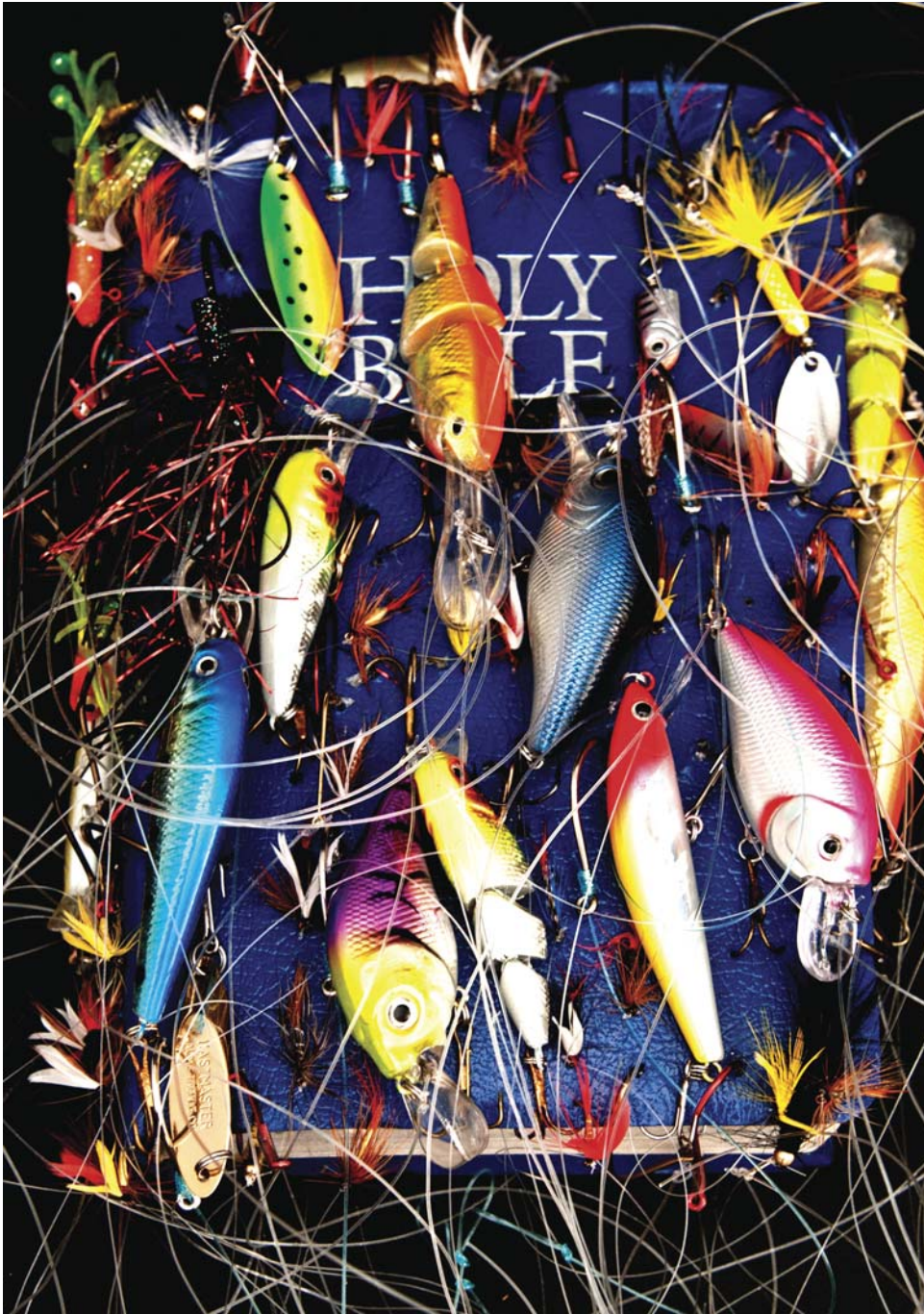




community through conversation

# SPECTRUM



## **A Calling to the City**

*Creation: the (Killer)  
Lesson Plan*

## **Getting to the Crux of the Adventist Biology Education Debate**

*The Story of the  
English Bible*

## **New Tools for People of the Book**

*When What is  
True is Not Pure*

## **Reading the Bible Sculpture Series**

community through conversation

# SPECTRUM

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**Artist Biography:** Born and raised in South Africa, John McDowell completed high school at Helderberg College. His father, a pastor, moved the family to Newfoundland, and John went to Atlantic Union College. Along with completing his BA in English, he took several art classes. He completed his MA in English at La Sierra University. After completing a PhD in English at the University of Calgary, he taught at Canadian University College. He has taught at Pacific Union College for the last ten years where he also directs the Honors Program. Wherever he has been he has taken art classes; currently he is taking a class in stone sculpture. This summer he will be transitioning back to CaUC. He has had shows in Canada and in the US. Most recently he had two sculptures selected for this year's St. John's Religious and Spiritual Art show, "In Search of Grace," in Sacramento. He likes to balance academic work with the physical and creative challenges of creating sculptures. Creating art is, for him, a spiritual discipline.

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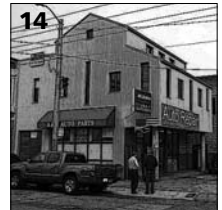
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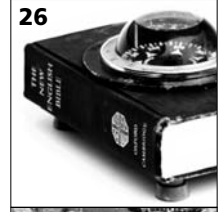
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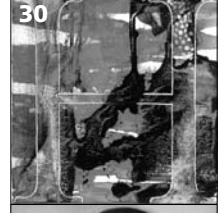
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## In the Beginning Was the Word | BY BONNIE DWYER

Walking into a room full of books always charms me. Somehow I feel as though I am immediately among friends—friends who have such important things to say that they have taken great pains to put them down on paper. These are friends who will make me laugh and cry, who will take me back in time to amazing places. Friends who will give me new ideas and ways of thinking about life.

Opening the Bible is a similar experience. Each morning, cup of tea in hand, I sit down to talk with the Israelites, given that at the moment I am in the Chronicles. The details of Solomon's temple set my mind awirl. There is a church board meeting on my agenda for the day; we'll be discussing the painting of the sanctuary. Ideas begin to form.

Listening to the Bible has the same effect. Several years ago when I had a lengthy commute to work, I would play tapes of Alexander Scourby reading the Bible for my morning drive. His melodious voice and the poetry of King James English were like music washing over me. Refreshed by the tones and words, my mind would awaken and creative ideas would flow, even if his words were just the begats of Matthew 1.

Were I a sculptor, like John McDowell, I would portray the Bible as an egg, or inside an egg, or inside the smallest of a series of Russian nesting dolls. The Bible, for me, is the beginning of ideas and creativity.

"In the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1) has become a favorite text, especially since the other book that I am now reading is James Gleick's *The Information: A History. A Theory. A Flood*. His tour through science history shows information and information theory reshaping everything from economics and philosophy to biology and physics. So now as I think of God's first creative act, I think of algorithms and words—information.



In this issue, our focus is on creatively exploring the Bible down through time and in art and literature. Recently in Loma Linda, there was a celebration of the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible. The articles by Melissa Brotton, Lisa Geriguis, and Sam McBride came from that series of meetings. Ryan Bell's reflections on what is pure were given at the 2010 Adventist Forum Conference. We round out the Bible section with Reinder Bruinsma's review of the new Adventist Study Bibles.

Of course, with the many official church meetings this time of year, there is news aplenty to share. We have looked for information to illuminate the headlines that you may have already heard.

To conclude, we again turn to those books that are like friends. Herold Weiss would be such a friend, and so is his latest book, *Finding My Way in Christianity*. Another friend Roy Branson reviews it and highlights Weiss' significant contribution to our community life. Don't miss it. ■

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Bonnie Dwyer is editor of *Spectrum* magazine.





## Creation: the (Killer) Lesson Plan | BY CHARLES SCRIVEN

Some never answer the summons to humility of mind. They *know*. That's it. I suggest, though, that if you lead the following discussion (in Sabbath school or somewhere else), those in your circle will feel humbler afterwards. If our leaders participated in such a conversation, we might be spared the ordeal of changing Adventist Belief Number 6 (see below) into something polarizing and extra-biblical.

What follows is a discussion starter and could work as a handout. It will bring about wider understanding that we “see through a glass darkly” (1 Cor. 13) and ought to acknowledge *mystery*. That seems elementary enough, but for all too many, it's not.

### Creation Controversies

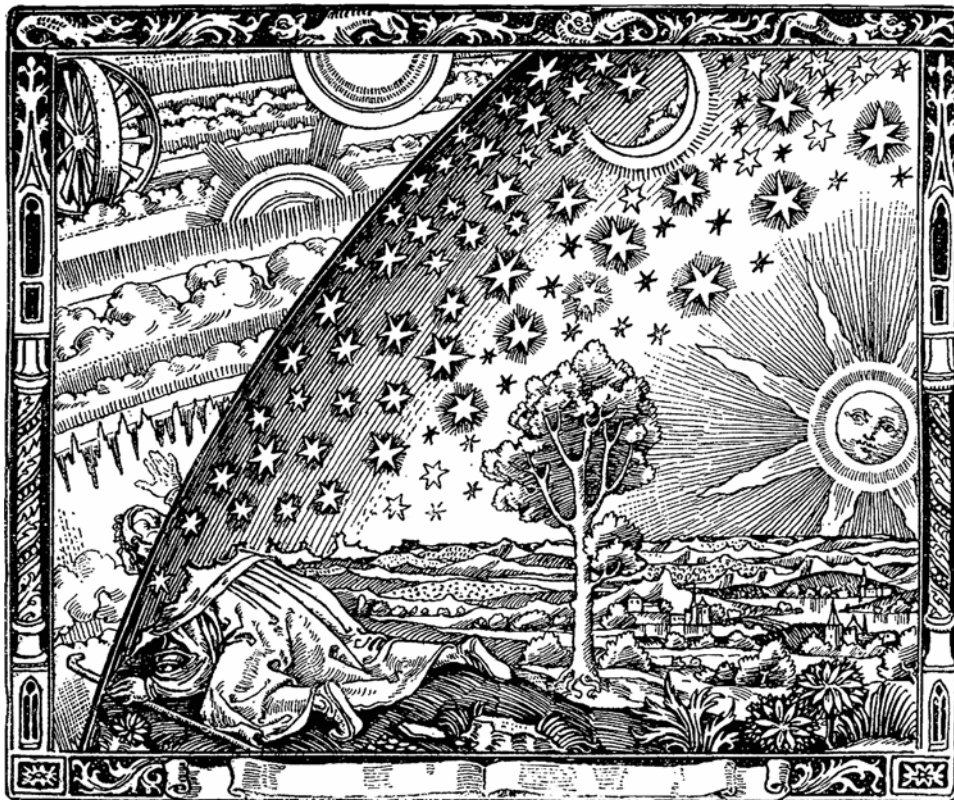
How might we deal, as brothers and sisters in Christ, with controversy concerning our understanding of creation? Consider the following Bible passages and the arresting bits of church experience that I describe, and consider the suggested questions. (I have noted, for each passage, the point that seems particularly pertinent for the topic.)

### Scripture on scripture

2 Timothy 3:16, 17: Inspired writings serve a *practical* purpose; the point is equipping us—equipping church members—for “every good work.”

### Scripture on creation

- Genesis 1:1–31: Creation is “good”; human beings appear *after* nearly everything else; they reflect God’s “image.”
- Genesis 2:4b–8, 15–25: Human beings appear *before* the garden is planted; God *forms* them from “dust,” and *breathes into* them the “breath of life.” They are meant to *share* life with others, to “till” and “keep” the garden, and to “name” the animals.
- Psalm 33:6–9: God creates by *speaking*; God also gathers the waters “in a bottle” and puts “the deeps in storehouses.”
- Isaiah 55:8–9 and Romans 11:33–36: God transcends—is “higher than”—we are; divine thoughts and



ways surpass human understanding. God is unsearchable, inscrutable—and we cannot (and should not) expect to answer all our questions.

- Mark 10:6–9: When Jesus alludes specifically to Genesis 1 and 2—the only time—his point, as in 2 Timothy 3, is *practical*, or *moral*; it concerns marriage.

### Some questions about creation

- What *attitudes*—about the earth, about human potential and responsibility—does the Bible’s creation teaching encourage us to have?
- How can you tell when biblical words are meant “literally,” or when they are meant as “pictures” of something too deep for words? Or is there no *clear-cut* answer, and must we learn to live with ambiguity?
- In Jesus’ view, the creation story serves as a premise for *how to live*. In what way might Jesus’ example affect the way you interpret Genesis?

### The Adventist creation controversies

- At present, top Adventist officials want the next session of the church’s General Conference to adopt a re-written Belief Number 6 (on creation).
- The current statement says that Scripture gives the “authentic account” of God’s “creative activity,” and alludes, with quoted phrases, to Genesis 1; it encourages a straightforward reading of the passage but does not spell out more detail than the Bible itself gives.
- Officials want the statement to *say more*; they want official Adventist belief to assert that creation occurred—literally—some 6,000 or so years ago, over seven contiguous, 24-hour days.
- A few—often, the well-educated—worry that such a statement will marginalize, or even exclude, scientists (and others) who may think this degree of literality incompatible with the empirical evidence concerning earth’s history.



### The Galileo episode

In the early fifteenth century, the great scientist Galileo (*pictured, left*) got into trouble for doubting the Catholic Church’s teaching that the sun revolves around the (motionless) earth. For these doubts the papacy eventually sentenced him to house arrest. Consider these Bible

passages the papacy used against Galileo:

- Joshua 10:12–14: The sun *stopped*, and “did not hurry to set”; the premise is a *geocentric* universe.
- 1 Chronicles 16:30: The “world is firmly established...shall never be moved.”
- Psalm 93:1: Again, the world “shall never be moved.”
- Ecclesiastes 1:5: The “sun rises...goes down...hurries to the place where it rises.”

### More questions

- Even very traditional Adventists would agree that Galileo was right and the papacy wrong. Do Adventist leaders today run the risk of repeating the papacy’s mistake? Why, or why not?
- How does your theory of Scriptural inspiration help you deal with the passages that assume the sun revolves around the earth?
- How might we affirm God’s creative activity without provoking division or seeming silly? Or without claiming (as the papacy once did) to know more of the divine *mystery* than mere creatures can ever know?
- How might we read the Genesis stories straightforwardly without insisting that every one of us must interpret the details exactly alike?
- Again, what does the Bible’s creation teaching tell us about our hopes and responsibilities as children of God on earth?



Pope Paul V  
by Caravaggio, c. 1605

There ends the lesson plan. Why say it’s a “killer” plan? Because the time your group spends with these passages, stories and questions will slay the dragon of intellectual pride. You may continue to read Genesis the way would-be revisers of Belief Number 6 want you to read it. But now you will not be cocky. You will allow your brothers and sisters to acknowledge the struggles they have and to explore solutions that might not be identical with your own.

Anything less and you would be like the Pope who came down on Galileo. ■

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**Charles Scriven** chairs Adventist Forum and is President of Kettering College of Medical Arts.



## Letters Beget Letters, Editorials Questioned

### Soil Reasons

I WAS DELIGHTED to see Graham Will's article on New Zealand soil formation in the volcanic region of the North Island in *Spectrum* 38:4. Now, for the first time, these observations are available for discussion.

In 1981 and 1985 Will took the late Dr. Asa Thoresen and me to see these multi-soil layers, each overlaid by layers of undisturbed ash. The humus layers varied in thickness due to the length of time under development by present-day native ecosystems before new volcanic ash was deposited, beginning the successional sequence all over again.

The rate of present-day humus formation can be measured based on today's environmental conditions and species. In this way, surface layers can be dated and earlier layers dated beginning at the present. Humus formed by natural organic material (e.g. leaves, twigs, etc.) and profiles can be observed differently from organic debris laid down via flooding.

There was no evidence of alluvial deposition; therefore, humus and profiles were naturally creating a clock going back in time. Graham Will is right to conclude that an explanation cannot be tied to a short time period. Only longer times can be concluded based on the evidence.

The counter letter by Ariel Roth in *Spectrum* 39:1 seems to make "apples and oranges" comparisons and gives unjustified doubt to this research by making comparisons with different ecosystem soils and tree growth in Hawaii. His analogy is misleading. For example, a 3–5 year-old, pithy "Tree of Heaven" would be taller than a 4,500-year-old dense wood Bristlecone pine. Also, without getting into the radioactive dating controversy, to list only two negative C-14 titles and not mention that there are thousands of positive ones in the literature gives a misrepresentation of the knowledge of the subject.

There is sound ecological evidence here supporting

much longer periods of soil formation going on into the past and no support for a short post-flood timeframe. I saw no evidence of any alluvial deposits in these ash/humus layers (Will's response also). These evidences along with the distinctive natural history and biogeography, geology and plate tectonics/continental drift history of New Zealand make it very hard to place these phenomena into any short, worldwide post-flood history. These and other similar long-term data are going to have to be addressed sooner rather than later, it seems to me.

