidence that unions were "helping to implement the Catholic church's objectives" in America, which, according to Revelation 13, meant "erecting an image to Catholic power." Some labor leaders expressed support for Sunday laws, underscoring the ultimate danger of unions to Adventists.[39] Wilson in fact devoted greater attention to apocalyptic concerns than many *Review* articles on the topic of labor unions in the 1940s—yet another indication of the continued strength of the Adventists' interpretation of history in influencing their action in the public arena and creating permanent distance between them and public institutions.

But here again the apocalyptic outlook did not simply produce a quietism that preferred to wait for the coming of the Lord rather than join the struggle to achieve justice for workers. It also correlated with an activism that used the political process to preserve and extend liberty. Having failed to establish a satisfactory arrangement through direct negotiation with unions, Adventist leaders in the mid-1960s turned to legislation and litigation as means to help working people in the Church enjoy religious liberty without loss of economic opportunity. And, ironically, that effort at times brought them into political alliance with organized labor.



President Lyndon Johnson's call upon Congress in 1965 to repeal section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 provided the occasion for an Adventist legislative initiative. Taft-Hartley, with its limitations on the power of organized labor, had afforded Adventists some support in their endeavor to work without joining unions. However, rather than oppose the repeal of section 14(b), which provided for state right-to-work laws, Adventist lobbyists proposed attaching to the repeal an amendment preventing the exclusion of religious objectors to labor unions from work places under union contract.

W. Melvin Adams, then associate secretary of the General Conference Religious Liberty Department, spearheaded the intensive lobbying effort for what became known as the "conscience clause."[40] Adams's plea, in the setting of the Johnson administration's ambitious program for social justice and welfare, was expressed in the title of a *Liberty* article: "Is there room for religious conviction in the Great Society?" He argued that since voluntary agreements between the church and unions had failed, and the spotty protection afforded by state right-to-work laws was now jeopardized, "it is now time for the Government to step in and guarantee the God-given right every man has to make a living for himself and his family, one of those rights our forefathers called 'unalienable.'" In other words, the government must combine with its program to combat poverty and expand economic opportunity strong provisions for individual liberty.

Specifically, he, on behalf of the Church, recommended to House and Senate subcommittees in June 1965 an amendment stipulating that to require an individual who has religious convictions against so doing to "join or financially support any labor organization" shall be "unfair labor practice." Such an individual would be required, in turn, to pay the equivalent of union initiation fees and periodic dues to the treasurer of the United States.[41]

Adams persuaded Representative Edith Green of Oregon to sponsor the amendment. A prolabor Democrat, she had initially regarded Adams's proposal as antiunion. After agreeing to sponsor it, however, she stuck by it despite some opposition from labor supporters.[42]

In addition to Adventists, representatives of a branch of the Plymouth Brethren, the Mennonites, and the National Association of Evangelicals spoke at congressional hearings, pressing the case for protecting religious convictions against union membership. Additional support, elicited by Adams, came from prolabor ecumenical organizations. Representatives of the National Council of Churches, the National Catholic Welfare Conference, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis sent a joint telegram urging that Congress "find a formula which simultaneously guarantees the legitimate rights of organized labor and the rights of those workers...whose religious beliefs make it impossible for them to join or support a labor organization."[43]

In this vigorous effort to promote legislation, the Church, said Adams, was "neutral on the political, economic and social aspects of the repeal of Section

14(b)," and concerned only with defending religious conviction.[44] But however apolitical the Church's motivation, it had definitely taken a side in a political fight. Moreover, the desire to "stand free" from labor unions led Adventists in this instance to take the side of organized labor, supporting labor's leading legislative priority, so long as the conscience clause was included.[45]

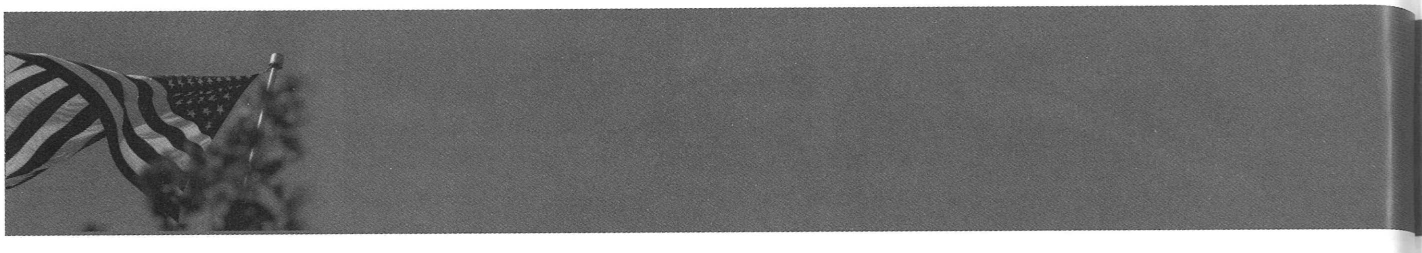
As it turned out, the bill to repeal 14(b), to which a modified form the conscience clause became attached, was killed by a filibuster. But despite its failure in Congress, the conscience clause served as a new general framework for Adventist efforts to make arrangements with unions. A boost came from the executive council of the AFL-CIO, which endorsed the provisions of the conscience clause while it was pending in the Senate and urged unions "to accommodate themselves to genuine individual religious scruples."[46] For its part, the Church, through its Department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, issued a "statement of cooperation," pledging Adventists to abide by the stipulations of an amendment proposed by Senator Wayne Morse of Oregon regarding the payment of the equivalent of union dues and fees to charity. By such action they sought to show that they were not, as sometimes accused, "free riders." Additionally, in the event of a strike, they would "not side with the union by participating in the strike activities, nor with the employer by interfering with the union picketing."[47] In essence, this was a renewal of the terms of the "Basis of Agreement" established in the 1940s, with one major difference: the money paid by the religious objector would go to an independent charity, rather than into union coffers.

> "This new policy is dishonest. It begins by maintaining our historic position of separation of church and state and then turns 180 degrees." W. Melvin Adams

With AFL-CIO policy not binding on union locals, however, it remained often difficult to persuade them to accept the conscience clause. Adventists continued to encounter pressure, with some losing their jobs and others either agreeing to join unions or accept arrangements that fell below the standard recommended by the Church. An occurrence in 1972 in Long Island, New York, is illustrative. Nine Seventh-day Adventists, employed as cooks, housekeepers, and nurses aides, were affected when the Drug and Hospital Workers' Union No. 1199 won the right to represent workers at the United Presbyterian Home. Four of the Adventists quit, wishing to avoid any connection with labor unions. Two agreed to join the union. The other three contacted church officials for help. Representatives of the General Conference and local union conference Religious Liberty Departments arrived to negotiate with union leaders. The union refused to accept a proposal based on the conscience clause, which would have allowed the workers to retain their jobs if they paid an amount equivalent to union dues to a national charity. However, the union was willing to exempt them from actual membership, oaths, picketing, and meeting requirements, if the money was paid to the union instead. The workers accepted these terms.[48]

While Adventists, with increasing success, pressed the issue in the courts during the 1970s,[49] Adams and his colleagues persisted in seeking congressional action on a conscience clause.[50] Success came slowly and in stages. A crucial breakthrough came in 1975, when New Jersey Congressman Frank Thompson, a prolabor Democrat who chaired the Subcommittee on Labor-Management Relations, indicated his support for such action. A bill sponsored by Thompson early in 1977 providing for substitution of charity payments for union membership and dues passed overwhelmingly in the House. In the Senate, however, it was attached to a broader Labor Reform Bill that was defeated by a filibuster. Finally in 1980, with Adams now retired and Gordon Engen leading Adventist lobbying, conscience clause legislation made it all the way through the congressional maze, despite continuing opposition from some unions. Reaching the Senate floor just a day before Congress was to adjourn, it passed by a voice vote without dissent and was signed into law by President Jimmy Carter on December 24, 1980. After a fifteen-year period of congressional lobbying, Adventists won the backing of federal law for the right of individuals with religious convictions against union membership to not have their economic opportunity thereby obstructed, so long as they did not take unfair advantage by pocketing the amount that would go to union dues.

The ethical approach taken by Adventists toward labor unions paralleled that taken toward the military in some important ways. They believed that the violence and coercion practiced by these institutions was contrary to biblical teaching concerning individual Christian behavior. Yet they did not protest the existence of such institutions in a sinful world, nor did they address the broad issues of peace and justice surrounding the activities of armies and unions. In exchange for the freedom to follow their understanding of certain biblical injunctions, they could offer silent neutrality and, sometimes, tacit blessing and willing cooperation to the institutions participating in conflict. In some respects, then, they tended toward uncritical nationalism, moral passivity, and indirect complicity in actions they regarded as morally impermissible for themselves.



At the same time, they would not entirely be swallowed up by conformity to the dominant institutions of American society. Indeed, Adventists sought with some rigor to maintain their social nonconformity on the issues they expected ultimately to be decisive. So even in the period when American Adventists were eagerly cultivating a cooperative relationship with the powerful institutions of the surrounding society, their apocalyptic view of history continued to undergird a sphere of resistance. Their earthly citizenship was, after all, only temporary; the heavenly was soon to supplant the earthly. In pursuing the course required by that expectation for the future, American Adventists succeeded in expanding the scope of individual freedom recognized by their earthly government.

While during the 1930s and 1940s many of the Church's editors and evangelists had denounced the welfare state as a potential instrument of repression, Adventists in the postwar decades did not perpetuate intransigent denunciation of "big government." Instead, they used legal channels in pressing for full realization of religious liberty under the provisions of the welfare state.

In the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, "cautious conservatism" remained the dominant, though no longer unchallenged, political style among American Adventists. Not only did they generally refrain from challenging the status quo, many leaders stressed more than ever that belief in the premillennial return of Christ and separation of church and state meant the Church must avoid political activism. That emphasis, however, was in part a reaction to significant voices being raised in the Church on behalf of a new and deeper involvement with the issues dividing American society.