DENNIS W. WOODLAND

*Berrien Springs, MI*

### In Response to Scriven's Memo to Elder Wilson

THANK YOU for putting into words what so many of us feel instinctively, but have found it uncomfortable to try to express. I cautiously raise my voice in favor of moderation when it comes to making our fundamental belief about creation more precise than Scripture itself—"improvements to the book of Genesis," "meddling with holy writ," as you put it. Yet I know some desire such specificity to make public the exact ingredients of their belief. Unfortunately they would insist that I adopt their specifications when I have no need to. The Scripture alone is sufficient for me.

The creation is complex, and, even for those of us who attempt to unravel some of its inner workings, mysterious. Surely our brothers and sisters in the church who desire this added precision can understand that there is much more to carrying out the creation than what is implied by a sterile reading of "God spoke and it was done." The creation is not an event, or only a series of six days of events, but a process, on-going now.

The expression of our belief about creation must allow for the dynamic character of the creation itself. And our

reading of Scripture must be compatible with that also. Extra-biblical detail leads to over-simplification of that which is multi-faceted, and squeezes the dynamic character of the creation into a static, ill-fitting mold.

If the church could find a way to accept the simple testimony from its teachers of belief in God as creator, and then leave it to them to untangle the complex details of how it was rendered, and how it now works, there would be a genuine revival of spirit, of commitment, of consecration. Indeed, true revival will come when people know they are loved and wanted, in this case, by their brothers and sisters in the church.

EDWIN A. KARLOW, PHD  
Walla Walla, WA  
*Ret. Professor of Physics, La Sierra University*

### **In Search of Activism**

THE WINTER ISSUE brought me face-to-face with the realization that *Spectrum's* editors and audience, while willing to opine about what bothers us about the Adventist Church, seem reluctant to speak out or take action that will bring us into direct conflict with official church hierarchy, i.e., refuse to pay tithe or organize protests at Silver Spring. In other words, *Spectrum*, as a magazine and blog, is a place where disaffected, cultural Adventists like me can let off steam. It's not a place where activists are comfortable.

In her editorial "A Time to Mourn," Bonnie Dwyer reflects: "*In the spiritual journey of our community, we pause for reflection at the passing of these family members. Each was controversial in his own way—Wilson for his handling of crises related to church theology and the equality of women, Maxwell for his theology, and Drum for her sexual orientation. Yet they are all part of the Adventist family and so deserving of our love.*"

Bonnie, Holly Drum was not a part of the "Adventist family." According to the Adventist Church Manual, she was an Adventist pariah. She was a practicing homosexual. For that offense against God and the Adventist Church, she warranted inclusion in this "A" list of sinners: sexual pervert, sexual abuser of children, fornicator, one who is promiscuous sexually, one guilty of incest, and a producer and distributor of pornography (p. 44).

There was no cry of outrage that our church may have been complicit in Holly Drum's suicide and who knows how many others? It was only recalled that she was crushed when she was "*disfellowshipped by her home*

*church in Oregon years ago and that she was very interested in finding out if a local church would be open and accepting.*"

Charles Scriven's editorial "Memo to Elder Wilson" begins with these words:

*Because my counsel is unbidden, it may never reach you, or if it does, it may seem obtrusive. But we are brothers in the faith, and that makes me bold to offer perspective on two challenges you are embracing. One is revival and reformation." The other is "the doctrine of creation.*

Chuck, aren't you distraught that your carefully reasoned, logical, friendly, even obsequious attempt to reason with Ted will fall on deaf ears? He has repeatedly demonstrated that he is dismissive of your "perspective." He is divinely appointed; he already knows THE TRUTH and controls all the levers of power in a hierarchical system that takes its orders from the top. That's him.

I ask again, "Where is the outrage, the call to mobilize, the call to action?" Don't look for it in *Spectrum*. Our motto is "community through conversation."

ANDREW HANSON  
Chico, CA  
<<http://adventistperspective.blogspot.com/>>

### **Scriven Responds**

YES, ANDREW HANSON, I would be pleased to see Elder Wilson engaging the likes of me—and of the church's many scientists—in dialogue. Part of my life mission is to press for discipleship over fundamentalism, and I do not doubt, especially now, that it is a fool's errand. But if 1 Corinthians is any clue, Paul himself was on a fool's errand. And while I am on that subject, let me say that, though awash in discord, Paul evinced both candor and kindness. Somehow (I don't have all the answers) that is relevant here.

CHARLES SCRIVEN  
Kettering, Ohio

### **Dwyer Responds**

BECAUSE THE CHURCH is the people, changing the way Holly Drum was treated requires a change in all of our hearts. Just as *Spectrum* cannot change the actions of the brethren in Silver Spring, only call to attention what has taken place there, we cannot change the way local churches function. Noting Holly's death was meant to be a wake-up call to all of us that how we treat each other matters.

BONNIE DWYER  
Roseville, California





## Spring Meetings Bring Changes

### Looking for the Crux of the Matter in the Adventist Biology Education Debate

BY BONNIE DWYER

CONTROVERSY OVER THE TEACHING OF creation and evolution in biology courses at La Sierra University continues despite the university's attempts to address the issue in its classrooms as well as its boardroom. An April 4 vote by the Adventist Accrediting Association (AAA) Board was the latest indication that the issue is not yet resolved.

On the docket for discussion at the AAA Board's regular three hour spring meeting were 65 actions for institutions of higher education and 280 actions for secondary schools. Of those, there were three extensions of accreditation, including the one for La Sierra University.

Given such a lengthy agenda and limitation of time, typically the 40-member board receives and votes the recommendations from their visiting teams that are sent to the campuses to interview administrators, faculty, students and board members about the institution.

La Sierra University was thus surprised when the AAA Board voted to extend their accreditation only to the end of 2012 rather than the eight years that had been recommended at the conclusion of the AAA site visit to La Sierra last November.

The chair of the 10-member visiting team, Niels-Erik Andreasen, president of Andrews University, had announced to the La Sierra faculty that by unanimous vote the team would be

recommending three years beyond the five year accreditation routinely given to colleges and universities. La Sierra would be recommended to receive an 8-year accreditation, similar in length to what it had just received from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). La Sierra was commended for offering "high quality Christian education, with a Seventh-day Adventist character."

The site team's report, did, as usual, include recommendations as well as commendations. The number one recommendation was that "In particular, the biology and religion faculty, in collaboration with the faculty of the University Studies core courses curriculum, should seek ways to support the beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in an 'open' manner and monitor effectiveness through program review."

The board and administration were exhorted to "develop and implement a strategy to resolve the creation-evolution controversy, rebuild the reputation of the university, and regain the confidence of the constituency."

However, in addition to the report from the visiting team, a "letter of consultation" to the administration was written by three of the visiting team members—Lisa Beardsley, director of the General Conference Department of Education; Larry Blackmer, vice president for education of the North American Division; and David Steen, chair of the Andrews University Biology Department—and voted by the visiting team. According to Blackmer, this was the first time such a letter had been sent to an institution of higher education. He compared the letter to

**"We want  
LSU to teach  
evolution  
with vigor...  
Nobody wants  
LSU to be  
a bible college  
that only  
teaches  
creation... "**

—Larry Blackmer

what auditors refer to as a management letter.

The letter presented a more detailed discussion of the creation-evolution issue based upon the three hour interview that Beardsley, Blackmer, and Steen held with the entire biology faculty, an extra interview that had been requested after the team arrived on campus.

When the report and the letter were shared with the university's Board, it became the lot of the boards' ad hoc committee on Creation and Evolution to respond. And in February it issued a ten page report to the board, including a summary of the survey that had been taken of biology students from the past four years. President Randal Wisbey and Board Chair Ricardo Graham issued an open letter regarding the teaching of creation in which they included the results of the biology student survey and apologized that stronger results in support of the Adventist view of creation had not been found.

All of these actions in response to the site team visit were noted at the General Conference headquarters in Silver Spring, however there was still some doubt that the AAA Board would approve the recommendation of the site team. So several days before the scheduled board meeting a group gathered to draft an alternative motion. That group, according to Blackmer, who was part of it, also included representatives of the General Conference president's office, education department, and the North American Division president's office.

The proposed motion began by stating that La Sierra has "issued a public apology regarding its performance in teaching creation in ways that depart from the official position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and further has commendably indicated a commitment to remedy that situation" followed by a list of commitments. But then rather than affirming the institution for what it has done to resolve the controversy and supporting the site team recommendation, the motion states, "Although La Sierra University has deviated from the philosophy and objectives of Seventh-day Adventist education, it is moved that the university be granted an extension of accreditation to December 31, 2012, in order for the university to act upon its commitments and implement changes and enhancements related to the recommendations set forth in the AAA Team report."

"This was a challenging and complex decision," Lisa Beardsley, the director of the General Conference department of education told the *Adventist Review*. "The AAA

Board took into consideration the report of the AAA team that visited the campus in November 2010, and events that have transpired since, such as the actions of the institutional board, the finding of its special subcommittee, and the open letter published in March by the university. After careful and prayerful consideration, the board expressed its will as a body by means of a written ballot so that all views could be honored."

The *Review's* report about the AAA vote seemed to indicate the amount of ire that church officials feel about the topic. "La Sierra University Granted Window to Show its Faithfulness to Church's Creation Belief," was the headline.

News of the vote caught the attention of the local newspaper in Riverside, California where La Sierra is located. On April 11, the *Press Enterprise* ran a front-page story about the AAA vote and noted the possible wider impact it might have.

"The pressure on La Sierra is causing concern at WASC, a federally approved accreditation agency that, among other things, measures academic quality and integrity at public and private colleges and universities. Federally approved accreditation is required for acceptance of university class credits by most other universities and many employers, and for most financial aid," the article said.

Stating that WASC planned to send a team to La Sierra in the next few weeks because the controversy over creationism could threaten La Sierra's academic autonomy, Ralph Wolff, president of WASC, was quoted as saying, "What we want to make sure of is that non-academic outside forces are not controlling the curriculum. While we respect that it is a faith-based institution, it is still an academic institution."

*Inside Higher Education*, in an April 12 story, said that, "La Sierra is caught between two accrediting groups using different measuring sticks. There is the Adventist association which measures the university's fidelity to church beliefs and judges whether it will remain an Adventist institution. And there is the academic accreditor, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges' Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities, which includes measures of academic freedom and institutional autonomy in its evaluation."

Usually the two groups do not conflict, the web-based news service said: "the Adventist accreditor relies on WASC to judge administrative, financial and educational issues, while focusing its own analysis on whether the institution fulfills the mission of the church. But what raises red flags for one committee might trouble the other for different reasons."

Beardsley told the *Press Enterprise*, "The real crux of the matter is whether the Bible has a privileged position as a source of knowledge." She suggested that "inadequate teaching of Biblical creation 'is a symptom of a problem,' an indication that La Sierra hasn't done enough to ensure students are thoroughly exposed to the Adventist worldview," the paper said.

At La Sierra, Provost Steve Pawluk pointed to page 130 in Ellen G. White's book *Education* saying that Adventists have long considered both Scripture and nature to be revelations from God and that faculty are attempting in good faith to harmonize the two.

For Blackmer, who is a biologist by training, the whole controversy has been misunderstood. "We want LSU to teach evolution with vigor," he said. "Biology students need to come out of college understanding the theory of evolution. The church is only asking that the theory of evolution not be presented as the only theory for the origin of life on this planet. Nobody wants LSU to be a bible college that only teaches creation. The Adventist Church believes as a corporate body in a literal creation week and professors in all our institutions should share that with their students."

For La Sierra Board members who have spent the last year working on the issue, there was disappointment over the AAA vote. One board member commented that he did not know what else the university could have done. He thought that the board had worked diligently with its subcommittee to address the issues identified by the AAA visiting team in their report. "The quoted wording of the AAA vote makes life difficult," he said.

Beardsley maintained that the most recent efforts of the university to address the concerns of the site team had helped LSU during the AAA discussion. "The survey of students and their open letter outlining plans to address the issues led to the decision for an extension of accreditation so that LSU could have the time to provide evidence in support of what they said they would do in their Open Letter."

The crux of the matter that she did not explain is why there was such a huge difference between what the visiting team recommended and what the board voted.

Blackmer, however, says there was not a big difference between the visiting team and the board. The site report had stipulated coming back to LSU in 24 months and 5 years. "The board received the report in total and didn't change any of the commendations or recommendations. We agreed to those. The university remains fully accredit-

ed with no pejorative comment," he noted. "The board simply wanted to see the university make changes."

WASC, however, has a different view of the actions taken by the LSU Board to please AAA. After WASC's team revisited the campus on April 19, it told the Board that doing surveys by themselves is an insufficient way to assess learning outcomes, and the Board should stay out of curriculum decisions.

The next meeting of the LSU Board will be in early May. The WASC commission will meet on June 20, at which time it will receive this report and decide what, if any, action to take. ■

## Texas Conference Constituents Reject Leaders Embroiled in Legal Controversy

BY JIGGS GALLAGHER

THE SITUATION IN THE TEXAS CONFERENCE which resulted in the expulsion of Leighton Holley as president on April 3 has a long and rather complicated history. As is often the case when passions run high in church politics, money is a factor. But so are individual egos, conflicting agendas and generational changes.

The 73-year-old Holley, who had been elected president in 2004, was not renominated by the nominating committee, which made its report to the constituency in early March. Also rejected by the committee were Errol Eder, treasurer, and his wife, Bonnie Eder, who had held the position of education director. A field of three new nominees was offered to the constituency which would gather on April 3 in Keene to accept or reject the nominating committee's slate.

Holley's leadership had been controversial for several years, primarily over a situation regarding the conference's boarding school, Valley Grande Adventist Academy in Weslaco, Hidalgo County, in the southern tip of the state. In the 1960s (long before Holley's term began), a nursing home currently named Valley Grande Manor was established on the property of the academy to serve the community and also to provide a source of steady income for the academy, which had struggled like many other denominational boarding academies throughout North America. An income of \$450,000 per year was contractually agreed on, with the money deposited in a

newly created entity called Valley Educational Foundation (VEF) in order to keep the revenue stream directed to the academy (and not to the parent conference).

When the foundation was created, three healthcare facilities were placed under its aegis. Two were faltering and were eventually closed or sold off. Valley Grande Manor is the surviving facility, and it experienced a major turnaround under the leadership of Glen Hamel, its current head. Hamel came to the facility originally as a consultant and eventually took over fulltime. He oversaw the creation of an entity called ElderCare to operate the manor and contract with VEF. The manor became a respected care facility, winning awards and serving as a training ground for health inspectors because of its outstanding reputation. For many years, it was financially sound and proved to be a financial lifeline for the academy.

However, in the past decade care facilities for the elderly have increasingly encountered financially troubled waters as Medicaid and Medicare payments were cut. Malpractice insurance also rose in cost to the point where premiums effectively cost more than coverage. Financial problems at ElderCare began in 2004 when Hamel and his group chose not to renew insurance coverage through the General Conference's insurance program. Hamel says the coverage was not mandatory; it appeared they were conserving cash at a difficult time.

Holley and other directors of the VEF argued otherwise, saying that Hamel and ElderCare had violated Texas law by giving up the coverage, and that as a result ElderCare had defaulted on its lease. Efforts to force ElderCare to reinstate its insurance coverage failed, and the foundation noted that ElderCare also failed to renew its lease agreement when it expired on December 31, 2007. Holley further argued that Hamel and ElderCare had transferred their operations to a shell corporation, also in violation of their lease with the foundation. Rather than negotiating with ElderCare, the foundation directors sued ElderCare to force their eviction for alleged violations of their lease agreement.

ElderCare filed bankruptcy to stop the eviction. They also countered with a suit against the foundation, seeking to cut its rent almost in half. They further sought to recover more than one million dollars in alleged damages from the foundation. All of these actions embroiled both parties in a multi-year legal action that continues to this day.

The case was first heard in bankruptcy court where the court denied VEF's motion to compel ElderCare to

vacate the premises. On appeal, the District Court reversed the judgment of the Bankruptcy Court rendering its opinion in a brief, telephonic hearing. Neither side was pleased and both sides appealed to the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals where retired U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, who takes cases on assignment, was appointed one of the judges to hear the appeal. The court ruled in May, 2009, reversing the district court's decision and coming down in favor of ElderCare (and against Holley and the foundation).

"I think the new conference president (Larry Moore) will find it extremely risky, politically, to try to continue to fight," Hamel said. "It could be risky for him even to try to settle with us now. I think our best chance is for a third party to act as a mediator between us and come to a settlement."

Hamel says he has five to six more years on his current lease, and he hopes to continue operating the manor during that time and perhaps "earn-out" some of the money ElderCare is seeking from the foundation.

"I told them, you can pay me now or pay me later," he said. "But the conference rejected us. It became a very personal issue—Holley wanted me and my company out of the picture."

In the meantime, legal costs have mounted. For the foundation, the tab is estimated to be at least \$800,000 (some sources say it is closer to \$1 million). When the legal actions became known, Seventh-day Adventists in the conference had several reasons to be concerned. One was moral and religious—in view of Biblical and church teachings which strongly advise against members going to court against members, how could an SDA organization sue another SDA organization when both are controlled by Adventists?

This fact was noted in the ruling by the Court of Appeals. "In light of the church's policy that its members should not litigate against one another, the lease agreement included several uncommon provisions requiring good faith negotiations and mediation in certain contexts," the ruling said. The 31-page document tells the story of the many ways that negotiations and mediation failed.

The second reason for concern was financial. At a September 26, 2009, constituency meeting of the academy, Holley affirmed that to date ElderCare had not missed an annual payment of at least \$450,000, in spite of the legal costs to both sides, but he was asked in the forum whether ElderCare could continue to support the acade-

my foundation in the future, when presumably legal costs and possible fines or penalties could mount up.

Holley assured the academy's constituents that the foundation's legal actions were solely aimed at upholding the lease's validity and trying to uphold income for the academy. He admitted, however, that there was little likelihood of regaining the \$800,000 to \$1 million already spent in legal fees.

Phillip Brantley, an attorney with homes in both Berrien Springs, Michigan, and Sugar Land, Texas, has been active on behalf of ElderCare. He has spoken out publicly against the leadership of Holley and Eder. He has appealed to the national church leadership (General Conference President Ted Wilson and North America President Dan Jackson) to use their influence to resolve the situation in the Texas Conference.

Interestingly, Wilson made a special trip to the conference in early March. While he and Jackson have no direct responsibility for what takes place in a local conference—and in fact cannot influence the course of events—he conducted several speaking engagements, exhorting the faithful and seeking healing for all.

For his part, Jackson had responded to a letter from the Valley Grande Academy Alumni Association siding with them in their request for a chance to speak at the constituency meeting. He said their request that funds from the conference reserve be used to refund the Valley Educational Foundation for the money lost through the ongoing litigation deserved to be heard by the entire constituency, not just the conference executive committee. Jackson copied his letter to many people at the General Conference, the Union, and the Conference. The Alumni Association was given a spot on the agenda.

When the date for the conference constituency meeting approached in early April, the nominating committee was called back on Saturday night, April 2, because their nominee for Superintendent of Education had declined the position. Many members were absent, and the few who did attend chose to change their original slate and place Bonnie Eder's name back in play for the education slot. This created a firestorm on Facebook, Twitter and regular e-mail throughout North America. By Sunday morning, people were using phones and Blackberries to parse every word that was said, in public and often in private.

Retired Texas Conference president Steve Gifford had been selected to speak on behalf of the alumni association.

He was to be allotted 10 minutes for his speech; he and others had also prepared documents to support his case. The documents were confiscated at the door by conference personnel. And when it was time for Gifford to talk, the chair Max Trevino (Southwestern Union Conference President) put it to the vote of the constituents as to whether Gifford, a non-delegate, would be allowed to speak. This marked a turning point in what had been a decorous meeting to that point when, after remarks about Gifford were made from the platform, the constituents voted down giving him the microphone. Suzanna Facundo, the immediate past president of the Valley Grande Alumni Association was drafted to read from Gifford's prepared remarks. When the request for money that the Alumni Association was asking for from the conference was put to a vote, the constituents voted no.

Gifford and the alumni association representatives were displeased by the way that the meeting was going and the remarks that had been made.

Many bloggers and Tweepers suspected a conspiracy—some said the conference leadership was eating up the time with nonessential trivia and votes on other issues, hoping to delay the inevitable. Since the constituency meeting was held in Keene, many hours' drive for delegates from across the state and removed from many of the population centers, it was feared many anti-incumbent voters would give up and leave for home (and for work the next day) before the crucial votes took place, and that loyalists (conference workers, etc.) would remain to vote Holley, Eder and Mrs. Eder back in office.

But when the mid-afternoon votes finally took place, it was clear that the change in leadership the nominating committee had begun would be the order of the day. Larry Moore (*pictured, right*) was elected conference president by a vote of 720–250.



When Bonnie Eder's name was brought to the floor, there was a request that it again be sent back to the nominating committee which held a meeting in one of the back rooms. When they returned with William Reinke's name, instead of Eder's, he received an overwhelming vote of support.

What remains to be seen is how Moore and a new leadership team in Texas will handle the relationship with ElderCare. ■





# THE CHURCH



# AND THE CITY

## A Calling to the City: *Second Wind's Urban Ministry in San Francisco* | BY GREG NELSON



*Our monthly Friday evening Bread & Jam (eating and singing)*

*What keeps us going are the stories of personal journeys and the testimonies of life transformation.*

### OUR CELEBRATION

Each November, Second Wind celebrates its birthday (this year was our fifth) with a big party during our Saturday service. The energy in our upper room above the auto repair shop is electric and joyful. Our gratitude for such fellowship is palpable.

The heart of the service is an activity we have enjoyed as an annual tradition. Each person selects a random postcard on their table to share with the whole group about how the picture or saying on the card describes their spiritual journey with Second Wind in the past year. The testimonies are often raw, honest, and incredibly inspiring and moving. We laugh, we cry, we clap, we shout encouragement and affir-

mation. It is pretty amazing.

What keeps us going are the stories of personal journeys and the testimonies of life transformation we hear from our community. One young female student who came to Second Wind because her boyfriend (a regular attendee) invited her said, "I've never really believed in God. But hearing all of you pray really inspired me. And so I decided to try it, wondering if I would feel anything or if anyone would respond. I now pray regularly." And she says she loves being a part of the Second Wind journey.

A former Adventist pastor who lost his job when he came out as gay and is now on our leadership team reveals, "Second Wind has given me back a spiritual home—a safe and energizing place where I can grow and minister and serve others in the ways that express who I am and who I am still growing to be." And then, with a serious look in his eyes, he says, "Thank you for being a welcoming congregation that gives LGBTQ seekers a place to experience belonging and spiritual growth."

A young female physician, whose Hindu family is from India, started coming to Second Wind by invitation from a regular attendee's cousin. Both were in medical residency at UCSF Medical Center. The cousin ultimately moved to another part of the country, but this physician continued to worship with us. She said recently, "I credit Second Wind with providing the most formational influence on my spirituality I've ever had. My life has been forever changed for the good."

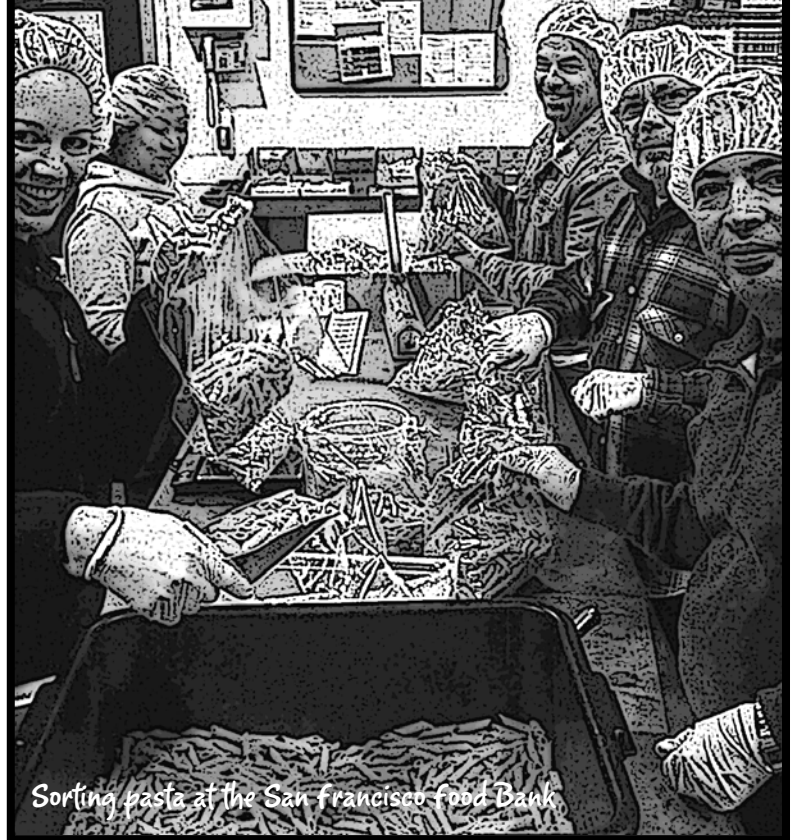
I sit there listening, my heart filled with awe

as I hear each story—people who live in the midst of a big busy city, choosing to carve out sacred space and show up authentically and transparently in community to experience a divine encounter. I remember thinking that of all the kinds of ministry I've done through the last 31 years, this is where it has all led, and I am struck with the grace of it all.

## OUR CALLING

I remember vividly that Sabbath sermon in the College View Church in Lincoln, Nebraska, over a decade ago when I stood in front of my congregation and announced that I had felt the Spirit moving me from “inside the stadium, with all its lights and crowds of fans and enthusiasts” to the obscurity of a start-up ministry in the middle of Seattle. Seattle is one of the most unchurched cities in America.

I remember while in that new ministry experiencing my most painful personal and professional failure and wondering if I would ever recover and re-emerge with any light to shine on any place in the world again? Was



*Sorting pasta at the San Francisco Food Bank*

God still there and still moving on my spirit and soul? I remember realizing that my passion for urban ministry had not only not abated, it had strengthened.

When it became apparent that denominational sponsorship might not be forthcoming,

*I hear each story—people who live in the midst of a big busy city, choosing to carve out sacred space and show up authentically and transparently in community.*



*A typical lunch outing in the Mission District after a Second Wind service*



*Second Wind's fifth birthday party gang*

began to realize that I didn't have all the answers. We are not lone possessors of "the truth." Every person has pieces of truth. We must show up as receivers of those pieces even more than as givers. We must learn to learn from others. And we must learn not only to be

*We are not lone possessors of 'the truth.' Every person has pieces of truth.*

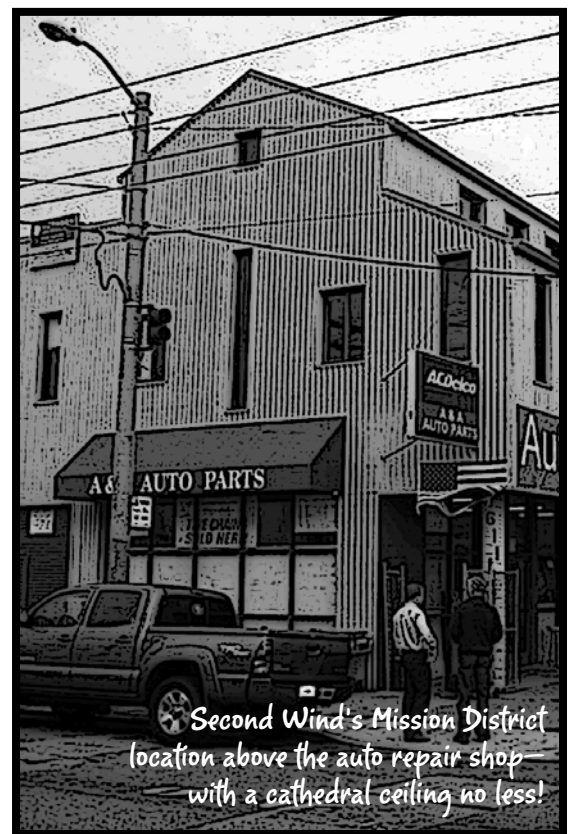
I decided to place myself in an even more challenging urban environment: San Francisco. I did it not as any kind of spiritual, religious hero, but this time as a broken, humbled "clay pot" (2 Cor. 4:7). My motivating promise from St. Paul's pen was that the light of God's grace needs cracks in order to shine through the walls of the clay container. And I had plenty of cracks.

**OUR TRUTH**

**T**he good thing about all of those painful cracks was that I had to be real. Authenticity was the upside to having a spectacular public failure yet still feeling called to ministry. I no longer could hide anything, and the inner image consultant that I had carefully cultivated over decades of Adventist ministry was out of a job.

I discovered what happens when we show up with an honest, transparent witness through our failures and weak spots. I've learned that this is precisely what effective urban ministry demands—authenticity and a willingness to be vulnerable, to come "as we are," to both give and receive from others. I

givers of grace, but to receive grace from others, all others, even the most unlikely others. And sometimes, it's the receiving that can be the hardest.



*Second Wind's Mission District location above the auto repair shop—with a cathedral ceiling no less!*



## OUR CITY

**W**e live in San Francisco! According to many church people, San Francisco is more Sodom and Gomorrah than Sodom and Gomorrah. There is no way this urban metropolis could remotely facilitate spirituality. With its reputation, it defines everything that is evil about cities. In spite of the fact that San Francisco is among the top five most visited cities in the world, many of these visitors are happy and excited to observe and taste for a safe, brief period of time. But they would never settle down here—that would be pushing their spiritual luck!

With the idea of “urban spirituality” as a stretch, spirituality in San Francisco just doesn’t seem possible to many. We city-dwellers and many church people are used to seeing pictures of our skyline superimposed with images of doom, destruction and end-time scenarios. The view is that urban spirituality can only exist as a phoenix rising from the city’s ashes of judgment.

Yet I learned something significant about this important city when I moved here. Its namesake is St. Francis, the twelfth-century spiritual leader who had a reputation based on two personal choices: he renounced his wealth in order to identify with and serve the poor, and he was called “the clown of God” because he chose to act and behave in unusual ways to get people to see God differently. He forsook wealth and image to serve others effectively.

St. Francis’ choices represent the DNA of San Francisco, its foundational core values, and the city has certainly lived them out in extravagant ways. This financial center of wealth has a higher per capita rate of philanthropy than anywhere else in the country. Even in the deepest period of the current recession, San Franciscans volunteering time and money for charitable causes keeps their city at the top of the list in the U.S. San Francisco and the Bay Area have more nonprofits dedicated to serving the world than anywhere else in our country.



*Sharing our stories during Second Wind's 5th birthday party*

Many know how this city deals with the image issue: “be who you are” is the mantra here. Don’t worry about what everyone else says. Just be the best you you can be. That attitude plays out in everything from fashion to architecture to food to music to gay rights. The history of this city is an ongoing story of failure and fruitfulness, tragedy as well as triumph, in how it has lived out these values. It has been admired and ridiculed, loved and hated by the world. Its “take it or leave it” attitude has made enemies and loyal friends alike.

It became clear to me that if ministry was to be effective here, we had to pay close attention to these core values. I had to come to grips with them in my own life—I had to be willing to serve unabashedly and express myself beyond the cautionary voice of my inner image consultant.

## OUR COMMUNITY

**M**y wife Shasta and I started Second Wind five and a half years ago in San Francisco because we had a hunger to create a spiritual community where people gathered to share their stories and experience a sense of belonging and passion for a deeper,

*It became clear to me that if ministry was to be effective here...I had to be willing to serve unabashedly....*



*Lunch time after Second Wind service*

*Second Wind's vision centers on providing both a spiritual community and a resource center for personal and relational growth for San Francisco neighborhoods and beyond.*

more intentional life. And since Christianity and fundamentalist religion have such tarnished reputations in San Francisco (deservedly so in many ways), we wanted to develop a positive and progressive voice for God here.

Every community has a culture or personality that is shaped by the values and beliefs of the collective. Second Wind was formed out of a true sense of acceptance and honor for people wherever they are on their personal faith journey. Our name Second Wind continues to shape our experience and passion to be a safe place for people, where people are graced with second chances and new beginnings, where people who have given up on God or themselves or their dreams or the church can find a second Wind/Breath/Spirit of love, acceptance, transformation, and hope. We see a God that is big enough for all of us. And we see a God who is bigger than any one of us, who is expressed more fully by all of us in unique and diverse ways.

Second Wind's vision centers on providing both a spiritual community and a resource center for personal and relational growth for San Francisco neighborhoods and beyond. As a spiritual community, we engage in weekly Saturday morning services where we have con-

versations around topics that impact our discovery of identity and how to live in alignment with that truth. We challenge ourselves with what it means to make a positive difference in the world. We explore questions about God and how the faith journey impacts life. We provide service opportunities in collaboration with other non-profits in the city.

As a resource center, we offer workshops, classes, seminars, and events that center around topics of personal, relational, and family health. We even periodically host a toddler dance party for parents and their kids to enjoy lively singing and playing. Definitely high energy! Our vision is to continue expanding our reach to more and more people who share a deep curiosity about life and a hunger for transformation.

Second Wind's concept of community is centered on a significant paradigm summarized well by a Christian psychiatrist who said, "There are two things in life you cannot do alone: be married, and be spiritual." We believe we grow best in the context of supportive, nurturing relationships with others. Community is a high value for us.

The power of belonging to a spiritual community is that people find themselves getting



*Two of Second Wind's leadership team, Tom Baxter and Marcos Apolonio*

to know people they would most likely not choose to be best friends with or hang out with on a regular basis. This kind of diversity stretches us and teaches us the art of learning how to love people who are different from us. Over the years a very eclectic gathering of people has formed, comprised of young and old, couples, singles, and families, students and profes-



sionals, gays, straights, and transgenders, and a rich mix of ethnicities. Some of us have had positive religious experiences, but we craved something more. Others have had no intentional spiritual education but are curious. Still others have seen the worst of their religious upbringings but are hopeful and courageous enough to believe that not everything God-related is abusive.