Separationism and Conservatism

Reacting to the increasing involvement of American churches in progressive social causes, *Review* editor Kenneth Wood exclaimed in a 1971 editorial, "When will Christians really believe that the second coming of Christ is the only answer to this world's problems!"[51] Wood here ignored the history of extensive activism on the part of apocalyptically motivated Adventists. But he and other Adventist leaders posited a sharp distinction between the religious—the Church's proper realms of activity—and the secular, the proper sphere of government and politics. Making such a distinction was certainly nothing new for Adventists, but now leading spokespersons seemed to be making it in a more unqualified fashion than in previous eras. Borrowing the language of a Gallup Poll question, Wood declared in 1968 that while the Church should indeed be attentive to human rights and needs, it should "stick to religion" and not be "sidetracked" by such worthwhile causes from its "God-given assignment" to preach the gospel throughout the world, particularly the "three angels' messages of Revelation 14—God's saving messages for this judgment hour."[52] Similarly, F. D. Nichol, in 1965, described the increasing Protestant interest in political, economic, and social issues as an effort to "reform the world in its secular aspects."[53]

Though they thus tended to distance themselves from church-based political activism, Adventists could not be described as politically neutral or entirely aloof. Though hard evidence is sketchy, Adventist church historian C. Mervyn Maxwell's observation about late nineteenth-century Adventists being "overwhelmingly Republican in political sympathies"[54] held equally true into the 1970s, at least for the white majority.[55]

"In earlier eras Adventists had rarely been so timid about expressing their judgment on constitutional issues of church and state."

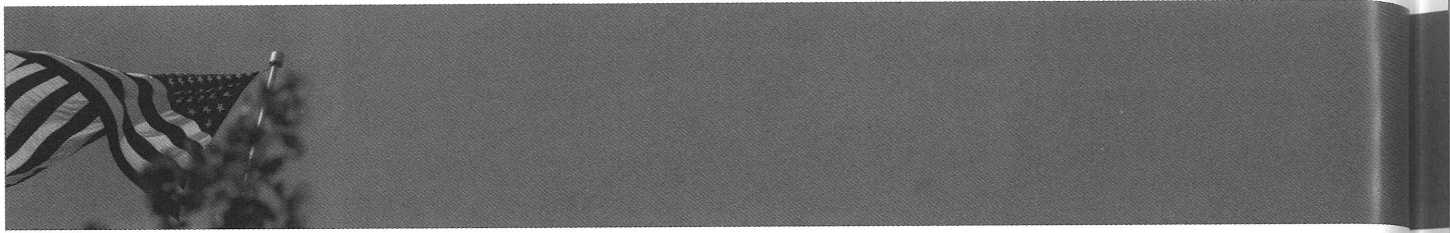
The record of Jerry L. Pettis, the first Adventist elected to the United States Congress, gives us a window on Adventist political leanings. Pettis began his remarkable career as a minister, then turned to aviation, and then to business ventures in audio tape distribution and tape duplicating equipment that made him a millionaire. He also took up citrus and avocado ranching. Then, in 1966, he was elected to represent the southern California district that included Loma Linda, the site of the Adventist medical school. A private plane crash brought a tragic end to his life in 1975 while he was still in Congress.[56]

The *Almanac of American Politics* described Pettis as "safely conservative" though straying from party orthodoxy enough "to indicate the presence of an original mind." Analysis of his voting record from 1968 to 1970 shows support for all major weapons programs and opposition to the Coop-Church amendment to limit presidential authority to conduct military operations in Cambodia. These votes earned him a 100 percent rating on the National Security Index of the American Security Council. He also received high ratings from the conservative Americans for Constitutional Action. Ratings from the liberal Americans for Democratic Action ranged from 0 percent in 1968 to 28 percent in 1970.[57]

Probably no church official expressed Adventist identification with conservatism and the Republican Party in more direct fashion than J. James Aitken, who served as the General Conference representative to Congress and the United Nations in the early 1970s. After President Richard Nixon's speech in April 1972 declaring plans for intensive bombing of North Vietnam, Aitken sent him a letter of appreciation and, in a second letter a month later, expressed the hope "that the nation will understand the extreme importance of the most courageous action which you have taken."[58] Writing to Pettis on the same topic, Aitken summarized in a sentence the aggregate of church-state separationism, quietism, and conservatism that had become the dominant political style in Adventism: "Other Churches may take whatever action they desire on Vietnam, but the Seventh-day Adventist Church feels that it should pray for the Chief Executive that the state might make the right decisions without pressure from the Church."[59] Under Aitken's approach, the Church could support a favored government such as Nixon's with complicity and spiritual legitimation and yet remain ostensibly apolitical, not crossing the wall separating church and state.

During the Watergate crisis, Aitken assured Nixon and other Republican leaders of ongoing support from the Adventist Church. In a letter to George Bush, then chairman of the Republican National Committee, Aitken declared that in all the political crisis we have been going through recently, we as a church want to be loyal to our President and to the Republican Party who put him there.... We have not lost faith in you, your party, and above all, the President of the United States. We stand firm in our support of him. Acknowledging that some Adventists vote Democratic, he maintained that the majority "have through the years been on the conservative side and appreciate the great principles of the Republican Party."[60] Though no public church pronouncement would be so openly partisan and Aitken's sweeping statements no doubt exceeded any authority with which to back them, he did speak as the Church's official representative to Congress, and effectively conveyed a political orientation that was rarely stated so explicitly in public.

The quietism and cautious conservatism that Adventists continued to exhibit in this period derived in part from their belief in the separation of church and state, which biased them against church-based advocacy for governmental solutions to social problems. However, just as the expanding welfare state battered strict separationism in regard to government aid, the issues of war, race, and poverty that stirred the nation in the 1960s prompted challenges to the blend of patriotic conservatism, individualistic piety, and disengagement from public controversy that had come to be viewed as normative for American Adventism. Particularly from black Adventist leaders and from a growing class of young, highly educated academics and professionals, came calls for the Church to break out of its isolation and relate its message to the turbulent issues facing the nation.



It was controversy over these issues of war, race, and poverty that sharpened into what Robert Wuthnow has called the "Great Divide" between religious conservatives and liberals in America. Liberals sought to galvanize direct action by the church for peace in Southeast Asia and racial justice. Conservatives judged such activism improper for the church, while favoring a strong military posture and a lesser role for the government in resolving racial and economic problems.[61] The new voices in Adventism identified, at least vaguely, with the liberal side.

Reaction by adherents of cautious conservatism against the new calls to such involvement was strong, but not so overwhelming as to silence the voices for change. The "Great Divide," which marked conflict between liberals and conservatives within denominations rather than between denominations, now manifested itself in the new plurality of views that persisted in Adventism. Each of the key issues that divided the nation—war, race, and poverty—brought new tension and new dynamism into Adventism.

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"Separation of church and state must at times be as invulnerable wall, but on occasion it must also be a permeable honeycomb allowing legitimate cooperation and even government regulation." Bert B. Beach

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48. Robert Nixon, "Attention Pastor: How Would Your Members React?," *Liberty News* 18 (Aug. 1972): 47-48.

49. Dybdahl, "You're Fired!," 19; Gordon Engen, "Judge Rules in SDAs Favor," *Review* 155 (Sept. 21, 1978): 24; Robert W. Nixon, "Two SDAs Win Conscience Cases," *Review* 155 (Nov. 2, 1978): 32; Shirley Burton, "Court Upholds SDA's Stand," *Review* 156 (Feb. 15, 1979): 23.

50. The continuing efforts for a conscience clause leading to its passage in 1980 are described by Dybdahl, "You're Fired!," and Gordon Engen, "U.S. Congress Enacts Conscience Clause," *Review* 158 (May 7, 1981): 4-8.

51. Kenneth H. Wood, "The Church and Its Mission," *Review* 148 (Aug. 19, 1971): 2.

52. Kenneth H. Wood, "The Church Should 'Stick to Religion,'" *Review* 145 (May 23, 1968): 12-13.

53. F. D. Nichol, "The Church and Social Reform," *Review* 142 (Apr. 15, 1965): 14-15, emphasis supplied.

54. C. Mervyn Maxwell, "Adventists and Politics: A Second Look," *Ministry* 49 (Oct. 1976): 10-11.

55. Although hardly definitive, reports on polls and precinct voting in Adventist college newspapers substantiate a strongly Republican orientation. For example, 55 percent of the students polled at Walla Walla College in Washington in 1964 favored the Republican candidate Barry Goldwater whereas only 22 percent favored President Lyndon Johnson, slightly less than the "undecided." See Ron Schaffner and Chuck Scriven, "Poll Shows Preference for Goldwater," *Collegian* 49 (Oct. 29, 1964): 1. A poll in which Andrews University students participated in 1968 gives further indication of the Republican leanings of Adventist students in the 1960s. In the "Choice '68" National Collegiate Presidential primary, 47 percent of Andrews students indicated Richard Nixon as their first choice for president, compared with 19 percent of students nationwide. Over 29 percent of Andrews students made Robert Kennedy or Eugene McCarthy their first choice, but over 49 percent did in the national total (*Student Movement* 54 [May 16, 1968]: 2).

56. Miriam Wood, *Congressman Jerry L. Pettis: His Story* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1977).

57. Michael Barone, Grant Ujifusa, and Douglas Matthews, *The Almanac of American Politics* (1972; reprint, New York: E. P. Dutton), 1975, 115.

58. J. James Aitken to Richard M. Nixon, Apr. 28, 1972, and May 24, 1972, Box R 760, GCA.

59. J. James Aitken to Jerry L. Pettis, May 24, 1972, Jerry Pettis, Box R 760, GCA.

60. J. James Aitken to George Bush, Dec. 28, 1973, Box R 747, GCA. In a letter to Richard Nixon following the president's news conference of Mar. 6, 1974, Aitken lauded the president's performance as "most noble" and commented that he wished "the press could be more objective;" J. James Aitken to Richard Nixon, Mar. 7, 1974, Box R 760, GCA.

61. Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith Since World War II* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1988), 132-34, 145-49.