## OUR CHALLENGE

Jesus used the metaphor of light to describe the mission of his followers. What is significant about light is that there is a wide spectrum of colors that makes up light. In order for a community to follow Jesus' call to be light in the world, it must embrace more than one kind or style of light. Are we willing to allow for radical diversity in our witness and influence? Can we allow spiritual journeys to look different from what we have experienced? Can even our conceptions of God be different and still experience effective community? Can we let God choose how God wants to use our individual cracks to shine light through, rather than imposing our own views?

I've seen how messy ministry often is in this environment. Building relationships with urban-dwellers requires a broad-mindedness

and non-judgmental attitude. It calls us to live with and among and on the side of people instead of conducting missions from the safety of the suburbs. We are compelled to rub shoulders with our neighbors and friends as fellow travelers rather than as their teachers and saviors. It has involved changing my personal paradigm from "I'm here to save you" to "I'm here to learn from you." In that same vein, I've been confronted with the necessity of changing my standard of success: "How can I serve you?" instead of "Here's what you can do for me: join my church!"

And yet, Shasta and I periodically wonder whether we're making a meaningful difference. The high mobility rate in cities creates challenges to growing stable and sustainable community. Sometimes we feel disconnected from our own past and lost in the middle of this concrete urban jungle. We get weary of having to constantly raise money to achieve sustainability for both Second Wind and ourselves. Being self-supporting in this environment is a huge challenge, which continually stretches our faith. Regardless, Second Wind somehow continues to expand its ministry in a city labeled as one of the most expensive places to live in the U.S. God

*Building relationships with urban-dwellers...calls us to live with and among and on the side of people instead of conducting missions from the safety of the suburbs.*



*Giving the Blessing is a call to ...live out the goodness of God in authentic, courageous, persistent ways.*

continues to bless through the faithful and generous gifts of individuals who share a belief in the significance of a nontraditional, deeply spiritual, urban safe place for people of all stripes and sizes “to experience belonging, excite dreams, extend compassion, and explore God” (from the Second Wind mission statement).

### OUR BLESSING

**S**tories keep us going. They remind us of the importance of urban ministry. At a time when churches tend to invest less attention on cities than elsewhere, and when the only contact churches tend to have with cities is sending out thousands of brochures depicting God’s fiery judgment on them, we are reminded how important it is to live here and build trusting

relationships with people who long for something more in their lives.

Our ministry team is persuaded to keep practicing a fundamental truth about the human family in the midst of the rich diversity in this city. It is called “Giving the Blessing.” It’s based upon the ancient Jewish theology of blessing. Giving the Blessing is not conferring something on another person that they didn’t have before. Giving the Blessing is simply acknowledging her/his fundamental identity of goodness that is already in each person. It’s calling out that Divine goodness to be recognized and embraced by that person. It’s saying, “I honor you and the Good God who lives and loves in you.”

This spiritual practice is transforming our sense of Presence in this city by empowering us to be genuine Light-bearers, showing up with love, compassion, and hope. Giving the Blessing is a call to all of us to live out the goodness of God in authentic, courageous, persistent ways, whether it’s in the middle of the urban jungle or the pasturelands of rural regions, whether it’s through our successes or our failures, whether it’s in the stadiums with bright lights or the back alleys in the shadows. It’s a call to let the Light shine through the cracks so God’s goodness can be seen and felt in transforming ways. ■



**Greg Nelson**, DMin, pastored in the Adventist Church for 25 years and is now cofounder and copastor with his wife Shasta of Second Wind <[www.Second-WindSF.org](http://www.Second-WindSF.org)> in San Francisco. He is also a personal and professional life coach <[www.FlyAgain-Coaching.com](http://www.FlyAgain-Coaching.com)>. Greg blogs regularly on urban spirituality at <[www.soulballast.wordpress.com](http://www.soulballast.wordpress.com)>.

# Can a Community Church be an Adventist Church at the Same Time? *One Congregation's Quest for Relevancy and Orthodoxy* | BY TODD LEONARD

**T**he Seventh-day Adventist Church is at a point in its history where hard decisions have to be made, not even for the sake of carrying out the gospel's call to reconcile the world to our Father but just in order for the church to survive institutionally as a meaningful part of North American culture.

Except among first- and second-generation immigrant populations, North American Adventism is dying. In 2008 the average age of an Adventist was 51, while the average age of a resident of North America was 36. All signs point to this denomination and its churches losing their ability to connect in any meaningful way with young adults and any age group that has adapted to mainstream society.<sup>1</sup> And most thought leaders in the church are at a loss to explain this incapability or suggest any strategies, supported by empirical evidence, that are proven to reverse this trend and help church membership grow among indigenous people groups. Even Elder Ted Wilson stated at his first press conference as the new General Conference president that he wished he knew the answer to the question of why less success attends traditional Adventist outreach in more economically advanced nations.<sup>2</sup>

People are working hard to come up with solutions to this decline and lack of societal impact. Much has been written about the need for change in organizational structure, reasons to embrace growth models by other evangelical churches, calls to revisit and clarify our denomination's theology, and appeals to pray and fast for spiritual revival and transformation. All of these proposals hold potential. But how does a local church integrate different structures and methods while waiting for the denomination to do the same? How can it work out a reimagined theology in the local context? What does



**The Canton Church stage**

revival and reformation actually look like? And, ultimately, how does a local church and its members become part of its community in such a way that it results in drawing people into the life and ministry of the congregation?

Existing Adventist congregations and new church plants around the world are wrestling with the answers to these questions in their local contexts. The following is just one of those stories.

## **An Encouraging Start**

Canton, Georgia, is a growing community on the north side of metropolitan Atlanta. Like much of the metro area over the past fifteen years, Canton has seen a large influx of young, middle-income families seeking affordable housing within easy driving distance to their jobs and the leisure and cultural activities of the city. But with its growth, it has also seen the problems of crystal methamphetamine abuse, domestic violence and poverty having an increasing impact. With the housing boom, Canton has also attracted an influx of undocumented migrant workers from Latin America, which brings additional economic, community health, and political issues for the city to face.

The men, women and children who launched Canton Adventist wanted to develop a church that would be a





**Canton Church co-hosts Forever Fed with Liberty Hill United Methodist Church**

welcoming, relevant and meaningful faith community for the young, unchurched families in their community while investing significant time to address the challenges that faced our neighbors and friends. In April 2006, eight families moved into 2,000 square feet of retail space and opened our doors to the public. In just over two years we had outgrown that space and moved into our current location, a 70-year-old chapel. Our average worship attendance peaked that summer at 70.

The growth that occurred from April 2006 to August 2008 can be attributed in large part to three phenomena: (1) Adventists who had moved into the area and were looking for a church home, (2) Adventists and their families who were not in the habit of church attendance but decided to start attending again at Canton Adventist, and (3) families that had one spouse with and one spouse without an Adventist background who found our church environment to be meaningful and relevant to both. Hardly any of our growth came from active members switching from another local Adventist congregation to Canton's. From its inception, Canton Adventist has been a church made up of and led by adults under the age of

45. This is still true at the time of this writing. Two-thirds of currently-attending adults fit that age demographic.

What drew these individuals and families to our church? Anecdotal evidence points to:

1. an acceptance of people no matter their background;
2. a comfortable informality in worship style and activities;
3. an atmosphere free from the judgmental criticism too prevalent among many Adventist congregations regarding diet, dress, leisure activities, Sabbath observance and relationship status;
4. an active children's ministries program and dedicated children's staff;
5. relevant, thought-provoking Bible teaching and the use of current music in worship;
6. a freedom to ask questions and publically disagree with Adventist conventional wisdom without fear of recrimination;
7. and the ease of friendship development through social events and small groups. For many church members, Canton Adventist has been a place to heal from the wounds suffered in other congregations.

## Growing (and Shrinking) Pains

That is the good news. Now here's the sad news.

Toward the end of 2008, the congregation reached a crisis point regarding its identity. Because our church had attracted many marginal Adventist families, we had a bunch of people whose lifestyles didn't fit the profile of a typical Seventh-day Adventist church member. We had social-drinkers, co-habitors, jewelry-wearers, movie-goers, pork-eaters and poker players. The result of having so many atypical Adventist members resulted in an atypical congregational culture.

For some, this was a breath of fresh air and a sign that our church was doing something right and was evidence that we needed to push the envelope further. For others, while they were thrilled to be attracting these people, they were also concerned that our church was not doing enough to lead them to be both graceful and morally upstanding Adventists.

For the first group, the concern was that as well as we had done in attracting Adventists on the fringes back to church, we had, so far, failed to attract unchurched people to our church who had no Adventist background. We had not, in their opinion, connected to our community in any real way. So they felt that, as refreshing as our church culture was, it still had obstacles it had to remove in order for the community to be attracted to an Adventist church.

The second group was more concerned with the question, What are we bringing people into? They worried that our church was not discipling people into an understanding of Adventist truth and the practice of godly living. They felt that, while maintaining a welcoming environment, there needed to be more teaching and training in the areas of Sabbath-keeping, healthful living, Ellen White literacy, and worship sacredness. For them, there was no point in reaching out to the community if our church was not going to take seriously its responsibility to uphold, model and pass on the ideals of Adventism.

We reached the boiling point in January 2009 with the presentation of two sermons, back-to-back. I shared a sermon on the Last Supper and how Jesus invited a very messy group of people to join him as he reinterpreted the elements of the Passover meal to point to the salvation provided through his death and resurrection. I expressed my conviction that the church of Jesus would always be a mess, but its messiness does not undermine its call or its witness to the world. I told our church members it was

OK that they were a mess, that I was a mess and that we should embrace each others' messiness while continuing to passionately pursue God's call to love our messy city.

The following Saturday, one of our founding members, who functioned as our head elder, gave the sermon while I spoke at the other church in my district. He spoke on the Last Supper's roots in the Passover meal and talked about how Pharaoh's heart hardened to God's voice which ultimately resulted in his and many Egyptians' destruction. He said that Passover and the Lord's Supper were calls for us to remain humble and to listen to God's voice and put our trust only in him. He warned that if we do not trust in and obey God's voice, we are in danger of losing his favor and ultimately losing our salvation. As God's last-day people, he concluded, we need to trust in the inspired voices and teaching that have faithfully brought our denomination to where it is today. If we don't, we are in danger of being shaken out.

The fallout from these two sermons resulted in one group being very angry at me because I had taken a stand for a congregational culture that would not seek to resolve all the messiness in belief and behavior while the other group got angry at the head elder for reminding them of all the reasons why they had left Adventism in the first place. I was told by one person that I should leave the Adventist denomination because I was not devoted to it and its teachings, while the head elder and others who were sympathetic to his viewpoint felt that they were being shunned by those who disagreed with them.

Eventually, this division resulted in our church's losing our head elder and several other families. These people had been crucial to our early growth and success as a congregation. Their passion, dedication and selflessness helped stabilize us and empower our ministries. Losing them was a major blow to our stability and our spirit. For those who left, they felt betrayed and rejected by a church to which they had given their heart and soul. It took them and our congregation a long time to recover from the hurt and anger from that split. And, while in one way those who stayed with Canton Adventist felt that the split needed to happen, we are still haunted by the loss of those relationships. For me personally, the fact that I was unable to keep us all together and move forward has been the greatest failure in my ministry thus far. And since that episode in our history, we have yet to have an average monthly attendance of over 40.

But what I have come to understand through my reading on starting new churches and my interaction with a number of church planters is that the questions of identity are common during the early years of a church's life. And as clear as its identity and vision may seem at the beginning, it continues to evolve as new people come on board, as its leadership matures and as it gains insight into the culture and needs of its community. No matter how hard you work to have clear objectives before you start a church, there will be needed adjustments along the way as you face the realities of congregational life and community ministry.

I believe wrestling with identity is an even bigger issue specifically within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Anyone who grew up in Adventism can attest to the cookie-cutter appearance of the denomination's congregations. You could walk into any church building—on this continent or any other—and hear the same songs, follow the same order of worship, listen to similar sermons, attend the same adult and children's Sabbath School classes, read the same books and magazines, eat the same food at potluck and dress according to the same standards. It only makes sense that when a new church does not have the same appearance, people will question whether it has the same substance.

### **Finding Our Story and Our Mission**

In 2010 two developments took place at Canton Adventist that began to define its substance. First, our Sabbath worship gatherings became defined by the seasons, stories and scriptures of the Christian year. By journeying through Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Holy Week, Easter and Proper Time, our congregation became a people with a story—the story of God and His people. We are becoming what the Adventist Church has always claimed itself to be: a people of The Book. We give voice to the patriarch, the psalmist, the prophet, the apostle and, most importantly, the gospel writer. We walk in the footsteps of Jesus week by week.

Amazingly, even though the practice of following the Christian year is a mainline church tradition, our embrace of the calendar has put us more in touch with Adventist priorities: at Advent, we spend as much time looking forward to Christ's second coming as we do looking back at his first; at Lent, we hear God's call to reacquaint ourselves with our own mortality and need of



**Canton baptism**

divinity and hear his invitation to simplify, to leave bad habits behind, to pursue healthier, more holistic ways of living, and to re-experience the gift of Sabbath rest. At Easter, we turn our attention away from what we need to do to improve our lives and celebrate what Jesus has already done through his death and resurrection, and what he is doing and will do in us through the work of the Holy Spirit.

At the same time, by placing ourselves in God's story, we've had to ask hard questions of ourselves, our congregation and denomination. We are more convinced than ever that now is not a time to rest on substandard answers to life's most important questions. We must keep pushing. We must keep challenging. We must keep wrestling with God's call in our lives and in our church. Because we have integrated a more intentional liturgy—in a less formal, more contemporary approach—Canton Adventist is going deeper into the story of God.

The second substantial component of our church life has been the engagement with our community through ongoing acts of service and friendship. We called 2010 the Year of the Splash. Our goal was to soak Canton with the beauty and love of God. Beginning in January, up to half our congregation worked together to throw birthday parties every other month for 15–20 children at the Cherokee Family Violence Center (CFVC), the largest transitional housing program for victims of domestic violence in the United States, which happens to be less than a mile from our campus. Easter weekend, we partnered with The Quest, another congregation in the city, to put on a massive Easter egg hunt for the kids.

In 2011 we will continue our ministry at the CFVC and explore new ways of serving the kids and their moms.

As we look back on what we started at the CFVC, we humbly believe that with that one small step of faith, God brought two other opportunities for us to serve the city with our limited membership and finances. In August, we were approached by Forever Fed, a mobile food ministry affiliated with Liberty Hill United Methodist Church, to host a monthly meal in our campus church's neighborhood for the families who live at or below the poverty line. Since then, we have welcomed up to 100 people to our campus each month for a delicious, nutritious meal served by our two churches.

Around the same time, a wonderful couple approached Canton Adventist about hosting a weekly Christ-centered support and recovery ministry at our church. In October, they began a new chapter of Celebrate Recovery, an accepting and healing gathering that provides support and accountability to people who want to break free from addiction, anger, grief and any other hurt, habit or hang-up in their lives. Each Friday evening 20–30 people come together to experience the power of community gathered in the healing presence of Jesus. Through Splash, Canton Adventist is beginning to live out its mission to our city. We celebrate the connections we have developed with local non-profits. We cherish the relationships we have with other churches in our city. And we take pride in our facility's location in the lower-income part of town. We are right where we want to be.

We don't know whether we'll start attracting more unchurched people. We don't know if we're Adventist enough. But we feel we're headed in the right direction. We'll see. ■

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**Todd Leonard** has led Canton Adventist from its inception and is part of the leadership team at Buckhead Community Fellowship, another progressive Adventist congregation in Atlanta.

## Footnotes

1. Beckworth, David and S. Joseph Kidder. "Reflections on the Future of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America: Trends and Challenges." *Ministry*, December 2010.

2. Newman, J. David. "Report: Ted N. C. Wilson Shares his Priorities for the Coming Five Years." *Adventist Today Newsletter*, June 25, 2010, <<http://www.atoday.com/content/report-ted-n-c-wilson-shares-his-priorities-coming-five-years>>.

## San Diego Adventist Forum

### 13th ANNUAL RETREAT, MAY 20–22

*Dr. John R. Jones, La Sierra University School of Religion*

#### **"The B-List: Early Christian Writings That Didn't Make the Cut—and What They Tell Us about the Early Church"**

Are you aware that there are documents, including some that have come to light rather recently, that have titles such as The Gospel of Thomas, The Gospel of Peter, The Gospel of Mary, The Acts of Paul and many others that were not included in the New Testament? Why were they written and why are they not part of the Bible? What do these other "gospels" teach us about Jesus, his relationship with Mary, the early Christian church and its appeal to women? What is "Q" and what do we know about it? Dr. Jones will lead us in a fascinating journey as he answers these and many other questions.

**Pine Springs Ranch, Mountain Center, CA.**

Advance Registration Required.

Information and Registration Form available at  
[www.tsdachurch.org/forum.htm](http://www.tsdachurch.org/forum.htm)

E-mail: [sdaf.org@gmail.com](mailto:sdaf.org@gmail.com) or [gmrck@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gmrck@sbcglobal.net)

**Phone: 858-775-4671.**

## New York's Best-Kept Secret

### Highlights of Recent Services:

**4/23**

Jan Anderson: *a Review of The Empathic Civilization*  
by *Jeremy Rifkin.*

**5/14**

Gary Land: *An Historian's Journey with Ellen White*

**5/21**

Ron Lawson: *A Review of Finding My Way in Christianity*  
by *Herold Weiss*

**6/11**

Seneca Vaught: *Prodigal Sons and Black Sheep*

**6/18**

Sarah Reeves: *Must Women Be Silent?*

See [www.MNYAForum.org](http://www.MNYAForum.org) for our current program.  
Contact us at (718) 885-9533 or [chaplain@mnyaforum.org](mailto:chaplain@mnyaforum.org).