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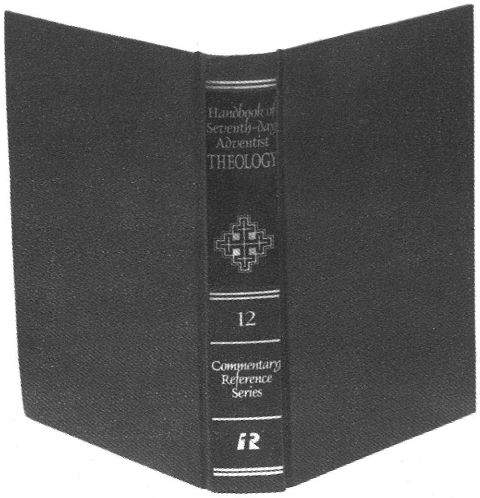
Theology as Topical Bible Study



Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theolgy,
Commentary Reference Series, vol. 12. Hagerstown, Md.:
Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000; 1,009 pages.

Reviewed by Richard Rice

Volume 12 of the "Commentary Reference Series" is now ready to take its place on Adventist bookshelves, alongside the *Adventist Bible Commentary, Bible Dictionary, Sourcebook,* and *Encyclopedia.* The *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* appeared just in time for the 2000 General Conference in Toronto. Over a thousand pages long, it contains twenty-eight entries—an overall sketch of the movement entitled, "Who Are Seventh-day Adventists?" followed by twenty-seven extensive essays on various doctrinal topics, from biblical inspiration to eschatology.

The *Handbook* has a long history. In fact, it has a long "prehistory," as someone involved in the project put it. At one time during Robert Pierson's presidential administration, both the Review and Herald and Southern Publishing Associations were authorized to prepare a theology book, unbeknown to each other. Nothing came of either effort, however, and it wasn't until the 1980s, well after the two publishing houses had merged, that the projects began to move. By the end of 1986, members of the Biblical Research Institute (BRI) and editors at the Review and Herald had a slate of writers and deadlines in place and the next year a steering committee was set up to oversee the operation. The Review and Herald took charge of paying the writers and editing their material. But the quality of the contributions varied widely and writers kept missing deadlines, so the project was terminated in 1987.

Still convinced the Church needed a theological handbook, the General Conference revived the project the next year. At Annual Council in 1988, the Executive Committee authorized George Reid, of the Biblical Research Institute, to direct its preparation. Raoul Dederen, longtime professor at the Adventist Theological Seminary, was appointed project director and editor, and under his determined leadership things began to roll. The idea was to have the *Handbook* ready by the 1995 General Conference. It finally appeared in 2000.[1] Sad to say, two of the contributors, Gerhard Hasel and Kenneth Strand, both among the Church's most productive scholars and most influential teachers, did not live to see their contributions reach publication.

The Review and Herald Publishing Association has printed and published the book, but its production has been entirely the responsibility of the Biblical Research Institute.[2] The articles were written by individual authors whom Dederen and the BRI selected. The contributors were instructed to write with the nonspecialist, general reader in mind, to devote the bulk of their articles to a consideration of biblical material ("abstaining as much as possible from nonscriptural sources" [xi]), and to develop positions "broadly representative of mainstream Adventist theology and biblical scholarship." The Biblical Research Institute Committee (BRICOM) read the initial drafts and often requested revisions. Consequently, as the preface announces, "no part of it is the work of a single author." The overall goal was to produce a "handy and valued reference tool" for "Adventist non-Adventist homes, classrooms, and libraries, as well as... pastoral offices" (xi).

Moreover, the writers were to meet these needs on a global scale. The list of authors is international. Though all but a few of the twenty-seven writers now live and work in the United States, many of them came from other parts of the world and the whole working team—BRICOM members included—represents more than twenty countries. By other standards, however, there is notably little diversity. More than twenty of the twenty-seven contributors have been associated with the General Conference or with Andrews University at one time or another. The only woman in the group is Nancy Vyhmeister, who wrote the introductory essay.

Each article follows the same general format: first, an introduction that contains a brief overview of the topic and a detailed outline of the presentation; second, an extensive treatment of biblical material relating to the topic (almost always the longest section); third, a "historical overview" that summarizes different treatments of the topic throughout the Christian centuries, along with the development of Adventist thought on the issue; fourth, a compilation of quotations from Ellen G. White's writings, arranged under topical headings—the sort of compilation found at the end of each of the *Commentary* volumes; and fifth, a "literature" section that contains "a short list of works used by the author and regarded as helpful for further investigation of the topic."[3]

Only time will tell whether the appearance of this *Handbook* represents an important event in Adventist history, but it certainly deserves careful attention. I don't know of anything else the Church has produced that rivals it in the way of sustained theological reflection. Because it is a "handbook" of "theology," it is appropriate for us to ask just how each expression applies to it.

It is quite a reach to call this volume a "handbook." At least, it is unlike most other theological handbooks or dictionaries I have seen. I have three such works in my library.[4] Each is roughly half the size of the Adventist *Handbook*; their articles, arranged in alphabetical order, vary in length from half a column to many pages; and the number of contributors ranges from 138 to 175. In comparison, the Adventist *Handbook* is quite large, the number of contributors is remarkably small, and the individual entries are exceptionally long. The essays average more than thirty-seven double-column, print-filled pages.[5]

Theological vs. Alphabetical Order

Perhaps most significantly, the articles in the Adventist *Handbook* are arranged in "theological" rather than alphabetical order. They follow the general sequence of topics familiar to every student of systematic theology. The book starts with the doctrine of

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revelation, proceeds through the doctrines of God, humanity, salvation, and church, and concludes with eschatology. The Adventist *Handbook* contains two articles on revelation, one on God, four on humanity, four on topics of special concern to Adventists (the sanctuary, creation, the law, and the Sabbath), three on the church, four on different aspects of Christian living, and seven that deal with eschatological themes.

What we have here is less a handbook of theology than a systematic theology. The book doesn't just itemize the bits and pieces of theology, as handbooks typically do, it integrates and arranges them in a sequence of substantial essays. However, most systematic theologies are the work of one author, who brings to bear on the range of Christian concerns the unifying vision of a single mind. The handbook, of course, is a group project, perhaps more accurately, a committee project, and for that reason it was probably a good idea not to describe it as systematic. Still, a title along the lines of "an introduction to Adventist theology," or "essays in Adventist theology," would more accurately convey its intentions.[6]

Given the fact that the book was thoroughly edited by a committee, it is surprising to find considerable overlap among certain articles. For example, Aecio E. Cairus's article, "The Doctrine of Man," discusses sin, death, resurrection, and the future life, in spite of the existence of separate articles devoted to each of these three topics. Raoul Dederen's article, "Christ: His Person and Work," and Ivan Blazen's article on "Salvation" touch on a number of the same themes. Miroslav Kis's article on "Christian Lifestyle and Behavior" includes a section on "Christian Stewardship," even though Charles E. Bradford devotes an entire article to the topic. Consideration of humanity's final destiny shows up in a number of different articles, too. Perhaps the reading committee found it difficult to excise shared material without violating the integrity of the different articles.

The historical surveys are generally succinct and quite informative, although the same characters—largely related to developments in Western Christianity—show up time and again. Eastern Christianity is generally ignored. The Ellen G. White quotations are treated unevenly. Some authors simply list them under various headings; some include introductory or interpretive remarks; and others provide summaries of her statements with supporting references.

I have two additional quibbles with the preparation of the volume. The articles lack footnotes and endnotes, and that is regrettable. The idea, of course, was to make the book's appearance more inviting to the general reader, the sort of person likely to dislike such scholarly apparatus. However, given the length and density of the articles, I doubt that the absence of footnotes is likely to increase readership. The sort of people inclined to make their way through dozens of information-packed pages with skimpy margins will want to know where the authors got their material and just how they use their sources.

In general, the "Literature" sections that appear at the end of each article are only minimally helpful. They combine a list of the author's sources with suggestions for further reading without any distinction between the categories. The list of items is probably too long for the general reader, too short for the scholar, and too diverse to be of much help to either. In a given bibliography one might find references to items in nineteenth-century denominational publications, popular books and articles of recent vintage, and weighty scholarly tomes like Kittel's massive *Theological Dictionary of the Greek New Testament* and Karl Barth's multivolume *Church Dogmatics.*

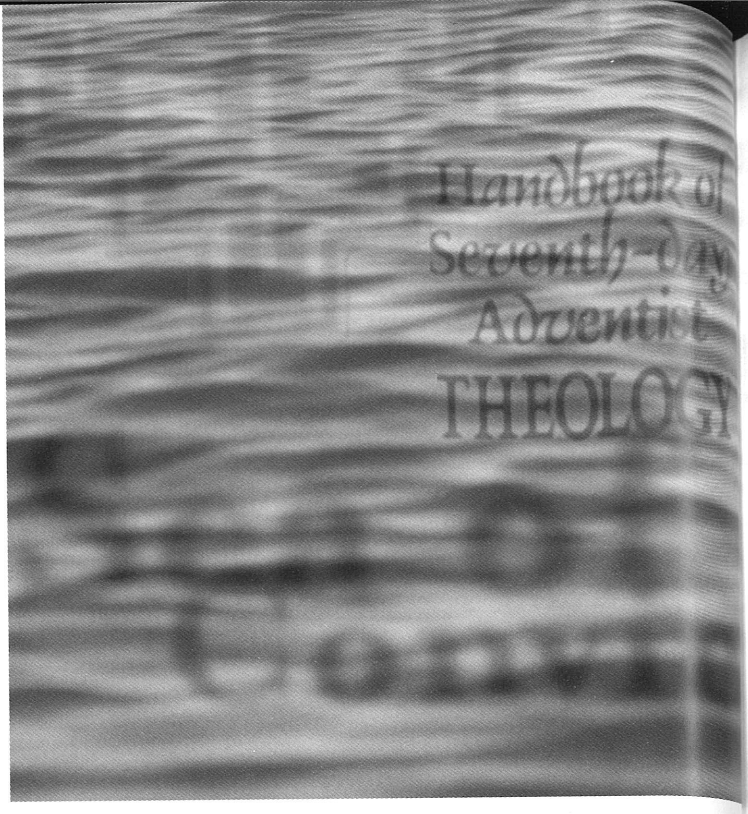
Because the book really isn't a handbook, I have my doubts that this volume will serve as the "handy and valued reference tool" it is supposed to be. It is a little difficult to imagine a student snatching it from the shelf, paging quickly to an item of interest and finding her question succinctly answered. The selection of Ellen G. White quotations, as well as the historical summaries, at the end of each article may serve such a purpose, but the articles themselves probably won't. There is no easy reading here, only solid, serious material calling for diligence and determination. However, the book has three features to help readers looking for specific items. Each article contains a detailed outline at the beginning, the headings and subheadings throughout the text are very clear, and the *Handbook* has both a general index and a selective scriptural index.

So much for the "handbook" part of the title. What does it represent as a work of "theology"?

To begin, the mere appearance of this volume is encouraging. It is reassuring to think that an interest in serious theological reflection exists in the Church today. I grew up in the 1950s, when the *Bible Commentary* was published. The members of the little church to which I belonged bought the volumes, read them, discussed them, and eagerly awaited the arrival of the next addition. These books made a major contribution to the thinking of the Church and testified to the seriousness with which Adventists studied their Bibles.[7]

The commitment to serious Bible study I saw years ago has given way to something rather different in recent years. For the most part, Adventists today are not interested in reading serious books—or even articles—of any length. They now appear to be more interested in items of an inspirational, devotional nature. They want help in solving problems and building relationships. Consequently, our denominational publications don't contain the sort of material for which they were known years ago. They now include much more in the way of news items, personal sketches, chatty columns, and inspirational thoughts, and much less in the way of sustained biblical or doctrinal discussion. If the arrival of this *Handbook* generates an appetite for some solid theological food, we can all be grateful and the Church will be the better for it.

As far as the Adventist Church and the larger religious world are concerned, this volume will serve both, perhaps in different ways. On the one hand, along with the *Bible Commentary,* the *Handbook* demonstrates that Seventh-day Adventists are capable of and committed to sustained theological reflection. The articles all evince a great deal of work. They are obviously the fruit of extensive research and careful exposition. The labor is a little more "labored" in some places than others, but anyone who reads this book carefully will learn a lot.[8] Non-Adventists can learn from the serious discussion of characteristic Adventist concerns, like creation, the Sabbath, the sanctuary, judgment, and death. Adventists can learn from the careful treatment of themes not unique to our own community, such as the doctrines of God, Christ, and the church.



The Great Themes of Christian Faith

As a whole, the book clearly demonstrates that Adventists do not hold their distinctive beliefs in isolation from the great themes of Christian faith. They are interested in the entire range of Christian beliefs, and they want to situate their specific doctrinal concerns within a comprehensive framework of Christian faith.[9] Adventism represents a particular expression of Christianity, but it is not a departure from it.

Although there is a good deal to praise about this endeavor, there are some things about it that concern me. I wish this *Handbook* managed to convey the vigor and intensity that often characterizes Adventist theological discussion. I also wish it provided a sense of the growing range of Adventist theological concerns.

The sections of each article that deal with Adventist history don't pursue matters beyond the

> "The *Handbook* is a good example of the way Adventists have characteristically gone about describing their beliefs .... This is theology as topical Bible study."

nineteenth century, so readers unfamiliar with recent discussions in Adventism will not be brought up to date. For example, "The Sabbath in Seventh-day Adventist History and Practice" concentrates on developments in the mid-1800s. Yet over the past few decades, Seventh-day Adventists have done some of their most creative theological work on the Sabbath, indeed, some of the most creative theological work anyone has done on the Sabbath. Unfortunately, the article conveys no sense of that work.

Nor does the *Handbook* signal some of the liveliest theological discussion in the past few decades. I couldn't find anything on women in ministry, certainly a matter of great concern to Adventists in North America, and one that the world church has addressed. In fact, the words *ministry* and *ordination* do not even appear in the index. Ellen G. White's literary dependence is touched on only lightly, and the books by Ronald Numbers and Walter Rae that ignited controversy on the topic twenty-five years ago do not appear in the bibliography.

On the other hand, the book contains some oblique references to variations of thinking within the Church. Fernando Canale indirectly refers to the open view of God as one to which certain Seventh-day Adventists are attracted.[10] In his article on the person and work of Christ, Raoul Dederen mentions that some Seventh-day Adventists believe Christ assumed a fallen human nature in the incarnation. He also refers to the beliefs of some contemporary Seventh-day Adventists who prefer a "view reminiscent of Abelard's moral influence interpretation" to the traditional view that Christ's atoning death represents "a penal substitutionary sacrifice."[11] However, these comments hardly communicate the intensity with which many Adventists advocate the fallen humanity of Christ, or the significant influence that Graham Maxwell's "larger view" of God has had on the thinking of many in the Church.

The book includes some discussion of moral and ethical issues—see "Christian Lifestyle and Behavior" and "Marriage and Family"—but the authors of these articles approach these issues primarily as matters of individual concern. Adventists have had a longstanding interest in the relation between the church and the world, and in the role that its members should play in addressing social problems. Adventists were deeply involved in various reform movements in the nineteenth century, particularly the temperance movement, and over the past forty years many Adventists have called on the Church to respond to social evils in critical and constructive ways. One learns next to nothing about this aspect of Adventist life in this volume, however, and that is unfortunate.[12]

Something else that's missing is an extensive discussion of the Adventist concern with spiritual formation and the devotional life. Adventists have a tremendous investment in religious education. We see it in our private educational system—the largest unified private school system in the world, one General Conference official has told me—in programs for Bible study on a group and personal level through Sabbath quarterlies and devotional aids like morning watch books. But the *Handbook* does not develop such concerns. It contains a brief section on "piety" in the article "Christian Lifestyle and Behavior," but a single page does not begin to convey our interest in this area.[13] (The index contains no entry titled "prayer.") At the same time, the volume does address a number of important issues, such as homosexuality, abortion, and the environment, and it has a nice essay devoted to health and healing, an area of characteristic Adventist concern.

We may quibble over whether our favorite topics receive adequate treatment in the *Handbook*, but it makes one omission particularly hard to understand. The "Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology" oddly contains no article titled "theology," or any explanation of theological method. This is not to say that the project has no concept of the theological task behind it. There is indeed. It is very specific, it emerges in several ways, and it raises important questions.

Consider the general layout of the articles. As noted, each article contains an extensive review of biblical material on the topic, a much briefer review of historical material, and a compilation of pertinent Ellen G. White quotations. These are the basic sources an Adventist theologian would consult in developing a position, of course. But one would expect an author who has reviewed these sources to take another step—to synthesize the insights this study provides and formulate a constructive statement on the topic. However, in these articles there is no such constructive statement. There are short sections on "practical implications" after each biblical section, and the words "theology" and "theological" occasionally appear in subsection titles within the biblical discussion. However, the bulk of each article consists of a review of biblical material. As the preface notes, the writers were instructed to "abstain as much as possible from referring to nonscriptural sources" and "let the *Scriptures* speak" (emphasis original) (x).

The implication is clear. As envisioned by the editors of this book, the task of theology is to survey various biblical passages that relate to doctrinal topics. With that, the work of theology is essentially done. We don't need constructive, interpretive statements, because the Bible speaks for itself.[14] In other words, once we have determined what the biblical material meant, there is no need to ask what it means. We already know it.

This approach to theology rests on the assumption that the biblical message needs only to be stated to be understood. It seems to presuppose that the Bible speaks with timeless immediacy to every generation, more or less independent of historical circumstances. This brings us to the perennial challenge theology faces as to what, exactly, is involved in hearing the message of the Bible *for us.*

Interpreting vs. Preserving Biblical Messages

In very broad terms, there are two contrasting approaches, each with a cluster of variations around it. One emphasizes the importance of preserving the biblical message and respecting its integrity. The other emphasizes the importance of interpreting the biblical message. The first is preoccupied with the spoken word; the second, with the word that is heard. So although they share a commitment to communicate the message, they disagree as to what effective communication involves.

Proponents of the first approach fear that the attempt to interpret, mediate, or translate the message to contemporary minds will compromise and obscure it. Instead of hearing the message, they are convinced, interpreters inevitably impose their own ideas on the Bible and, not surprisingly, find in its words nothing but the echo of their own presuppositions. Proponents of the second approach fear that the message will never speak to us effectively unless it takes seriously the thought forms that shape our view of reality.

The Bible reflects the thought forms of antiquity, a world far removed from our own. To understand what the biblical writers say to us we must take into account the vast distance between their time and ours. This requires us to analyze two perspectives—ours as well as theirs. Unless we bridge the distance between them, the message will remain inaccessible to men and women today.

It is essential, then, that we take into account the perspective that we ourselves bring to the Bible as we seek to understand it. Because no one occupies a neutral vantage point and because we all stand in a specific place within human history and society, we must approach the biblical text in a way that is "methodologically self-conscious." So we have not heard the Bible unless we have heard its message for us, and we have not heard its message for us unless we take into account the conceptions we bring with us when we approach the text.

The reply to this alternative conception of theology is that anything in the way of constructive interpretation amounts to human speculation. Interpretation involves imposing ideas on the Bible, rather than drawing them from the Bible; placing human reason above the Bible, rather than submitting human reason to the Bible. Our task, instead, is simply to hear the message of the Bible, in essentially its own words, and accept it straightforwardly as the Word of God. We must let the Scriptures speak for themselves and avoid allowing our own ideas to interfere in the process.

This is an ideal, to be sure, comes the rejoinder from the other side, and one that nearly all theologians—liberal as well as conservative—would warmly endorse. Nothing should obscure or predetermine the meaning of the biblical text. However, this goal does not obviate the need for interpretation. Like it or not, admit it or not, it is a simple fact that nobody, not even the most ardent biblicist, comes to the Bible devoid of theological presuppositions.

Although there is nothing like this sort of exchange in the *Handbook,* concerns like these lie behind the *Handbook,* and there are places where they surface. The authors of two articles in particular insist that we should avoid human speculation and let the Bible speak

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on its own terms. In both, the authors' own agendas are evident, even as they insist that they are only attending to the clear teaching of the Word.