Worship with us Sabbath mornings at 11:00 at  
St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 521 W. 126 St., Manhattan  
(two short blocks from the 125 St. Subway station on the #1 line).

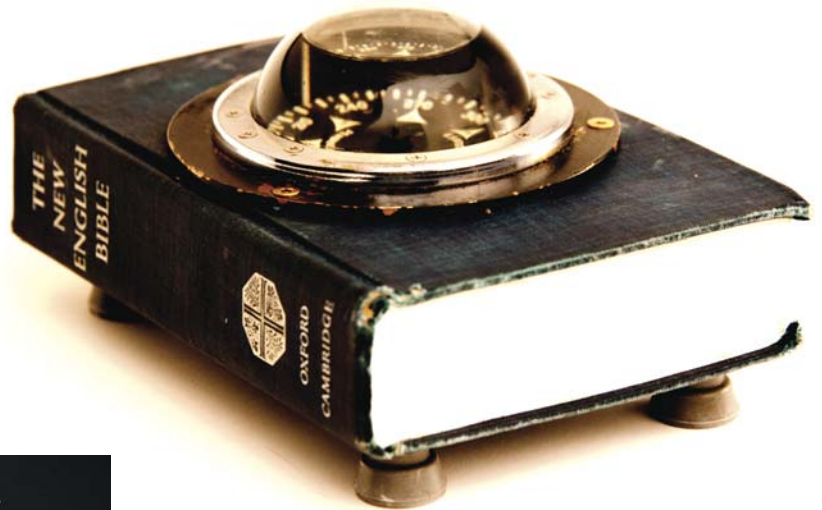
# THE BIBLE IN ART

## Reading the Bible Sculpture Series

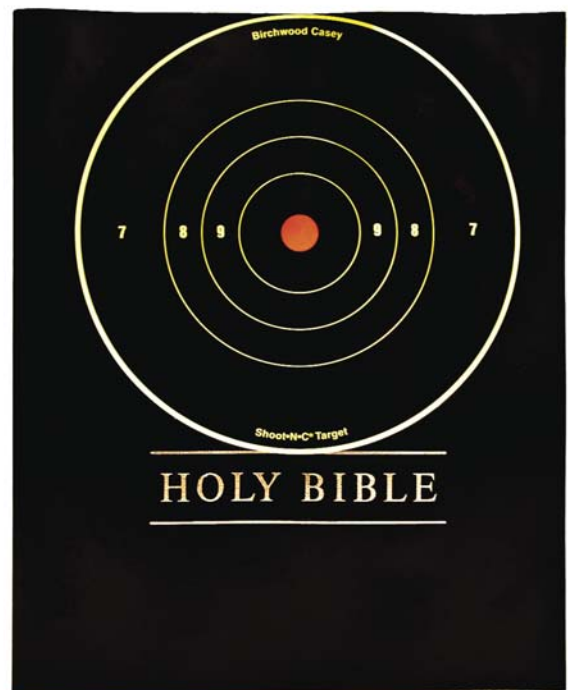
BY ARTIST JOHN MCDOWELL

### Compass

Bible: *The New English Bible*.  
Oxford: Oxford UP, 1970.  
Mixed media, 2011



Bible: *Authorized King James Version, Red Letter Edition*.  
*The Open Bible: It is Written Heritage Edition*  
with Verse Translations and Cross References, Cyclopedic Index.  
*This Bible in Your Hands* Outlines and Study Notes.  
Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1975  
Mixed media, 2011



### Target

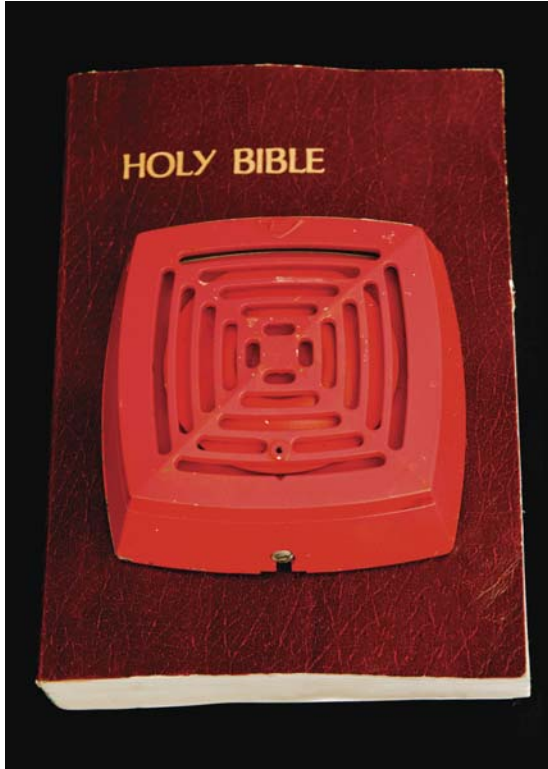
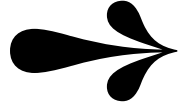
Bible: *The New American Bible*. Translated from the Original Languages with Critical use of all the Ancient Sources by Members of the Catholic Biblical Association of America.  
New York: The Catholic Press Publishers, 1970.  
Mixed media, 2011

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DIANA KLONEK



# AND LITERATURE

Interview with the artist



## Alarm

Bible: *The Holy Bible: New International Version*.  
Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.  
Mixed media, 2011



## Onward Christian Soldiers

Bible: *The Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version*.  
Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989.  
Mixed media, 2011

## Gift

Bible: *Good News Bible for Children*,  
*The Bible in Today's English Version*.  
New York: American Bible Society, 1976.  
Mixed media, 2011





## Reading the Bible Sculpture Series: An Interview with the Artist | BY JOHN MCDOWELL

**Interviewer:** To start, what got you going on this series? Also, when I first saw these pieces, I confess that I was a little taken aback at seeing the Bible as a work of sculpture.

**Artist:** I can understand how you might be taken aback. Growing up I was taught to treat the Bible with respect, and I can remember being careful not to stack other books on top of my Bible or leave it on the floor. I was a little apprehensive about cutting and drilling into bibles. What I hope viewers will understand is that I am not commenting on the Bible *as such*. I am representing attitudes toward and uses of the Bible. The art is about people who read the Bible, not about the Bible as the word of God.

**Interviewer:** You are working with metaphor then?

**Artist:** Yes. I am, as you know, interested in language and the way language shapes and mediates meaning. Metaphor is in the root of knowledge and flowers in understanding. I am thus interested in the images and words used about the Bible and belief such as “fishers of men.” I think about visual representations of such words. Since the Bible is central to Christian and hence Adventist belief, it was a natural progression to having the Bible as central to a series of sculptures. The visual representation externalizes and defamiliarizes the metaphor. Estranging the metaphor enables one to look in new and hopefully enlightening ways.

**Interviewer:** Can you give an example?

**Artist:** Certainly. Take the piece, *Sound the Alarm*. In sermons, Sabbath Schools and evangelistic crusades, I’ve been exhorted, as I assume many others have, to “Sound the Alarm”; to alert others to the end of the world, Christ’s coming, the necessity of the Sabbath, the good news of salvation—any number of core doctrines. To visually represent that, I used a fire alarm. Place a fire alarm in a Bible



and hang it on the wall, people take notice—which is what an alarm is meant to do. But, think about a fire alarm going off. It does get one’s attention, and we obey it. Obedience, driven by necessity, makes us act. Indeed, it may save one’s life. Enjoyment does not play into the action. In fact, an alarm can be irritating and annoying after a while—especially if perceived as a false alarm. A constant alarm; we cover our ears and run. To use the Bible as an alarm all of the time, what are the consequences? Some are certainly positive, but downsides shadow. I want people to think about these things. I do not wish to pass judgment. I wish to challenge the viewer in a way that I hope engages and rewards.

**Interviewer:** Did you come up with a list of words then?

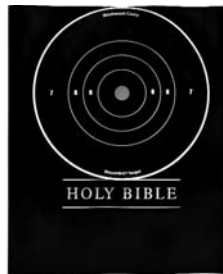
**Artist:** Not exactly. I start with a list of visual images. With art, I think visually first. I need to be satisfied with the visual image before thinking about “what it means.” I have no wish to proscribe a singular or definitive meaning. I go for evocation and suggestion because they invite the viewer’s participation in the creation of meaning; I eschew prescription and sermon in that they present the viewer with meaning already packaged.

**Interviewer:** While I think I can appreciate your reluctance to tell us what your work means, it would be helpful, now that we’ve talked a bit about process, to talk about the pieces as a way of giving viewers a starting point. I rather like *Compass*.

**Artist:** I rather like that piece myself. Most everyone who reads the Bible reads out of the desire for guidance. At times most of us have felt lost, left wandering, not



sure which way to go. We use a variety of phrases—sometimes clichés—nevertheless, they are felt realities. We speak longingly for Christ to be our “Captain.” There are plenty of nautical metaphors applied to the spiritual life. I feel that a vintage ship’s compass serves as an appropriate visual metaphor for this way of reading the Bible.



**Interviewer: Target?**

**Artist:** A book as important to western culture as the Bible, and arguably there has been no other book as important, becomes a book revered by millions, and over time, billions, and also becomes a book that attracts

—over the centuries—attacks. The Bible has been a target, particularly from the nineteenth century onward, by skeptics and non-believers.



**Interviewer: Speaking of things that have to do with water, tell me about *Hooked*?**

**Artist:** Yes, I suppose *Compass* and *Hooked* go together, although I did not think about that when making them. I like to have layers of associations to more fully engage or hook

(forgive the pun) the viewer. This piece suggests various fishing references in the Bible—being a “fisher of men” readily comes to mind. There is also the traditional association of a fish with Christ.

**Interviewer: Gift has a pretty ribbon, but wrapped in lead?**

**Artist:** After the image occurred to me, I thought about what happens when we give Bibles as gifts. I realized that when we do, the gift comes weighted with expectation—hence the lead wrapping. Particularly when we give a child a Bible as a gift, the gift carries expectations of belief, tradition, of faith, of, even, salvation—all serious matters. We want our children to believe as we do, to have the same heritage, hope, and faith that we cherish: an important, weighty gift because of all the implied and hoped for expectations.



**Interviewer: Is it really a children’s Bible that you wrapped?**

**Artist:** Yes, I wanted to be authentic, even though you do not see the Bible at all.

**Interviewer: Again, intentional, I suspect?**

**Artist:** Yes, but I will leave the explorations of possible implications to the viewer.

**Interviewer: I see that you have the ribbon in a form of the cross.**

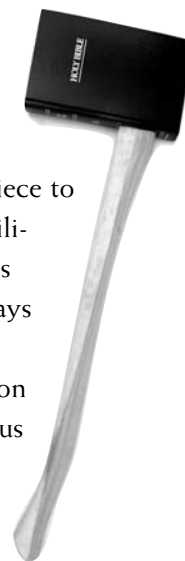
**Artist:** Yes. It also made sense to me to shape the red ribbon in the form of a cross.

**Interviewer: I notice that the Bible you used for *Target* is a Catholic Bible. That was that a deliberate choice, I suppose?**

**Artist:** Good observation. Yes. It also happened to be the Bible large enough to take the target! So it worked out. I wanted to highlight the fact that attacks on the Bible have not all come from non-believers. Within the Christian tradition we have a long and sad history of attacking the beliefs of others—targeting the way others read the Bible. Even within a tradition, differing readings—far too often, and at great cost to personal lives—are targeted. Adventism has its own sad history in this regard. We target each other with great viciousness disguised in self-assured righteousness. We are also capable of targeting others—including Roman Catholics. The choices with this piece are indeed intentional.

**Interviewer: The ax piece, *Onward Christian Soldiers*, is a little intimidating or shocking. I’m a little uncomfortable about it .**

**Artist:** Good! That’s part of the point. This piece can be seen as a companion piece to *Target*. I have always been uneasy with militaristic language in the service of religious ends. The link between militarism and ways of reading the Bible forms a dangerous union. Those who use the Bible to sanction and justify violence exist. While most of us deplore physical violence, far more read and use the Bible and *their* reading of the Bible as a way to attack others—for their beliefs, for the way *they* read the Bible and wreak emotional, relational, and spiritual devastation. We all want to be “right,” making it an easy slide into using the Bible to hack away at interpretations



**artist interview** ➔ **continued on page 59...**

## The Newest Illuminated Bible:

*Fujimura's The Four Holy Gospels* | BY HEATHER LANGLEY



After nearly twenty centuries, the illuminated Bible has finally gotten a makeover. Thanks to Makoto Fujimura (*above*), the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John have undergone a twenty-first century renaissance in a book commemorating the 400th anniversary of the King James Version Bible, printed by Crossway Publishing (*right*).

Fujimura, a Japanese-American artist with international fame, is recognized for his abstract, free-flowing and often gold-leafed paintings that merge abstract expressionism with the ancient Japanese practice of *Nihonga*, a water-based painting style that is executed with traditional Japanese papers, brushes, and natural hand-made pigments. His multicultural style has made Fujimura's work stand out nationally and internationally, and has earned him widespread recognition as one of the most prominent contemporary artists.

Working out of his Manhattan studio, Fujimura himself

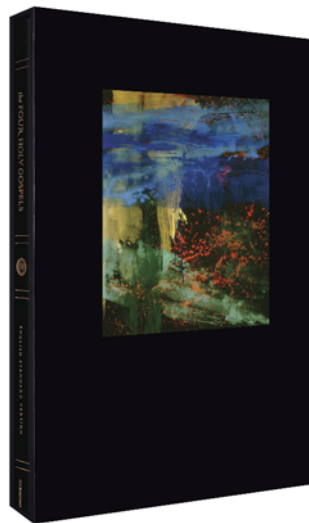
straddles the divide between two seemingly disparate subjects: contemporary art and religion. A devout Christian, Fujimura consistently uses his faith as the inspiration for his artwork, a partnership that is seldom seen within the prominently liberal art circles of New York. He describes himself as "a Christian and an Artist, not a Christian Artist," a statement that is both descriptive of his artwork as well as his audience.

His non-representational paintings are like massive, vibrant watercolors, creating emotional landscapes all their own with wash after wash of blue, black, gold, streaks of green, splatters of red. Fujimura's large canvases require him to work large, too, utilizing squeegee and broom-like tools to apply the paint in broad sweeps. Only after he has laid down the foundation in this way does he come back with a brush no thicker than a few hairs, tediously detailing his compositions.

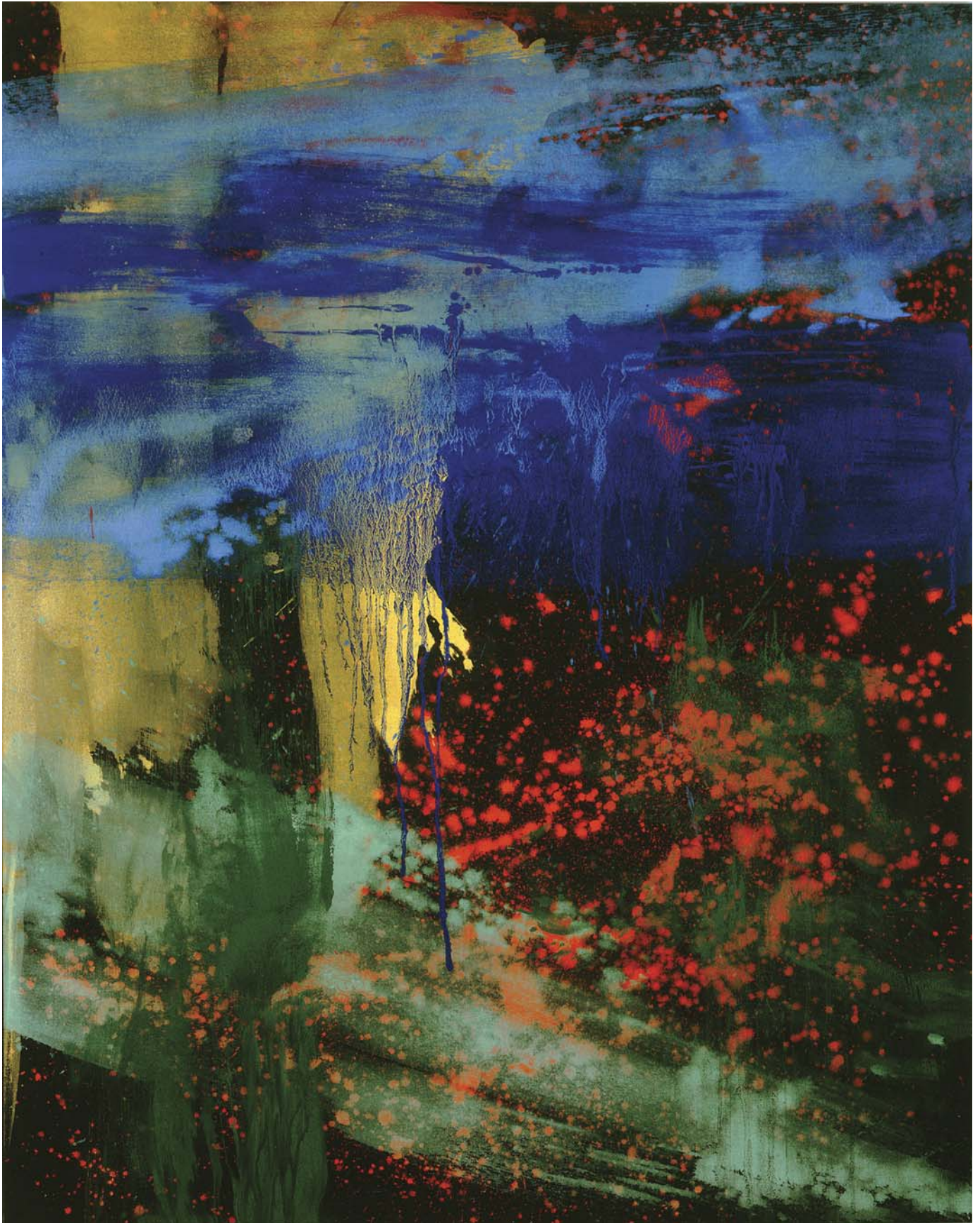
Crossway Publishing's decision to commission Fujimura for their commemorative *The Four Holy Gospels* was therefore an unusual, albeit ingenious, choice. The abstract, transcendental qualities of Fujimura's art present a break from the tra-

ditional and concrete religious themes found in most Bibles to date, from the illuminated manuscripts of the Middle Ages to contemporary children's illustrated Bibles.