In "Doctrine of God," Fernando Canale insists that "our understanding of God must stand free from human speculations," and human philosophy must be "subject to the Bible, since divine philosophy is already available in the Scriptures" (105). However, Canale's approach to the doctrine is very much in the manner of classical theological reflection, dominated as it is by philosophical concerns. He discusses the divine attributes of "eternity" and "immutability," heavy philosophical concepts, before he takes up divine love, certainly God's preeminent biblical attribute. In addition, Canale appeals to divine mystery rather than addressing some significant problems in his formulation, such as the difficulties of reconciling divine foreknowledge with future free decisions (114), and the difficulties of affirming that God is both three and one.[15]

I like a great many things about Canale's discussion. He affirms an interactive view of God's relation to the world. And by marshaling the biblical support for the divinity of the Son and the Spirit as well as the Father, Canale provides a strong affirmation of the divine Trinity. My point is that Canale brings certain presuppositions to his study of the Bible, despite his determination not to do so. The fact is, we all do, and Adventist theology would be better off if we all acknowledged it.

Language of Philosphy vs. Language of the Bible

Nonbiblical presuppositions are also evident in another essay whose author is determined to avoid them. In the article on biblical interpretation, Richard Davidson explicitly rejects the "historical-critical" in favor of the "historical-biblical" method of interpretation. The distinguishing characteristic of the former is that it uses "methodological considerations arising from Scripture alone," whereas the latter makes human reason the ultimate criterion for truth.[16] Appropriate biblical study "analyzes but refuses to critique" the Bible.[17]

The interesting thing about this methodological commitment is the fact that it does not come from a straightforward reading of the Bible. Instead, it derives from a certain concept of the Bible through rather elaborate reasoning. Davidson draws many implications from *sola scriptura,* the principle that the Bible alone is the final norm of truth. The principle implies two corollaries, he says: the primacy and the sufficiency of Scripture. Another general principle of interpretation, the totality of Scripture, implies two more corollaries, and so it goes.[18] It is obvious that a great deal of close reasoning goes into Davidson's positions. It is not so clear that each point in his chain of corollaries—and the implications he derives from them—are directly based on biblical evidence itself. In fact, the language of the discussion—principles, implications, corollaries—is the language of philosophy, far removed from the language of the Bible.

Davidson is convinced that those who take other approaches to the biblical material are allowing human reason to determine what they find there. However, one could say the same thing about his approach. He advocates conclusions that seem to go well beyond what the biblical data support. For example, he lists among the hermeneutical procedures we should reject "literary (source) criticism," "the attempt to hypothetically reconstruct and understand the process of literary development leading to the present form of the text." Instead, he advocates "literary analysis," which examines the "literary characteristics of the biblical materials in their canonical form" (95).

Rejecting this quest for sources seems unwarranted, especially when certain biblical writers frankly describe using sources (Luke 1:1-3) and some even seem to tell readers to go look at them (1 Chron. 19:29-30). Davidson's approach also conflicts with the *Adventist Bible Commentary,* which acknowledges that both Matthew and Luke relied on common written sources, including Mark and another document.[19] So, "The mere appearance of this volume is encouraging. It is reassuring to think there is an interest in serious theological reflection in the Church today."

the *Bible Commentary* says we can know something about the literary sources of the biblical documents, but Davidson says we should not inquire behind their canonical form. Does this mean that the process of canonization is off limits, too? Davidson does not say. However, the logic of his position tends toward that conclusion. God directly superintended the entire production of the Bible as we now have it. For theological purposes, that's all we need to know about it. Studies that lead to a more complicated picture of the Bible's history represent challenges to divine authority and should be resisted.

Some time ago I worked through a couple thousand pages of *God, Revelation, and Authority,* the magnum opus of Carl F. H. Henry, one of the twentieth century's leading Evangelical thinkers and a strong supporter of biblical inerrancy.[20] Davidson's discussion is strongly reminiscent of what I read there. His article doesn't invoke the word *inerrancy,* but in other respects it employs both the language and the logic of that position.[21]

I don't know how many in the Adventist Church share Davidson's position, but I am a bit surprised to find it advocated so strongly in a volume described as "broadly representative of mainstream Adventist theology and biblical scholarship as they are practiced throughout the worldwide Adventist Church" (xi). In certain respects, it departs dramatically from mainstream Adventist biblical scholarship.

From Doctrine to Scripture

To summarize, the *Handbook* is a good example of the way Adventists have characteristically gone about describing their beliefs. We see it in church publications, evangelistic series, and Bible studies, as well as in academy classes in religion and seminary courses in theology. The approach is basically to develop a list of doctrinal concerns and then mine the Bible for evidence to support them. This is theology as topical Bible study. Although the extensive review of biblical material in each article is supposed "to let the *Scriptures* speak," each pursues a specific theological agenda. As John Brunt says in his article, "the entire biblical section is an explication of the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the resurrection" (370). There is nothing wrong with going from doctrine to Scripture, of course—after all, John Calvin suggests doing so in the introduction his great *Institutes of the Christian Religion*—but that is not quite the same as studying the Bible on its own terms, as every trained biblical scholar knows, and it is worth noting and preserving the important difference between these activities.

As I see it, then, this volume provides an outstanding example of traditional Adventist theology. It identifies a large number of our characteristic doctrinal concerns, and it contains extensive, sometimes massive, surveys of relevant biblical material.[22] But however valuable this approach to theology is, there are other approaches worth noting, too, and I believe that the Adventist community should consider them as well.

One is the sort of activity that the contributors to this volume were specifically asked not to do, and that is to develop their own constructive statements. Nothing substitutes for careful exegetical work. The Bible remains for all time the authoritative source and guide of Christian faith. However, to hear the biblical message to us, to appreciate its application to our situation, we must take into account the dynamics of our own situation. In other words, to hear the message clearly, we must carefully consider what it means to listen. Every generation confronts new challenges. Every generation asks new questions. We do not live in a cultural or intellectual vacuum, so we cannot avoid the challenge of interpretation. The Church has a responsibility to address these questions and respond to these challenges. Theology must be constructive as well as descriptive, or we risk missing its message for us today. Fritz Guy's recent book on theological method contains an eloquent brief for this theological vision.[23] It calls for a constructive interpretation of Christian faith from an Adventist perspective, and this is something rather different from what we find in this *Handbook.* Such a project would speak to academy, church, and world—the three "publics" of theology—in helpful ways.

I believe that the Church would benefit from yet another approach to theology, as well. Valuable as the interpretative and constructive task of theology is, it shares the preoccupation with doctrines, or beliefs, that we find the in the Adventist *Handbook*. By personal inclination and professional training, I am drawn to this general vision of theology. I like nothing more than applying reason to the contents of faith in a logically rigorous way, developing well-constructed arguments to support Christian truth-claims. However, I have come to the conclusion that the value of such endeavors, whether pursued in traditional or revisionary ways, is limited. They are relatively ineffective in communicating the lived experience of the community of faith.

Doctrines are not simply beliefs, they are beliefs that the Church holds dear. They are convictions by which people live and die. Beliefs and believers are bound together, and we need a way of doing theology that explores and explicates that inseparable union. Our "fundamental beliefs" rest on the surface of a profound sea of convictions, some of which we are clearly conscious, many of which move us in profound and imperceptible ways.

On a definitional level, for example, an Adventist is one who believes in Christ's personal return to Earth. On an experiential level, however, an Adventist is someone whose whole life is oriented by the fervent expectation of Christ's return. On a definitional level, a sabbathkeeper regards the seventh day of the week as the appropriate day for Christian rest and worship. On another level, however, the Sabbath represents an experience that infuses all of life and all reality with meaning. Theology needs to find ways to get at the experiential connection between belief and life. And this takes something more than a section on practical application in our doctrinal discussion. It involves the recognition that our doctrines are practical through and through. And it requires ways of rendering or portraying the way that beliefs bring to expression deeply held convictions.

This "third way" is not easy to define. Its object is elusive, not because it is too abstract for clear analysis, but because it is too concrete. It is not easy to "get at," and it is not easy to encompass. The concrete life of the community characterized by faith-hope-and-love embraces beliefs, but much more as well, and we need ways to capture the full range of its life. So, we need all the resources of traditional biblical study. We need to bring the conclusions of our biblical study into conversation with other sources of truth, with the conclusions of science and philosophy, for example. However, we also need to get to the heart of the community's corporate experience.

How shall we do this? Finding a way is our first task. Or so it would seem. But we can't define the task and then follow it. This sort of theology doesn't consist of method then application, theory then practice. So, we'll have to develop our method as we go. Like the life of faith itself, theology is a journey, an exploration. It will no doubt contain false starts and disappointments. However, it will also lead to achievements and surprises. Only one thing is sure: the beginning will not determine the outcome. We want the richness of what we are exploring to determine our inquiry, rather than force our conclusions to fit a preestablished mold.[24]

I am glad the *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* is available. It will serve a useful purpose. I hope it also serves as a springboard for further discussion. In addition to a review of the biblical support for our doctrines, we need something that tells the Adventist story and conveys something of the Adventist adventure. We need a "theological portrait" that will plumb the depths of Adventist experience and situate our beliefs within the dynamic context of our community's rich and varied life.

Notes and References

1. Compared to the *Bible Commentary*, the *Handbook* emerged at glacial speed. It took twice as long to produce the one-volume, one-thousand-page handbook as it took to produce the seven-volume, eight-thousand-page commentary. Eighteen months after the Review and Herald board approved its preparation, the first of the *Commentary*'s seven volumes appeared. The last one followed some four years later.

2. In fact, they were supposed to provide the Review and Herald with "camera ready copy."

3. *Handbook*, x.

4. Everett F. Harrison, ed., *Baker's Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1960); Donald W. Musser and Joseph L. Price, eds., *A New Handbook of Christian Theology* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1992); and Alan Richardson and John Bosden, eds., *The New Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983).