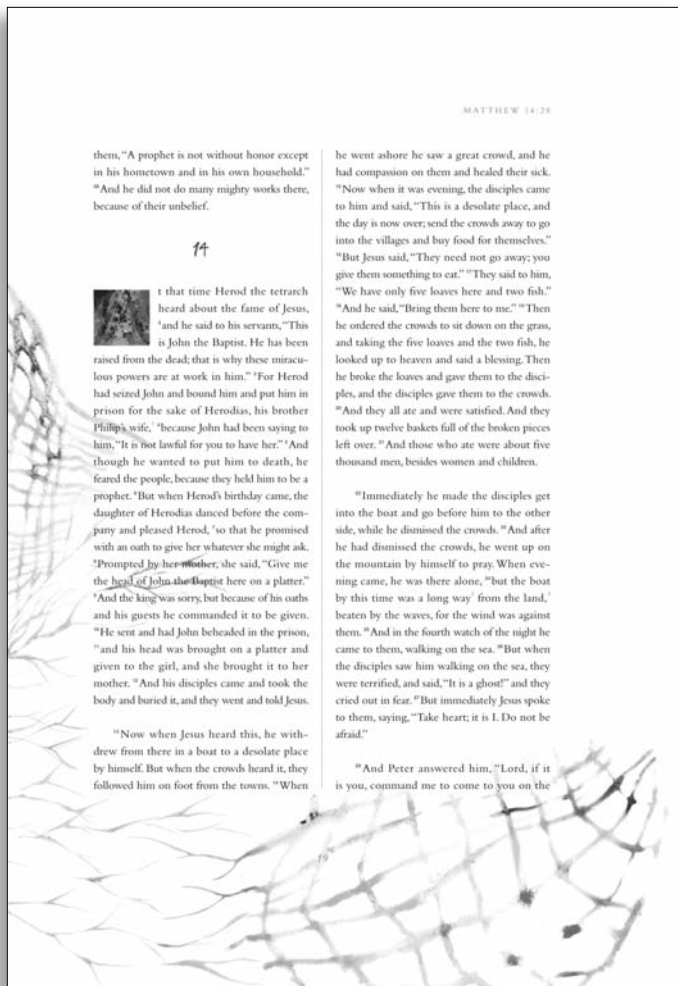
Fujimura recently said in an interview with the vice president of Crossway's editorial staff that biblical illumination of this kind "hasn't been done for a whole of 20 centuries. We've ignored this relationship between biblical text and







**Charis-Kairos (The Tears of Christ)** 80 x 64", mineral pigments, gold on Belgium linen



**Matthew 14:1-28**, an illuminated page of  
The Four Holy Gospels

images, so this [project] was a brand new effort." To Fujimura, "biblical illumination opens up the text... it's a catalyst to work so that you can go through the text into what I call a generative reality."

With Fujimura in complete control of the book's frontispieces, illustrations, and overall design, an entirely new kind of bible has arrived on the scene—one that befits both a coffee table and a gallery wall. Published in January 2011, the book has already been exhibited at Wheaton College in Illinois and Addington Gallery in Chicago, with a scheduled exhibition at New York's Museum of Biblical Art in September.

For the creation of *The Four Holy Gospels*, Fujimura spent over a year and a half composing five paintings (one for each gospel plus the cover), adding embellishments, illuminating letters, and designing the book's layout. Harkening to his Japanese roots, the book has a prominently Zen-like feel, with plenty of open white space, crisp edges, and strik-

ing use of shape and color. Each Gospel is assigned to its own painting and contains small stroke-like illustrations on each of its pages. John Wilson, editor of *Christianity Today's Books and Culture*, said in a recent interview that Fujimura's work gives readers "a sense of God and the gospel... and His prodigal generosity" as well as "a sense of God's splendor and the splendor of his creation." The book isn't just a Bible; it is art at its finest, the printed word at its best.

As an evangelical Christian, there couldn't have been a more appropriate project commission for Fujimura. Not many other contemporary artists could have internalized each gospel—its individual content, subject matter, and emotional overtones—and communicated his resulting interpretations with such beauty, originality and grace. The frontispiece for the first Gospel of Matthew, *Consider the Lilies*, is perhaps Fujimura's most representational work of the series, depicting a whitish rendering of Easter lilies on a subtle, light-blue background. The Gospel of Mark's *Water Flames* stands in stark contrast to *Matthew* with vibrant, fire-like hues of red and orange. Luke's *Prodigal God* and John's *In The Beginning* both incorporate multicolored themes and are visually more active with the use of

**Luke - Prodigal God** 48 x 60",  
mineral pigments, gold, platinum on Kumobada







Fujimura creates water-based pigments in practicing **Nihonga**, an ancient Japanese painting style

contrasting textures and patterns. And the book's cover image, *Charis Kairos (The Tears of Christ)*, harkens back to Genesis with complementary themes of light and darkness, green and red, motion and stillness.

Behind the beauty of the artwork lies an interesting phenomenon. Fujimura has, through the abstraction of his art, succeeded in visually transcending the linear language of the Gospels while still presenting a sense of their ultimate meaning. Instead of illustrating the Gospels for the reader, Fujimura accompanies them. He suggests, rather than tells. He expresses, rather than demonstrates. Through his work, Fujimura has freed the Gospels from years of verbal confinement and allowed them the opportunity to speak on their own. Finally, we're allowed to read the Gospels and not only appreciate but revel in their ability to transcend the literal realm and take us to an understanding beyond words.

What Fujimura has created in *The Four Holy Gospels* is something of a biblical revolution, not to mention an artistic one. He's taken the old, tired, yet altogether safe formula of illustrative biblical art and has transformed it into something more complex, more open-

ended, and more applicable to our twenty-first century sensibilities. In our multicultural and pluralistic society, we're becoming increasingly conscious of the need to allow room for multiple interpretations. Fujimura's art reminds us that reading the Bible is not about the henpecking of particular words and phrases, but about the beauty and power of the overarching concepts they represent. Much like the illiterate laypeople of the Middle Ages who needed those concrete visual narratives to understand the biblical passages, so do modern-day readers need the encouragement to understand their own involvement with the words on the page, to interpret the Gospels as text *and* as art. In *The Gospels*, Fujimura has paved the way for a new era of biblical usefulness and poignancy that matches the intellectual growth—and maturity—of its readers. ■

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**Heather Langley** is the editorial assistant at *Spectrum* Magazine.

**To watch a brief video** about Fujimura's *The Four Holy Gospels* project, please visit *Spectrum's* blog at <<http://spectrummagazine.org/blog/2011/02/12/four-holy-gospels>>.



# The Story of the English Bible: An Introduction to Three Presentations


BY MELISSA BROTTON

The 400th anniversary of the King James Version of the Bible (Authorized Version of 1611) recalls to us the story of the English Bible. The first known Bibles in English were the illuminated manuscripts. The Lindisfarne Gospels, for example, completed in the year 698 by the Monk Eadfrith on Holy Island off the northwest coast of England, contain the Latin text of all four Gospels. These were later glossed in the Northumbrian dialect of Old English by Bishop Aldred in the tenth century.<sup>1</sup> The pages of the Lindisfarne include colorful artwork of mixed Mediterranean and Insular styles. A large, decorated initial letter begins the text of John: "In principio erat Verbum." Matched word for word above this line, we read, "On fruman wæs word." Between the gospel texts are the evangelists' pages, depicting Matthew, Mark, Luke and John with distinctive hair, eyes, and clothing. Additional-

ly, the detailed cross-carpet pages boast a fine craftsmanship with their complex Celtic designs of spiral and animal interlacings. The scarcely dimmed pigments, gold leaf, and nineteenth-century jeweled cover remain the most remarkable characteristics of the volume, which is currently at the British Library in London.


The descendants of the illuminated manuscripts followed through the Middle Ages and, more legitimately, the fourteenth century with John Wycliffe's translation from the Vulgate, culminating in the mid-fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries with a series of translations, from Tyndale's New Testament in the 1530s to the King James Bible in 1611. The work of William Tyndale laid the most significant foundation for the readable English Bibles of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A brilliant scholar and master of several languages, Tyndale studied at Oxford, where he came into contact with the first manuscript

## The Bible in English Literature




**Lindisfarne Gospels**  
Illustrated c. 698 by Eadfrith;  
English Gloss added  
late 10th century  
Old English

**Wycliffe & Lollards**  
(Vulgate)  
Late 14th century  
Middle English




John Wycliffe

**"The Fall of Man"**  
by Titian, c. 1570



Tyndale, c. 1530s  
Coverdale, 1535  
"Matthew's Bible"  
Tyndale & Rogers, 1537  
The Great Bible  
Coverdale, 1539  
Geneva  
1560



John Tyndale  
Scholar, c. 1494 - 1536  
Burned at the stake for  
translating the Bible  
into English

Late 14th century

Late 16th century

copies of the Bible. His increasing dissatisfaction with the state of the common people of England, most of whom could not understand the Latin Scriptures read to them in their churches, led to his desire to translate the scriptures into readable English. This idea, he knew, was dangerous. Latin, with its authoritative distinctions of classical learning and literature, was the ecclesiastic language of England. It was a breach of church-state authority to translate or to read the Bible in English, the vernacular of the masses, considered unfit to contain the word of God. Transgressors were commonly burned at the stake.

Between the end of the fourteenth century (Chaucer) and the Renaissance (Shakespeare), as English began to regain a more privileged national and literary status, some began to question the established position on English scriptural translations. Tyndale's questioning led him to translate into English the New Testament from Greek and 14 books of the Old Testament from Hebrew sources. His gift for creative phrasing as well as his meaning-for-meaning in place of word-for-word rendering gave his translations exceptional qualities of accessibility and clarity for the English speakers of his day and even influenced the Elizabethan writers. Scholar David Daniell demonstrates that it was Tyndale's use of plain-style Saxon diction and syntax that made for his cogent, readable text, as he rephrased Latin lines like "The elevation of thy recliner and perambulation imperative is" to "Take up thy bed and walk."<sup>2</sup>

Tyndale's influence has been felt in various Bibles published since his martyrdom, such as the Matthew's, the Geneva, the Bishops', the Great, and the King James. Today we can see Tyndale's influence in the New International Version and the Revised English Bible, among others. The reformation spirit of giving the Bible to the people in their own vernacular contributes immeasurably to our reading of the Bible. More compelling is the thought of God's revelation being expressed through human language at all. English, with its inherent flexibility, mixed heritage, and continued growth, is now considered by most a viable and even a powerful language for Biblical translation, capable of preserving and revivifying God's word.

### "This Book of Starres": The Bible in English Literature

The literary quality of the English Bible influenced generations of literature, as "would-be poets cut their teeth on paraphrasing the Psalms or the Song of Songs."<sup>3</sup> Ballads on Biblical stories such as Queen Esther, Jonah, and David and Bathsheba abounded. Proverbs and Biblical songs proliferated as literacy grew and private reading began to replace public, oracular reading.<sup>4</sup> The beginning of the seventeenth century saw an English language enriched by its Elizabethan predecessors, all of whom used Biblical themes, imagery, or allusions. The King James Version, appearing just a few years before the death of Shakespeare (1616), was well-positioned to continue this influence. George Herbert admired the Bible in his second *Holy Scriptures* this way:

**King James Authorized Version**  
1611 (EMO)

**George Herbert**  
Metaphysical poet  
1593-1633  
"This Book of Starres"  
Portrait by Robert White, 1674

**John Milton** — Mid 17th century

**John Milton, age 21**  
1608-1674  
Political and Religious Poet  
Portrait by Benjamin Vanderquicht, painted in 1792 and based on the 1629 "Onslow" portrait which was lost for many years

**Paradise Lost**  
A POEM IN TEN BOOKS.  
The Author J. M.  
Licensed and Entred according to Order.  
LONDON  
Printed, and are to be sold by Peter Parker under Great Church near Aldgate, And by Adam Broun at the Tully Head in Whitechapel. Add: Whittie Hall, under the London Church, in Fleet Street, 1714.

Oh that I knew how all thy lights combine,  
 And the configurations of their glorie! . . .  
 Starres are poore books, & oftentimes do misse:  
 This book of starres lights to eternall blisse. (ll. 1–2; 13–14)<sup>5</sup>

Scholar John Drury believes Herbert's stars may have referred to the asterisks which appeared in the sparsely annotated Authorised Version of 1611, a fact which may point to Herbert's special preference for it.<sup>6</sup>

### The Fall Through Literary Time: John Milton

One Biblical theme—the Fall—can be traced through literary time. John Milton's epic *Paradise Lost* tells the story of the Fall and of God's redemptive plan. *Paradise Lost* contains corollaries to seventeenth-century intellectual life and civil war politics as well.<sup>7</sup> Through it Milton takes the opportunity to explore pre-enlightenment questions such as angel anatomy, mortalism, and predestination. Through Adam and Eve's loss of Eden, Milton inscribes the loss of his political dream of the Puritan Commonwealth with its aftermath of the restoration of Anglicanism, Milton's imprisonment and near death decree, and his hope for God's grace to restore "Paradise within . . . happier far."<sup>8</sup>

Milton's final scene in *Paradise Lost* depicts the sorrowful Adam and Eve as they are forced to leave their garden home:

Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;  
 The world was all before them, where to choose  
 Their place of rest, and Providence their guide:  
 They hand in hand with wand'ring steps and slow,  
 Through Eden took their solitary way.<sup>9</sup>

Adam and Eve are comforted by the promise of God's provision for their physical and spiritual needs though they have been exiled from their original home. Just so, Milton believed God would provide for the needs of His chosen people in England.

Since its reception *Paradise Lost* has exerted a tremendous influence on Christian consciousness, providing a significant treatment of Lucifer's rebellion against God in heaven and "the doctrine of the fortunate fall." Milton's representation of Eve as complexly subordinate to Adam has been a source of contention in the history of English poetry, leading to revisions of Eve by later poets. Milton's Satan is rendered sympathetically as a character who reveals his almost-human indecision and self-doubt, a quality that has led some readers to question whether Satan might not be

the real hero of the epic. Another thought is that the reader of *Paradise Lost* is the real hero. According to scholar Stanley Fish, Milton consciously created a vicarious experience for his readers in his poem.<sup>10</sup> And as we experience temptation and sin in our own pages of *Paradise Lost*, we too will feel that God's grace persists toward us just as the opening lines of Milton's epic persist in the minds of those who admire their wonder and beauty:

Of man's first disobedience and the fruit  
 Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste  
 Brought death into the world and all our woe  
 With loss of Eden till one greater Man  
 Restore us and regain the blissful seat  
 Sing Heav'nly Muse. . .<sup>11</sup> ■

### Footnotes

1. Daniell, David. *The Bible in English*. (New Haven: Yale UP, 2003), 21.
2. Daniell, 138.
3. Hill, Christopher. *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution*. (London: Penguin, 1994), 338.
4. *Ibid.*, 339.
5. Drury, John. "George Herbert." *The Blackwell Companion to the Bible in English Literature*. (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 256.
6. *Ibid.*, 255.
7. Hill, Christopher. *Milton and the English Revolution*. (London: Penguin, 1979).
8. Milton, John. "Paradise Lost," XII: 587.
9. *Ibid.*, XII: 645–49.
10. Fish, Stanley. *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost*. 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1997), 1.
11. Milton, I: 1–6.

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- Daniell, David. *The Bible in English*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.
- Drury, John. "George Herbert." *The Blackwell Companion to the Bible in English Literature*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.
- Fish, Stanley. *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Hill, Christopher. *Milton and the English Revolution*. London: Penguin, 1979.
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## “The Fortunate Fall” and Sixteenth-Century Culture | BY LORA GERIGUIS

Within forty years of its introduction in 1611,” distributors Brown and Marley assert, “the King James Version had displaced all others extant [and it had] inspired and influenced much of the best of our literature.”<sup>1</sup> The enduring works of literature that took seed in the fertile climate of the KJV include the well-known poems of John Donne (1572–1631) and George Herbert (1593–1633), as well as the lesser-known works of their contemporaries, male and female. Much of this poetry, prior to and following Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, reflects upon the “fortunate fall,” the idea that the fall into sin was in fact fortunate because it was the precipitating action necessitating, and thereby enabling, the plan of salvation.

Ordained as an Anglican priest during James I’s reign (1603–1625), John Donne, in “An Anatomy of the World” (1611), suggests that the wedge of sin exerted pressure on the universe even prior to creation, thereby forming a fissure in the prelapsarian environment:

*Then, as mankind, so is the world’s whole frame  
Quite out of joint, almost created lame:  
For, before God had made up all the rest,  
Corruption entered, and depraved the rest.* (191–194)<sup>2</sup>

Donne’s linking of ecology and theology reflects the KJV treatment of the Eden story, which repeatedly positions nature as alternatively joined to the divine and human actors in the story.

The two accounts of human creation recorded in Genesis 1 (“Let us make man in our image...and let them have dominion over...the earth” 1:26) and Genesis 2 (“The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground” 2:7) are both told in relationship to these three characters: divinity, humanity, and ecology. This pattern is repeated in Genesis 3 and 4 with the narration of the Fall and Cain’s

murder of Abel, during which the earth, plants, and animals once again function as mechanisms for testing human faithfulness to God’s laws (forbidden fruit versus permitted fruit, sheep versus produce). Nature too is forced to share in the deadly consequences of sin. Donne replicates that linkage when he asserts that the world felt “the consuming wound” of the Fall (248):

*The noblest part, man felt it first; and then  
Both beasts and plants, cursed in the curse of man.  
So did the world from the first hour decay,  
That evening was beginning of the day.* (199–203)

Donne’s emphasis that evening, not morning, forms the beginning of the day repeats the poetic device from the KJV (“and the evening and the morning were the first day” 1:5), which figures darkness as the prerequisite to light, itself a play upon the “fortunate fall” concept that sin is the catalyst to salvation.

In the “Epistle Dedicatory” to the 1611 publication of the KJV, the translators draw a similar parallel to the death of Queen Elizabeth and the coronation of King James:

*[U]pon the setting of that bright Occidental Star, Queen Elizabeth of most happy memory, some thick and palpable clouds of darkness would so have overshadowed this Land, [...but that] the appearance of Your Majesty, as of the Sun in its strength, instantly dispelled those supposed and surmised mists, and gave unto all that were well affected exceeding cause of comfort.*<sup>3</sup>

This requisite flattering of the patron clearly reproduces tropes from both the creation and redemption narratives, with its darkness-to-light structure, including the perennial nature imagery. Both Donne and the translators of the KJV engage nature, not merely as the setting for the story of salvation, but as integral to its plot and meaning.

George Herbert, son of a patron to John Donne and

himself an Anglican priest, collapses the elements of divinity, humanity and the environment into a single image. His poem "Paradise" (1633) figures man—both the first and second Adam—not as placed into a garden or hung onto a tree, but as the tree itself:

*I bless thee, Lord, because I GROW  
Among thy trees, which in a ROW  
To thee both fruit and order OW.*

*What open force, or hidden CHARM  
Can blast my fruit, or bring me HARM  
While the inclosure is thine ARM?*

*Inclose me still for fear I START.  
Be to me rather sharpe and TART,  
Than let me want thy hand and ART.*

*When thou dost greater judgments SPARE,  
And with thy knife but prune and PARE,  
Ev'n fruitful trees more fruitful ARE.*

*Such sharpness shows the sweetest FRIEND:  
Such cuttings rather heal than REND:  
And such beginnings touch their END.<sup>4</sup>*

Herbert's tree first innocently trusts in its immortality, but after recognizing the decay of death, wishes to be pruned into closer communion with the divine Gardener. The poem figures the concept of the "fortunate fall" by linking the "beginnings" to the end, creation to salvation, and in

the assertions that "cuttings rather heal than REND." This elegantly simple poem figures the fall of humanity and the sacrifice of Christ in one powerfully economic metaphor.

While the Fall figured prominently in seventeenth-century discussions of theology, philosophy, and even romance, it was in the arena of gender politics that the debate was the most intense.<sup>5</sup> The Eden narrative was a contested field among both male and female poets, as it became ground zero in the gender wars. Misogynists claimed that Eve was proof that all women (not a single character in history, but an entire gender) are prone to evil and therefore should be socially, spiritually, and politically marginalized. One example of the typical argument made in favor of women's culpability for the fall can be seen in the title of Joseph Swetnam's vicious tract, "The Arraignment of Lew, Idle, Froward, and Unconstant Women" (1615).


Rachel Speght (1597—after 1621) was just 20 when she published her tract, "A Muzzel for Melastomus" (1617), which means "black mouth," her name for Joseph Swetnam. That Speght wrote and published at all is remarkable, given the prohibitions against women doing so at the time, made possible only by the consent of her minister father. But even more significant is the fact that she engaged the KJV as a scholar, citing it closely and repeatedly in the course of her arguments, convinced by her reading that God had made women to be the equal of man, and that God would not approve of the tirades of Joseph Swetnam:

## King James Bible and Contemporary English Literature




King James I of England  
Coronated 1603

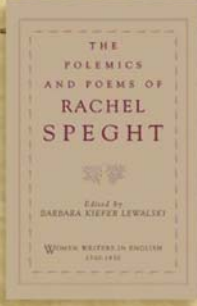
**King James  
Authorized Version**  
1611 (EMD)



**John Donne**  
Anglican priest, poet,  
1572 - 1631  
"Anatomy of the World,"  
1611

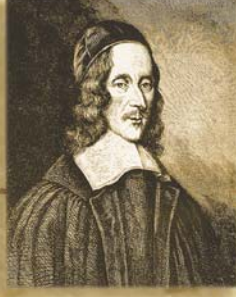


**Aemilia Lanyer**  
A musician in  
the court of King James  
(pictured)  
1569 - 1645  
"Salva Deus Rex  
Judaeorum," 1611



William Shakespeare  
Died 1616

**Rachel Speght**  
17th-century feminist,  
1597 - 1621  
"A Muzzel for  
Melastomus," 1617



**George Herbert**  
Metaphysical poet, 1593-1633  
"Paradise" 1633  
Portrait by Robert White  
1674

Good had it been for you to have put on that muzzle which Saint James would have all Christians to wear: 'Speak not evil one of another' (James 4:11). . . . True it is, as is already confessed, that women first sinned, yet find we no mention of spiritual nakedness till man had sinned. Then it is said, "Their eyes were opened" (Gen. 3:7), the eyes of their mind and conscience, and then perceived they themselves naked. . . . [T]hat she might not of him who ought to honor her be abhorred, the first promise that was made in Paradise God made to woman, that be her seed should the serpent's head be broken (Gen. 3: 15).<sup>6</sup>

Speght's writing demonstrates that she viewed the KJV Bible as a text she could personally take refuge in, both as a writer and a woman.

Aemilia Lanyer (1569–1645) was another woman whose poetry drew weapons from the Bible to defend rather than denounce women. A musician in King James' court, her work, *Salva Deus Rex Judaeorum* (1611), was published the same year as the KJV. Lanyer harnesses the story of Pilate's condemnation of Jesus as an example of a crime much worse than Eve's. In the marital drama of the Pilate household, Lanyer reminds us, the wife urges the husband not to sin. Lanyer argues that the vision of Christ's divinity Pilate's wife receives is proof of God's approval of women, even after the Fall. Having prosecuted Pilate, Lanyer turns to defend Eve, whose "fault was only too much love. . . . No hurt therein her harmless heart intended" (58, 30):

But surely Adam cannot be excused;  
Her fault though great, yet he was most to blame;  
What weakness offered, strength might have refused  
Being lord of all, the greater was his shame. . . (34–37)

[Adam] Who being framed by God's eternal hand  
The perfectest [sic] man that ever breathed on earth;  
And from God's mouth received that strait command. . . (41–43)

Yet men will boast of knowledge, which he took  
From Eve's fair hand, as from a learned book. . . (63–64)

If any evil did in her remain  
Being made of him, he was the ground of all. . . (65–66)

Lanyer's argument may be circular—don't blame women, we're the weaker sex, but don't hold that weakness against us either—but given her cultural environment, any small step away from universal responsibility for the Fall was a giant leap forward for womankind.

Abraham Cowley (1618–1667) was born into aristocratic privilege just in time to lose it all and share the court's exile in France during the English Commonwealth (1649–1660). Despite writing 50 years after Lanyer, he found it necessary to engage with the arguments she had set out. His poem, "Tree of Knowledge. That there is no knowledge" (1656), directly contradicts Lanyer's assertion that men took "knowledge/From Eve's fair hand, as from a learned book" (63–4). Of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, Cowley writes:

1649 Execution of King Charles I

Abraham Cowley  
Poet; child prodigy  
1618 - 1667  
"Tree of Knowledge,"  
1656

Paradise lost.  
A  
POEM  
IN  
TEN BOOKS.  
The Author J. M.  
Licensed and Entred according  
to Order.  
LONDON  
Printed, and are to be sold by Peter Parker  
under Great Church, near Aldgate; and by  
Robert Bayly at the "Tree of Knowledge" in  
and Middle-temple, under the "Tree of Knowledge"  
in the Strand. 1667

John Milton  
Political and  
Religious Poet  
1608 - 1674  
"Paradise Lost,"  
1667

POEMS  
UPON  
SEVERAL OCCASIONS.  
By Mrs. L. A. P. O. R. of Brackley  
in Northamptonshire.  
LONDON,  
Printed and Sold by T. Dobson in Strand Lane.  
MDCCLXIII

Mary Leapor  
Poet, cook, scullery maid  
1722 - 1746  
"Man the Monarch," 1748

"Pride and Prejudice"  
by Jane Austen, 1796 - 1813

"A Tale of Two Cities"  
by Charles Dickens, 1859



"Ye cannot know and live, nor live or know and eat."  
Thus spoke God, yet man did go  
Ignorantly on to know;  
Grew so more blind, and she  
Who tempted him to this, grew yet more blind than he.

The only science man by this did get,  
Was but to know he nothing knew:  
He strait his nakedness did view (12–19)<sup>7</sup>

Cowley is here engaged more in social critique than theological disputation. He is employing the Fall as an argumentative mechanism to prop up a patriarchal system set in disarray by the execution of King Charles I in 1649.

Mary Leapor (1722–1746), though less scholarly than her literary foremothers, was no less determined a writer. The daughter of a gardener and a domestic servant herself, Leapor was once fired for trying to cook and write poetry at the same time. Her treatment of the Genesis story braids the two threads of environmental foregrounding identified in Donne's and Herbert's works with the gender politics of Speght and Lanyer. In "Man the Monarch" (1748), Leapor parallels Adam's role in naming the animals to the right he claimed to marginalize his wife by pejoratively naming her as well.

When our Grandsire nam'd the feather'd Kind,  
Pond'ring their Natures in his careful Mind,  
'Twas then, if on our Author we rely  
He view'd his Consort with an envious Eye;  
Greedy of Pow'r, he bug'd the tott'ring Throne;  
Pleased with the Homage, and would reign alone;  
And, better to secure his doubtful Rule,  
Roll'd his wise Eye-balls, and pronounc'd her Fool.  
The regal Blood in distant Ages runs:  
Sires, Brothers, Husbands, and commanding Sons,  
The Sceptre claim; and ev'ry Cottage brings  
A long Succession of Domestic Kings. (54–65)<sup>8</sup>

Leapor treats the Fall as unfortunate, not in the theological sense, but in terms of how the Eden narrative precipitated the political and spiritual marginalization of women, figured in the dominion of animals, that brought disharmony into "ev'ry Cottage."

The staying power of the KJV as a central text of Christianity for the past 400 years is due in part to its literary qualities. The opening phrase, "In the beginning, God..." ranks as a literary model on par with the openings of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* ("Who there?"),<sup>9</sup> Jane Austen's *Pride*

and *Prejudice* ("It is a truth universally acknowledged"),<sup>10</sup> and Charles Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* ("It was the best of times, it was the worst of times").<sup>11</sup> Its beautiful language, powerful narratives, and spiritual truth have made the KJV a "well springing up into everlasting life"<sup>12</sup> that literary authors drink from again and again. ■

## Footnotes

1. Brown and Marley, owners and distributors. *The Holy Bible: Containing the Old and New Testament: King James Version*. (Philadelphia: The National Publishing Co, 1973), preface.
2. Carey, John, ed. *John Donne: The Major Works*. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990), 207–218.
3. *The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments: Authorized King James Version*. (United States of America: Collins World, 1975), preface.
4. Rumrich, John, and Gregory Chaplin, eds. *Seventeenth-Century British Poetry, 1603–1660*. (New York: Norton, 2006), 271–272.
5. For a philosophical treatment see Thomas Traherne's "Eden" (c. 1670); for a romantic treatment see John Wilmont's "The Fall" (c. 1680).
6. Lewalski, Barbara, ed. *The Polemic and Poems of Rachel Speght*. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996), 1–29.
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8. Fairer, David, and Christine Gerrard, eds. *Eighteenth-Century Poetry: An Annotated Anthology*. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 316–317.
9. Shakespeare, William. Evans, G. Blakemore, ed. *The Riverside Shakespeare*. (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).
10. Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*, Tony Tanner, ed. (New York: Penguin Classics, 2002), 3.
11. Dickens, Charles. *A Tale of Two Cities*, George Woodcock ed., (New York: Penguin, 1970), 35.
12. John 4:14 (KJV).

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## In the Garden: *The Bible and Nineteenth-Century Literature* | BY MELISSA BROTTON

Nineteenth-century British writers intentionally recreated the Fall theme through ruined garden imagery and revisions of Adam and Eve. Influenced by the cultural and social revolutions of their period, the Victorians transformed the context of the Fall through the lenses of social concern and morality. In *Great Expectations* Dickens' Pip can be read as a type of young Adam losing his innocence in the garden once he falls for Estella, who has been deceived into acting a part in Miss Havisham's scheme. Dickens' revised ending places Pip and Estella back in the garden where they come to new understandings about their relationship:

*I took her hand in mine, and we went out of the ruined place; and, as the morning mists had risen long ago when I first left the forge, so the evening mists were rising now, and in all the broad expanse of the tranquil light they showed to me, I saw the shadow of no parting from her.<sup>1</sup>*

Pip's narration provides a sense of finality to the act of leaving the garden, which carries echoes of Milton's final scene in *Paradise Lost*.

Also responsive to Milton's influence, women poets of the age rendered Eve more sympathetically than had been done in the past according to their new writing identities. Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote in her 1844 preface to *A Drama of Exile*:

*My subject was the new and strange experience of the fallen humanity, as it went forth from Paradise into the wilderness; with a peculiar reference to Eve's allotted grief, which, considering that self-sacrifice belonged to her womanhood, and the consciousness of originating the Fall to her offense, appeared to me imperfectly apprehended hitherto, and more expressible by a woman than a man.<sup>2</sup>*

Taking up where Milton left the couple, outside of the garden, Barrett Browning's Eve takes the responsibility for her choice to a suicidal extreme in her remorse for being the first human to sin. Eve's grief is later assuaged by Adam's prayer, and she speaks to Adam in redemptive terms:

*I am renewed.  
My eyes grow with the light that is within thine;  
The silence of my heart is full of sound.  
Hold me up—so! Because I comprehend  
This human love, I shall not be afraid  
Of any human death (500–505)<sup>3</sup>*

Christina Rossetti, following closely on Barrett-Browning's heels, portrays Eve's voice in similar melodramatic tones. Eve weeps inconsolably for her loss of both Abel and Cain, blaming herself for the circumstance of Abel's murder through her fall into temptation.

*I, Eve, sad mother  
Of all who must live,  
I, not another,  
Plucked bitterest fruit to give  
My friend, husband, lover;—  
O wanton eyes, run over;  
Who but I should grieve?—  
Cain hath slain his brother:  
Of all who must die mother,  
Miserable Eve! (26–35)<sup>4</sup>*

Rossetti's poem ends with the sad echoes of the lost natural world and its creatures in sympathetic response to Eve's grief, much like Barrett Browning's *A Drama of Exile*. Likewise, in "A Daughter of Eve," the narrator wrestles with a

sense of guilt over the demise of her own forsaken garden, applying Eve's suffering to future generations of women:

*My garden-plot I have not kept;  
Faded and all-forsaken,  
I weep as I have never wept:  
Oh it was summer when I slept,  
It's winter now I waken. (6–10)<sup>5</sup>*

Rossetti's Eve poems end with a sense of desolation and unmediated grief, representing a self-afflicted female type in Victorian literature. Alternatively Rossetti may offer a critique of such a figure as the despair remains in spite of self-reproach.