5. None is shorter than twenty pages, and the longest is Fernando Canale's book-length discussion of God, which runs to fifty-five pages.

6. In some ways the *Handbook* resembles a book of readings on theology, because it incorporates the work of various individual authors. But this description would not fit the project either. Ordinarily, books of readings draw on varied, often disparate, sources, and this project was

conceived as a single work from the beginning.

7. During the same time, I might add, *The Bible Story,* the ten-volume series by Arthur S. Maxwell, also emerged one book at a time, so we of the younger set had our own resource for Bible study. As I entered my teens, I turned to the *Bible Commentary* as a source of devotional reading.

8. Some articles are noteworthy for their smooth flow of thought. Raoul Dederen's clear account of Christ's person and work reminds me of his popular lectures that I heard at the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary in the late 1960s. I am also impressed with the cohesive exposition of biblical and theological material in the articles by Niels-Erik Andreasen, Ivan Blazen, John Brunt, and William Johnsson. Given the *Handbook*'s emphasis on biblical material, scholars specifically trained in biblical studies, as these were, are well equipped for their assignments.

9. To quote the preface once again, the book seeks to provide the general reader "a comprehensible exposition of the pertinent facts concerning the main tenets of Adventist theology, supplying the information such a reader might reasonably expect in comprehensive compass" (*Handbook,* xi).

10. "Some discussion has been initiated supporting the open view of God." Ibid., 151.

11. Ibid., 199.

12. Adventists have been particularly active in supporting religious liberty, at least in the United States, but I couldn't find anything about it in the *Handbook.*

13. *Handbook,* 687-88.

14. According to one author I spoke with, contributors to the volume were specifically instructed not to include original ideas in their work.

15. Canale comes perilously close to tritheism when he describes the persons of the Trinity as "three individual centers of intelligence and action," or "centers of consciousness and action," a formulation he identifies as "persons in the biblical sense." If this is indeed what the divine persons are, then they are essentially three independent beings, who happen to work in concert. In other words, there are three gods. Canale recognizes the thrust of his formulations, but all he does to avoid tritheism is to assert that the idea that God is "one single reality," "transcends the limits of our human reason," and must be accepted by faith. *Handbook,* 150.

16. Ibid., 94-95.

17. Ibid., 96.

18. Ibid., 60-63.

19. "Thus it seems clear that the Spirit of God led the authors of the first and third Gospels to use previously written accounts of the life and teaching of Jesus, and probably oral reports as well." Francis D. Nichol et al., eds., *Adventist Bible Commentary* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1953-57), 5:178.

20. *God, Revelation, and Authority,* 6 vols. (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1976-83).

21. One could draw the inference that Adventists are inerrantists from other portions of the *Handbook,* too. In her introductory essay, Nancy Vyhmeister describes Adventists as "a conservative body of evangelical Christians" (1), and the glossary includes this sentence in its definition of "Evangelicalism": "The authority of the Scriptures, the word of God written and therefore inerrant in its original autographs, is the foundational tenet of the movement" (xix).

22. The articles on the judgment, the Sabbath, and creation are particularly noteworthy for their painstaking attention to textual concerns.

23. *Thinking Theological: An Adventist Interpretation of the Christian Faith* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1999).

24. Perhaps we will find clues in recent studies of religious narrative and metaphor, or in theological proposals with words like "imagination," "confession," "postmodernism," and "radical orthodoxy" in their titles. We may also find clues in the stories Adventists read and in the stories they tell.

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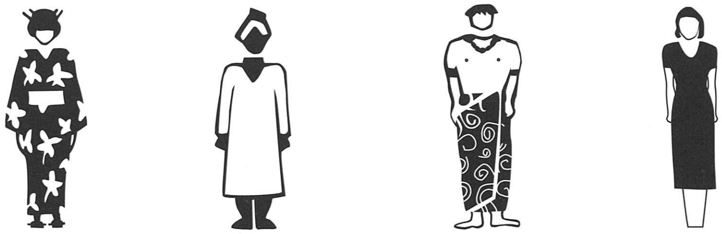
What Are the Ties That Bind?

Seventh-day Adventistm in Crisis: Gender
and Sectarian Change in an Emerging Religion.
By Laura L. Vance. Urbana-Champaign:
University of Illinois Press, 1999.



Reviewed by Grace Fields, Ronald Lawson, Judy Rittenhouse, and Charles I. Stokes

Submitted as a doctoral dissertation at Simon Fraser University, this is a book whose author purports to deal with the crises that face today's Adventism. Laura Vance, a professor at Georgia Southwestern State University concentrates on a North American Seventh-day Adventist Church that she came to know and, she feels, understand, as a result of her attendance at services, intensive interviews, and literary research. Choosing not to write just one more history of Adventism, Vance uses what she calls "crises" to "explicate" Adventism.

Her first apparent objective is to examine how and why a church whose founding depended so greatly upon a woman came to be male dominated. She wants to understand why Adventism "for decades" has been beset by "contention concerning the propriety of women's public participation in leadership." Her second objective is to master the "dynamic of doctrine" in Adventism as successive waves of conflict over rethinking of the "sanctuary question," justification vs. sanctification, secularization of the Church and its institutions, and even over the effect alleged plagiarism in "Sister" White's foundational "red" books may have had on emergent theology.

Her third objective is to put in critical relief how Adventism handles questions that involve gender and what the preferred structure of the Adventist family is, along with issues of divorce and whether there have been changes in how the Church views appropriate sexuality—including the role of gay and lesbian members. Because in point of fact these matters led her to study Adventism, one gets the impression that she formulated her list of crises before she began writing.

In effect, Vance has written two sets of essays about Adventism. Part one is a set of essays that do not break any new ground as she examines Adventism as a religion. The essays in part two analyze the denomination on a sociological level. This bifurcation is hard to defend, but scant evidence of professional editing in the book worsens matters. At the very least, the dissertation writing style and format need softening. There is clearly a disconnect between her rather favorable treatment of Adventism as a religion and her opinions about the challenges to Adventist society that her crises limn out.

When Vance wrestles with how to characterize the Adventist "church," she is guided by the familiar sociological categorization of sect and church. One senses her implicit judgement that Adventism is still a sect. To be sure, she recognizes that Adventism is no longer simply North American, and to that extent she is ready to call Adventism a denomination. Although she allows for the possibility that direction setting at the General Conference level may increasingly take place beyond these shores, she chooses to emphasize what she has found around her in North America.

Vance's research methodology involved regular attendance at and participation in the life of at least two local churches for more than six months. She went to and stayed at several camp meetings. She discussed a wide variety of local, conference, and wider issues with her acquaintances. She interviewed pastors, administrators, and educators. She poured over more than a century of *Review and Herald* issues trying to trace the emergence of conflicts and crises. She visited widely the centers of Adventist culture, the so-called "ghettoes." She came to be, she feels, in a position to understand the trappings of "conference" structure, from the local level to the General Conference. Withal, she attempted to immerse herself in an Adventism whose doctrines and characteristics today had deep roots in a nineteenth-century past.

Vance approaches Adventism as if she has the essence of today's Church after cataloging who does what, where the action is, and how decisions are made. Yet most American Adventists will sense that she doesn't quite get it. To insist that Vance understand what we Adventists feel in our bones, what binds us to each other, and how we respond to the Church as we experience it is probably asking too much. Yet without those feelings and that array of life events, she was likely to mishandle what she calls "crises" and mischaracterize what she calls "doctrines."

Because Vance never quite tells her readers what a crisis is, we do not know her criteria for selecting critical issues. In any case, she does not seem to consider the survival of Adventism to be at stake. If one ventures that crises are those events that tear the Church apart, not one of the issues she asserts to be critical has made any significant difference at the local church or conference level in North America. There are, to be sure, individual churches here and there where the sanctuary question or the ordination of women have been divisive issues, but typically these have been non-issues in most places.

In part, this is true because "as we know" women tend to "dominate" the local church anyway. They constitute the Sabbath School leadership; they are treasurers, church clerks, and the majority of the church boards. For women, the Church has a role for their families that is crucial. Church is where the wife and the husband, mother and father, work together to get things done, from welcoming the stranger to maintaining the church and school facilities. More often than not, it is the woman who pushes her husband forward to leadership.

Ellen White's role has been and remains that of a guide. The local church simply has not believed the attacks on her because she is needed. Indeed, she has had the effect of strengthening the authority system in the local church. By the same token, complex arguments over the sanctuary, righteousness by faith, or the meaning of the divinity of Christ have not reached local congregations. More important have been the issues of vegetarianism, what to eat, and how to keep the Sabbath, and behavioral matters such as dancing, card playing, jewelry, the lottery, theater attendance, smoking, and mind-altering drugs. Who would replace Ellen White on these issues? Pastors come and go after relatively short stays, but families

remain and the Church retains its permanence because in large measure the "red" books provide the answers.

Although what Vance calls crises have left little trace in local churches, there are and have been "contemporary issues" that do affect the local church. The recent defenestration of a General Conference president in a plethora of unfavorable publicity is not one of them. This had the potential to be a schismatic event, yet it has passed over as a summer storm now largely forgotten.

Not so easily disposed have been the problems of diversity and ethnicity. Throughout the United States and Canada, the typical city has African-American churches, Haitian churches, Hispanic churches, Portuguese and Brazilian churches, German, Hungarian, Czech, East Indian, Filipino, Korean, and even African churches, along with white or Anglo churches.

Many of these groups have shown themselves impatient with the structure of decision making in the conference system. In Canada, language differences have been divisive and some English-speaking churches in Quebec have become French speaking. These waves of ethnic change have been far more important than doctrinal matters to the structure and viability of the conference organization and the survival of institutions.

Moreover, throughout the world church, there is growing concern with unity. Language, vision, role, ethnicity, culture, and political status are becoming more and more divisive. Witness the problems in the Balkans, Hungary, Fiji, and other South Pacific nations. To say that there is an Adventist culture that one encounters everywhere is no answer to the questions about world church unity.

Though they appreciate what North America has meant to the Church, many members elsewhere argue that they are more true to the "Adventist way" than are North Americans. These members tend to look on the kind of crises that Vance has stressed as typically North American and irrelevant to their experiences. The granting of "independence" to the North American Division raises even more critical issues, such as whether the division's support of "missions" will decline as local ethnic problems are faced. What does this portend for world church unity?

The long-term rural ethos in North American Adventism is now being challenged by urbanization in the United States and beyond. The massive growth of the Church in third-world cities and the return of the Church to the central city raise questions of evangelical methodology. Urban churches have adjusted worship services and even liturgy to attract and hold a younger and less traditional membership.

Vance came to the study Adventism from the classroom. There, today's problems for the Christian church were defined in terms familiar to readers of *Christian Century* or the *New York Times*, for that matter. She must be pardoned for having done what her professors have suggested and approved. She cannot be pardoned for an unenlightened, pedestrian, and irrelevant treatise on Adventism.

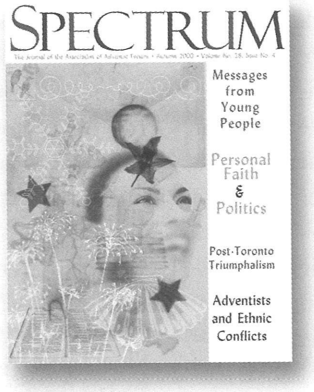
Grace Field is retired church worker. Ronald Lawson, a long-time leader of the New York Forum, is a professor of sociology at Queens College of the City University of New York. Judy Rittenhouse was for many years an editor of *Prevention*, in the Rodale Press. She is now a freelance editor and author. Charles J. Stokes was the Charles Anderson Dana Professor of Economics at the University of Bridgeport (Connecticut).

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tensions Among Adventists in the Balkans

In your issue of *Spectrum*, autumn 2000, you published an article "Political Challenges the Church Cannot Afford to Ignore," by Tihomir Kukolia. The article deals with tensions in different parts of the world, including the Balkans.

I do not read your magazine but it was brought to my attention. Because I was president of the Yugoslavian Union from 1984 to 1992 and president of the South-East European Union from 1992 to 1994, and was involved in the events described in your article, I want to draw your attention to some facts. I do this believing anyone who cares about the truthfulness of the statements in the article can have a broader picture.



In his article the author states: "In Europe, the violent breakdown of the former Yugoslavia ten years ago eventually led to the reorganization of the Adventist Church structure because of disagreements between Croatian and Serbian members" (62). A reference was given after this statement. I was interested about the source of the information, and I quote the reference: "The author lived in Croatia between 1990 and 1995 and has personal knowledge about events that affected Croation society and the Church during that period" (65).

The author continues: "The issue became so tense that in 1992 the executive committee of the Croatian-Slovenian Conference delivered a strong statement in a document prepared for the Trans-European Division (62)."

Again the reference was given. I was interested about the "document" that the Croatian-Slovenian Conference prepared in a "strong statement" and "delivered . . . to the Trans-European Division." The source of the "document" is explained in the reference as: "Summary Representing Discussions with the Croatian-Slovenian Conference Workers about the Future Status of the Croatian-Slovenian Conference, Zagreb, Croatia, Feb. 7, 1992" (65).

I have never seen such a document. Neither the leaders nor the pastors of the Croatian-Slovenian Conference said or wrote anything of the kind to us in the Yugoslavian Union leadership. Neither did the Trans-European Division ever gave or discuss such a document with the Yugoslavian Union leadership.

Again, the author: "Belgrade [whoever that is] was presenting them [leaders, church administrators, and pastors of Croatian-Slovenian Conference] as nationalists, separatists, politically minded, pro-Catholics, and sympathizers of the leading political party in Croatia" (62-63).

I challenge the writer, the Croatian-Slovenian Conference, and the Trans-European Division to produce any letter or other document where the Yugoslavian Union ever expressed such sentiments.

Union leaders never addressed issues about who killed or wounded over a dozen Adventists, or damaged and destroyed a number of Adventist churches, or bombed entire villages and cities in Croatia" (63). "Furthermore, Serbian church leaders were quick to remind colleagues in Croatia: 'Brethren, this is not our war! We should not take sides!'" (63)

This last statement is true, although the words are not my exact words. However, it stops short of what was emphasized in the letter. It continued: "We must help people regardless of nationality or creed in these terrible times. This is our Christian duty at the moment."

The reasons the Yugoslavian Union had to be reorganized were not the ones stated in the article. Situations in politics and everyday life required the change. All communications—telephones, transportation, and diplomatic ties—were completely broken down. Everything that came from Belgrade to Croatia was anathema. We in the union were aware of these problems. For our brethren in Croatia (who were at that time the West Conference of the Yugoslavian Union) to have a higher level of organization in Belgrade and receive instructions from there created a genuine problem. So we understood their desire to be attached directly to the division.

In our union committee we suggested that the division change that arrangement. At no time did we quarrel with our Croatian brethren or try to stop them from separating from the union. We felt brotherly love toward them, and they toward us. We were all sad because of the situation, but it was not of our making. There were no bitter feelings among us. We had differences of opinion because we always encouraged freethinking and open expression, but brotherly love was the foundation of all our dealings, and I can prove it.

In autumn 2000, there was a meeting in Sarajevo, Bosna, of pastors and church workers working in the territory that used to be the Yugoslavian Union. They were together for the first time after being separated many years because of political circumstances. Retired and living in England, I did not attend. But those with whom I spoke who did attend spoke of an exceptionally cordial and fraternal reunion of old friends. There was no bitterness or ill feeling, as the official report of the Trans-European Division confirms.

I cannot comment on other regions mentioned in the article because I do not have firsthand knowledge about them. I do not write or pass judgement publicly on things on which I am not well informed.

Jovan Lorencin, former President
Yugoslavian and South-East European Union
Bracknell, Berkshire, Eng.

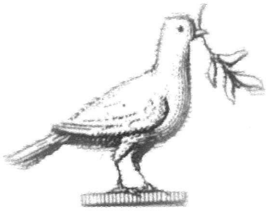
Tihomir Kukolia replies:

The response of brother Jovan Lorencin is interesting, though not surprising. He provided a rather lengthy response to what was only a segment in my article.

The segment describing the situation in the Balkans in 1991 presents accurately the conditions prevailing in the Church during the war years. It is not at all difficult to document what I have stated, for I have quoted from the existing documents. In fact, in my private archives I possess probably the most elaborate collection of the documents released by the Church in Croatia at the time of recent war. One mistake did appear though. One quoted document was mistakenly dated to 1994 instead of 1992, for which I apologize, but this mistake didn't take anything away from the truthfulness of the presented account.

I only wish the things were as bright as presented in Lorencin's response. However, I am rejoicing with others to hear that new positive developments are now bringing healing to the wounds inflicted by the circumstance that probably were difficult to avoid at those challenging and unfortunate times.

Blessed Are the Peacemakers



In their article "Blessed Are the Peacemakers" (*Spectrum,* winter 2001), authors Renard Doneskey and Robert R. Mendenhall state: "The Davidians, then, claim to have the Truth and state that if you don't agree with their biblical interpretations of the Seven Seals, you have rejected God and have committed the unpardonable sin" (36). This sounds like the attitude of many Seventh-day Adventists regarding certain SDA prophetic interpretations. There is a fuzzy ill-defined line in many people's minds between biblical prophecy and human interpretations of prophecy. Their interpretations become fused with the prophecy itself, both identified in their minds as "God's Word." I think it was James White who once said that in regard to unfulfilled prophecy the safest position is to "remain within the protecting bounds of Scriptural quotation marks."

In the same issue, writing under the pseudonym "Pastor Tom O'Hanley," the author of "What's in a Name?" asks this question: "But is an accusation about future evil actions of Roman Catholic Church leaders at the heart of our world view?" (50). Later, he seems to answer by stating that "eschatology forms the matrix for all our teachings, it defines Seventh-day Adventists' Christianity" (52). Our interpretations of unfulfilled prophecy make a very unsure "bedrock" upon which to build a whole denominational theology and reason for being. Christ is the only sure foundation, not interpretations of unfulfilled prophecies—even prophecies about Christ's Second Coming.

In the following article in the same issue titled "Why Can't We Be Wrong?" Siroj Sorajjakool cuts to the very heart of our current "identity crisis" when he writes "obsession with being right is a symptom of self-doubt.... A self-righteous and judgmental person judges others as a way of externalizing personal shadows. The level of defenses parallels the strength of one's identity, one's ego. This symptom of 'I can't be wrong' seems to suggest a weak sense of identity" (56, 57).

In an unpublished historical study tentatively titled "In Search of 'Father Miller': The Man, His 'Theory or System,' and his Legacy," I suggest that William Miller and his 'theory or system" is like a skeleton in the SDA closet, our repressed Founding Father's "shadow," as it were. We have never quite known what to do with Miller, our spiritual "father," who later disowned us as his illegitimate spiritual children. We have had a long unresolved love-hate relationship with him. We ambiguously claim he was right as to the date, but wrong as to the event. We have clung to his historicist "theory or system," and made 1844 the foundation of our theology and reason for being. But every day time continues, the tension continues to build in our unresolved "identity crisis." I believe understanding Miller and his "theory or system" is the key to the resolution of our "identity crisis."

EARTH`S FINAL WARNING

CHAOS AWAITS MAJOR CITIES...RESULTING IN THE ENFORCEMENT OF A NATIONAL SUNDAY LAW–*LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE DENIED*

If there are scholars who find this thesis intriguing and would be willing to read my unpublished manuscript and give me their candid critical feedback, I would appreciate hearing from them.

Arlin Baldwin
arlinb@sierratel.com

Rescuing Jephthah's Daughters

English archeologist David Rohl claims that archeologists can't find evidence of Israelite slaves in Egypt or of Jericho at the time of the Exodus because they are looking in the wrong place ("Rescuing Jephthah's Daughters," *Spectrum*, winter 2001). The BBC converted his book *A Test of Time* into a highly acclaimed TV series called "Pharaohs and Kings." Random House has published it in the United States under the same title.

Rohl argues that not enough allowance has been made in traditional Egyptian chronology for coregencies, parallel dynasties, and interregna. The upshot of these and other changes is that he dates the Exodus at 1447 B.C., not 1250 B.C. In this time frame, he can find evidence for "Asiatic" slaves in Egypt, "plague" pits, and Joseph and Moses, and for the destruction of Jericho during the time of Joshua. Under the new time frame, he can also identify Saul and David in the Amarna Letters.

Rohl's critics have issued disparaging letters to members of various historical societies. Some lecture tours have been conducted in opposition to his theories. Nothing wrong with that! But you, as editor, have asked us to offer answers in the form of a question. So my question is: Because archeologists don't generally worry about the outpourings of speculative writers on Egypt, the Americas, and elsewhere, why are they so concerned about David Rohl's "new chronology?"

David Chesney
Victoria, Australia

What's in a Name?

Without trying to answer to Pastor O'Hanley's (pseudonym) concern ("What's in a Name," *Spectrum*, winter 2000) about whether or not we still believe in *The Great Controversy*'s view of the future as carried in the advertisement placed by the Eternal Gospel Church of Seventh-day Adventists, there is a very good reason why we should stand in opposition to its approach. Ellen White makes the case clearly enough:

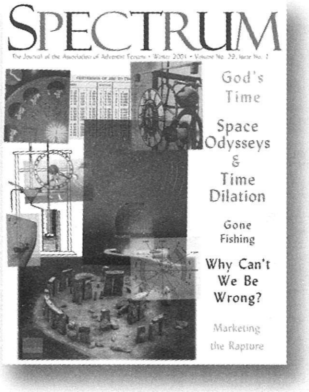
"Our policy is, Do not make prominent the objectionable features of our faith, which strike most decidedly against the practices and customs of the people, until the Lord shall give the people a fair chance to know that we are believers in Christ, that we do believe in the divinity of Christ, and in His preexistence" (*Testimonies to Ministers*, 253).

And again, relative to those not of our faith in

Adventist medical institutions: “Some manifest no wisdom in bearing their testimony in these little meetings intended more especially for the benefit of the patients, but rush on in their zeal and talk of the third angel’s message, or other peculiar points of our faith, while these sick people understand no more what they are talking about than if they spoke in Greek (*Testimonies*, 4:565).

It is amazing, as I’ve learned in handling news coverage at General Conference Sessions in San Francisco, Detroit, Cleveland, Dallas, New Orleans, Indianapolis, and Utrecht, just how unbridled can be the tongues of those who wish to place true but time-inappropriate material—though we try to dissuade them using Mrs. White’s words—so certain are they that by such placement they are going to save the wicked city

Herbert Ford
Angwin, Calif.



I am writing in response to the article “What’s in a Name?” (*Spectrum*, winter 2001). In this article, the author struggles with the embarrassing difficulty of publicly teaching Adventist eschatology. He suggests that these ideas “‘no longer represent who we are, or what we live our Christian lives in expectation of’” (54). As great as that difficulty is, it may be that understanding the most difficult parts of our heritage rather than distancing ourselves from it is still the missing key to moving forward. I would like to add the following parable to this dialog.

The Disappointment

“Forty days and Ninevah will be destroyed.” The jarring announcement made the front-page headlines. Alongside was a picture of the strange outspoken foreigner who strode through the city, spitting out the words at each passerby. In the streets, people cried out in repentance. The king commanded all to fast and pray.

The religious community was electrified by the news. If this was from God, why were they the last to know? If this was bogus, what was the power behind the amazing public response. Ordinary people were crying out to God. The experts were consulted. Committees were formed to study the matter. Conferences were scheduled. Schools of thought evolved. The fortieth day was marked on the calendar. Out-of-town vacations were scheduled to begin the day before the apocalypse. Investors who were religious recommended buying gold. Ordinary people continued to cry out to God.

Finally, a conclusion began to emerge. The destruction of Ninevah was consistent with the holy character of God. The prophet was to be believed. A statement was issued to the press in support of Jonah’s eschatology. Plans were formed to evacuate the believers. Ordinary people continued to cry out to God,

The day came. The day went…

Many quickly came to the obvious conclusion. Next time, they would not be so gullible. They would check the prophet’s portfolio more carefully. Others could not change so easily. They had seen evidence of the work of God in this movement. They were sure of their message. They would find explanations for this great disappointment that still made room for their school of thought. They would continue to teach their children: “Yet forty days and Ninevah will be destroyed.”

Only ordinary people really understood. Their Ninevah was destroyed. That city of vicious commerce and blood-sucking politics was barely a memory. Vendors no longer cheated and landlords no longer connived, because they no longer wanted to. Those who had fasted together feasted together. The apocalypse was a celebration. Ordinary people had heard the cry of God.

Randy Salt
Sedro-Wooley, Wash.

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Are Seventh-day Adventists Evangelicals?

A recent faculty discussion on my campus began with this question. Because it probes the core of Adventist identity, it is an important query, one that deserves a response with nuance. As might be expected, much depends on how we define the word "evangelical"!

Specialists tell us that its root meaning is something like "news," "announcement," or maybe even "good news." Like others, Seventh-day Adventists enjoy good news. In this first and general sense, they are all "evangelicals."

As the centuries went by, the term gradually became almost interchangeable with "Christian," the word that describes the beliefs and practices of those who accept the good news about God and humanity that Jesus Christ embodied and expressed. All SDAs are "evangelicals" in this second sense, too.

Following the religious reformations that transformed Western Europe during and after the sixteenth century, the word "evangelical" became a more positive way of saying "Protestant." Even today, major universities in that part of the world sometimes have two theological faculties, one Roman Catholic and the other "Evangelical," or "Protestant." Because SDAs rightly reject the authority of the Roman Catholic Church, as well as a number of its teachings and practices, they are all "evangelicals" in this third sense, as well.

In North America, from the middle of the twentieth century onward, the word "evangelical" increasingly was adopted by conservative Protestants who wanted to distinguish themselves from Fundamentalism by being more informed theologically and more involved culturally. Many SDAs are evangelicals in this fourth meaning of the term, but many others are not. Among those who aren't, some are more conservative than evangelicals in this sense usually are. Others are more liberal.

Sometimes the word "evangelical" refers to conservative Protestants in our time who turn for guidance to the writings of John Calvin and his followers more than any source other than Scripture. Depending upon whether we emphasize Adventism's roots in the soil of Calvinism, or how it has developed in this soil in different directions, SDAs either are or are not "evangelicals" in this fifth sense.

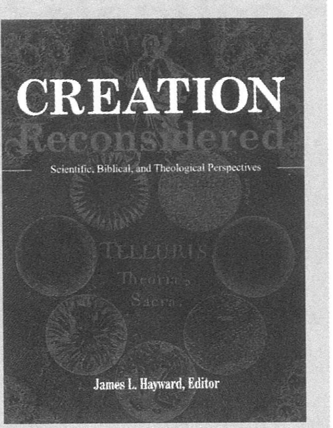
Both cases can be made. On the one hand, SDAs descend theologically from leaders who opposed Calvinism, most notably Jacob Arminius in Holland and John and Charles Wesley in England. On the other hand, the debates between Arminianism and Calvinism regarding divine predestination, human freedom, and related issues took place—and perhaps could only have taken place—within the context of Calvinism. If Arminianism is regarded as one of Calvinism's (rebellious?) children, SDAs are Calvinists and therefore "evangelicals" in this meaning of the term. If not, they aren't.

If the meaning of the word is restricted in ways that some organizations now favor, no Seventh-day Adventist now is or ever should be an "evangelical." For instance, after studying the matter extensively, one major Protestant organization in the United States that describes itself as "evangelical" recently reaffirmed its belief that hell is the experience of unending divine punishment. To put it as gently as possible, this belief is not "good news"; that is, it is not "evangelical." It is a mistaken doctrine with malignant consequences, one that every Seventh-day Adventist, plus every other thoughtful human being, should reject on the basis of a careful consideration of Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience.

Despite the possibilities for misunderstanding the expression now allows, a number of SDAs like to describe themselves as "Evangelical Adventists." Fair enough, providing we clarify what they mean. Nevertheless, I much prefer to think of myself and my companions in this community of faith as "Ecumenical Adventists."

More on that some other time!

David R. Larson
AAF President



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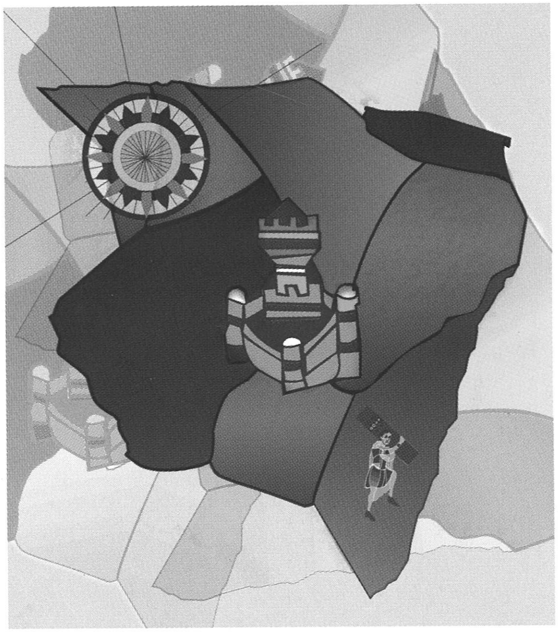

For the Cartographer

Linda Andrews

These are slow times for the map maker, the world
having gone so blunt with purpose. But still he looks
for the piece of land not yet paced, the unknown
stretch, the space not yet filled with sure things
like mileposts or children.

In the middle of his own land, in the tall grass,
is a yellow house. A dark-haired woman
watches him from the window as he steps
and measures to the end of their plot.
He comes to the same conclusion, always,

that the pieces are locked together, and returns
to tell her in new ways how they belong
to this slow, dry land.
When he leaves again in the morning,
she writes down his story from the night before.

Some day it will all be his, this yellow box
of stories, and they will read as if new,
about the two who started over
even though all around them the world
had been settled and quiet.

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