Unlike Rossetti's seeming fatalistic overtones in her Eve poems, a more hopeful picture emerges through nature's resiliency and God's spirit in Gerard Manley Hopkins' "God's Grandeur." In his poem Hopkins expresses concern for the environment, which humans have not cared for, but though Earth's beauty is dimmed since the original creation, God's spirit refreshes both landscape and human spirit.

*And for all this, nature is never spent;  
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;  
And though the last lights off the black West went  
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs—  
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent*

*World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings. (9–14)<sup>6</sup>*  
Hopkins' poem uses the metaphor of morning to represent the change that happens to Earth and mankind once God's care for the earth is acknowledged, creating an ecotheological vision for a new world.

Trailing the end of the nineteenth century, Frances Hodgson Burnett published *The Secret Garden*, a story depicting a reversal of the Fall, in which two emotionally damaged children find identity and healing as they discover and tend to a lost garden. In the following scene, Mary and Dickon bring Mary's sick cousin Colin into the garden for the first time:

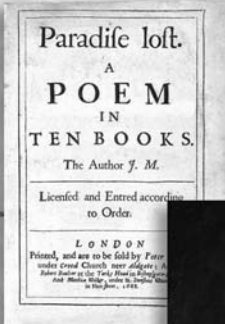
*[H]ere and there everywhere were touches or splashes of gold and purple and white and the trees were showing pink and snow above his head and there were fluttering of wings and faint sweet pipes and humming and scents and scents. And the sun fell warm upon his face like a hand with a lovely touch. And in wonder Mary and Dickon stood and stared at him. He looked so strange and different because a pink glow of color had actually crept all over him—ivory face and neck and hands and all.*

*"I shall get well! I shall get well!" he cried out. "Mary! Dickon! I shall get well! And I shall live forever and ever and ever!"<sup>7</sup>*


The restored garden reflects the redeemed relationships in this story. A father and his children are reunited, and, like Eden's promise of old, a new garden becomes a metaphor for healing and regeneration. ■

## The Bible and Nineteenth-Century English Literature


King James Bible — 1611




**John Milton**  
Political and Religious Poet  
1608 - 1674  
"Paradise Lost," 1667




**Charles Dickens**  
Victorian Era English Novelist  
1812 - 1870  
"Great Expectations," 1861





Pip and Estella in the garden, by Charles Green, c. 1877  
Gadshill Edition of "Great Expectations"

**Elizabeth Barrett Browning**  
English poet of the Romantic Movement  
1806 - 1861  
"A Drama of Exile," 1844



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1. Dickens, Charles. *Great Expectations: Norton Critical Edition*. Edgar Rosenberg, ed. (New York: Norton, 1999), 358.
2. Barrett Browning, Elizabeth. "Preface to the Edition of 1844." *The Works of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*. (Ware, UK: Wordsworth Poetic Library, 1994), 102-3.
3. Barrett Browning, Elizabeth. "A Drama of Exile." *The Works of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*. Vol. 1. Sandra Donaldson, Rita Patteson, Marjorie Stone, and Beverly Taylor, eds. (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2010), 23.
4. Rossetti, Christina. "Eve." *Collected Works by Christina Rossetti*. Classic Literature. *About.com*. New York <<http://classiclit.about.com/library/bl-etexts/crossetti/bl-crossetti-eve.htm>>. (Accessed February 27, 2011) .
5. Rossetti, Christina Georgina. "A Daughter of Eve." *Poems A Plenty*. <<http://www.poemsaplenty.com/poems/index.php?poemcategory=Future+Poems&poemID=783>> (Accessed February 27, 2011).
6. Hopkins, Gerard Manley. "God's Grandeur." *Gerard Manley Hopkins: The Major Works*. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002), 128.
7. Burnett, Frances Hodgson. *The Secret Garden: A Norton Critical Edition*. (New York: Norton), 124.

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**The Secret Garden [is] a story depicting a reversal of the Fall, in which two emotionally damaged children find identity and healing as they discover and tend to a lost garden.**

### Gerard Manley Hopkins

Late Victorian Poet;  
Catholic Priest  
1844 - 1880  
"God's Grandeur,"  
1877



"God's Grandeur,"  
Dover Thrift Edition, 1995



Christina Rossetti  
1830 - 1894  
"A Daughter of Eve," 1879

### Frances Hodgson Burnett

Late Victorian Novelist  
1849 - 1924  
"The Secret Garden," 1910



The Turn of the  
— 20th Century



# The Fall and Twentieth-Century Culture

BY SAM MCBRIDE

Dozens of new versions of the Bible have emerged in the twentieth century: translations, paraphrases, even a graphic-novel reduction. Even the venerable King James Version has been modernized. Throughout the past eleven centuries, however, the KJV has remained the standard against which all others are measured, just as the plays of contemporary William Shakespeare remain the standard of English-language drama.

What has changed dramatically over the same time period is the way humans think, a transformation which in turn affects contemporary understanding of Biblical concepts such as “the Fall.” Science asserts a very old earth shaped by slow transformations; this makes the first chapters of Genesis seem mythological rather than historical. Psychology has taught twenty-first century readers to see human actions rooted in impulses deep within the mind; as a result, Eve’s

and Adam’s actions at the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil seem unmotivated, providing no adequate answer for the question, “Why?” When approached as literature, the story of the Fall progresses too rapidly, with inadequate character development and plotting. From a contemporary perspective, the Fall seems an inferior story.

Yet the concept of the Fall continued to pervade the past century’s culture. John Steinbeck’s 1952 novel, *East of Eden*, with a title taken from the fourth chapter of Genesis, focuses on family relationships that parallel those among Adam and Eve and Cain and Able. The entire book is about the problem of evil and what humans can and should do about it. Chapter 34, in which “John Steinbeck” the narrator intrudes into the story, illustrates Steinbeck’s thinking:

*I believe that there is one story in the world, and only one, that has frightened and inspired us. . . . Humans are caught—in their*

The Bible and Twentieth-Century English Literature

**William Shakespeare**  
English Playwright,  
c. 1560 - 1616

**King James Bible**  
1611

**C. S. Lewis**  
British Novelist, Academic,  
and Christian Apologist;  
1898 - 1963  
"Perelandra," 1944

**John Steinbeck**  
California Writer  
1902 - 1969  
"East of Eden," 1952

**STEINBECK**  
**EAST OF EDEN**

1952: appearance of Revised Standard Version of the Bible, first serious competition of KJV. Based on American Standard Version from 1901.

lives, in their thoughts, in their hungers and ambitions, in their avarice and cruelty, and in their kindness and generosity too—in a net of good and evil. I think this is the only story we have and that it occurs on all levels of feeling and intelligence. Virtue and vice were warp and woof of our first consciousness... There is no other story... All novels, all poetry, are built on the never-ending contest in ourselves of good and evil. And it occurs to me that evil must constantly respawn, while good, while virtue, is immortal.<sup>1</sup>

Here Steinbeck outlines a twentieth-century version of the Fall. First, it has no beginning; it always, already was. Second, it has humans trapped; there is no escape from the struggle. But third, Steinbeck wishes to assert the superiority of good over bad, to give virtue a higher status than evil. "Evil must constantly respawn," he says, while "virtue is venerable as nothing else in the world is."<sup>2</sup> This thought represents a philosophical change underlying Steinbeck's writing; earlier, in *The Grapes of Wrath*, he expresses naturalistic philosophy in the words of ex-preacher Jim Casey: "There ain't no sin, and there ain't no virtue. There's just stuff people do."<sup>3</sup>

The twentieth-century version of the Fall that we see in Steinbeck's story has also impacted popular culture. Few events epitomize the 1960s as well as Woodstock, the 1969 rock music festival held on Max Yasgur's farm in rural New York. Here 500,000 idealistic and drug-influenced young people began to wonder whether they might have the power to transform the culture they had received

from their elders, a culture blindly embracing political evils such as the war in Vietnam.

Singer/song-writer Joni Mitchell, though not present at Woodstock, has immortalized the event in her song "Woodstock." Mitchell speaks of "going on down to Yasgur's farm" in hope of discovering a greater meaning and purpose in life. Perhaps joining a crowd that is "half a million strong," camping "on the land," and getting away from the "smog" of contemporary life will contribute somehow to world peace. Mitchell writes: "I dreamed I saw the bombers / Riding shotgun in the sky / And they were turning into butterflies / Above our nation." The song's chorus, especially its last iteration, alludes to the Fall:

*We are stardust (Billion-year-old carbon)  
We are golden (Caught in the devil's bargain)  
And we've got to get ourselves  
Back to the garden<sup>4</sup>*

Like Steinbeck, Mitchell sees humans always already trapped in the struggle between good and evil; we are "caught in the devil's bargain." Yet she refuses to give up hope for an exit from that struggle; her closing refrain, "we've got to get ourselves back to the garden," implies that surely there must be some means of recovering or returning to our lost state of innocence, personally if not politically.<sup>5</sup>

The words of another twentieth-century author stand in contrast to those of Steinbeck and Mitchell. This author is truly counter-cultural in that his thinking does not reflect the

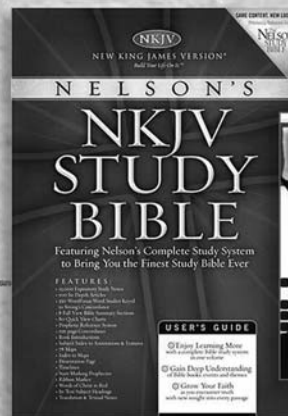


**Joni Mitchell**  
Canadian Singer and Songwriter,  
1943 -  
"Woodstock," 1969

Woodstock Music  
and Art Fair  
New York, 1969



The New King James Version — Version 1979 - 1982



**New King James Version**  
print edition, first published by  
Thomas Nelson, Inc.  
1979 - 1982



...and **NKJV Audio Bible**  
MP3 format published by  
Nelson Bibles, 2006



mainstream of twentieth-century thought. C. S. Lewis certainly recognized the awkwardness of the story of the Fall within twentieth-century culture. His science fiction novel *Perelandra* seeks to correct some of the aspects of the story that he felt Milton got wrong in *Paradise Lost* (the grandeur of Satan; the depiction of post-fall sexuality), yet it provides a version of the story that is neither abrupt nor unmotivated.

Lewis' hero, Elwin Ransom, is transported to Venus where he meets the planet's Queen, who along with her king, is the planet's only sentient resident. Lewis' Venus is a pre-fall Eden of floating tropical islands which have caused the Queen to become separated from her King. Also present is Weston, quite literally the devil incarnate, sent by evil spirits from Earth to accomplish the Queen's fall. Ransom, in contrast, is sent by angelic beings to intercede and works against the Queen's succumbing to evil. Lewis gives his Eve-figure character and psychological depth that make her temptation literarily and psychologically satisfying to twentieth-century minds. The following passage sums up the slow, steady, insistent and suggestive work of the devil over an extended period of time as he influences a noble, rational, intelligent Queen to carefully choose evil:

*It was on those lines that the enemy now worked almost exclusively. Though the Lady had no word for Duty [Weston] had made it appear to her in the light of a Duty that she should continue to fondle the idea of disobedience, and convinced her that it would be a cowardice if she repulsed him. The ideas of the Great Deed, of the Great Risk, of a kind of martyrdom, were presented to her every day, varied in a thousand forms. The notion of waiting to ask the King before a decision was made had been unobtrusively shuffled aside. Any such "cowardice" was now not to be thought of. The whole point of her action—the whole grandeur—would lie in taking it without the King's knowledge, in leaving him utterly free to repudiate it, so that all the benefits should be his, and all the risks hers; and with the risk, of course, all the magnanimity, the pathos, the tragedy, and the originality. And also, the Tempter hinted, it would be no use asking the King, for he would certainly not approve the action: men were like that. The King must be forced to be free. Now, while she was on her own—now or never—the noble thing must be achieved; and with that "Now or never" he began to plan on a fear which the Lady apparently shared with the women of earth—the fear that life might be wasted, some great opportunity let slip. . . . [Yet the Queen] was still in her innocence. No evil intention had been formed in her mind. But if her will was uncorrupted, half her imagination was already filled with bright, poisonous shapes. "This can't go on," thought Ransom.<sup>6</sup>*

Lewis has created a complex Eve-figure, one psychologically adequate for contemporary sensibilities; her temptation, perhaps like the real Eve's, is not based on a whim or a spur-of-the-moment acquiescence.

Just as important, the last words of Lewis's hero, "This can't go on," offer Christians a hope that Steinbeck and Mitchell can only wish for. In *Perelandra* the temptation does not go on forever; Ransom, with divine assistance, overcomes the evil Weston. The Christian, too, possesses the certainty that we are not eternal victims of humans' fallen status, that there will be a return to the garden, that virtue will outlive evil. Though newer translations have pushed the King James Version out of first place in the list of best-selling Bibles,<sup>7</sup> Biblical truths, such as the story of the Fall will live eternally. ■

## Footnotes

1. Steinbeck, John. *East of Eden*. (New York: Penguin, 1952), 475–477.

2. *Ibid*, 477.

3. Steinbeck, John. *The Grapes of Wrath*. (New York: Viking, 1939), 23. Steinbeck also contributes to the gender debate as central to representations of "the Fall"; his Eve character in *East of Eden* is pure evil, having no impulse toward good even in her childhood. In fact, she is more akin to Lilith than to Eve. While Steinbeck makes no generalization that all women have an evil bent, he is comfortable with one-dimensional caricatures of woman as evil, though he never wrote such an evil male character.

4. Mitchell, Joni. "Woodstock," *Jonimitchell.com*<<http://jonimitchell.com/music/song.cfm?id=75>>

5. The fact that Mitchell is a woman imagining a return to Eden for men caught up in an evil war suggests a gender reversal that also reflects a late twentieth-century transformation in thought: women, instead of the cause of the problem, may offer a solution.

6. Lewis, C. S. *Perelandra* (New York: Macmillan, 1944), 131, 134. This passage leaves out an unfortunate reference to the gender issues that have surrounded the Fall; in response to the Queen's fear that life might be wasted, Ransom argues that she ought to find adequate satisfaction in having babies.

7. "CBA Best Sellers," March 2011. Christian Booksellers Association. <[http://www.cbaonline.org/nm/documents/bsls/bible\\_translations.pdf](http://www.cbaonline.org/nm/documents/bsls/bible_translations.pdf)>

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## When What is True is Not Pure: *Flannery O'Connor and the Logic of Redemption* | BY RYAN BELL

**Editor's note:** At last year's Adventist Forum conference, "Present Truth in Visual Media: How Film Illuminates Faith," pastor Ryan Bell addressed the topic of the Bible in art and literature in a Saturday evening sermon. This is the transcript of his speech.

When people hear that I'm a pastor in Hollywood, they have such a variety of reactions. Some people are visibly excited by the idea of a church in Hollywood, but most people get anxious. I can see it in a person's face, but their concern is most obvious from the kinds of questions they ask next. People want to know if there is any hope for Hollywood or whether it's hopelessly corrupt and evil. Others offer us their condolences on living in such a lost and sinful place.

There is a great deal of fear about Hollywood and what it represents. A good percentage of those who are excited that we're there express relief that someone, at least, is trying to save those poor wretches who are destroying the fabric of America.

If you were to visit my church (as many of you have), you would discover a small but vibrant and very diverse group of people. Close inspection would reveal an incredibly creative community of artists. You would find that as a group we believe—as a matter of history and theology—that God loves to show up in godforsaken places. This is God's way. We also believe that the way we follow God faithfully is, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, by living completely in this world.

So, after five years of thinking about what it means to be a creative artist in Hollywood, attending and speaking at SonScreen Film Festivals, entering a couple of short pieces myself, along with starting up our own film production endeavor called New Name Pictures, the ideas that I want to share with you today have gelled in my mind. I realize I

am out of my depth here today and that there are many people present in the audience who know a great deal more than I do about art and film. Pastoral ministry is terribly interdisciplinary that way. It's important that you know that my method is dialogical, even though there isn't usually a lot of dialogue in a sermon. I think of my sermons as open-ended. That is less an *apology* and more an *invitation* for you to engage with me about these issues this weekend and in the future.

We are here this weekend talking about truth. Not just any kind of truth—*present truth*—truth for today, for the present moment. Not abstractions, but concrete truth, which bears fruit in Christian praxis. How do we access this present truth in an age where the vernacular is visual images and media? Can present truth be conveyed in film? Is the message necessarily diluted? Is the message doomed to be overshadowed by the medium?

The visual arts have historically been forbidden fruit for Adventists, something we want to protect ourselves from, or at least our kids. I'm from the VCR generation—the first generation of young people to have VCRs and therefore the first generation to be confronted with the question of whether the theater itself was bad or just the movie. I also have children, and so I understand what it means to not want them to see certain things.

My title this evening is, "When What is True is Not Pure." Earlier this week my talk acquired a subtitle: "Flannery O'Connor and the Logic of Redemption." Flannery O'Connor was an American novelist, short-story writer and essayist. I have been especially blessed by two of her essays, "The Fiction Writer and His Country" and "The Church and the Fiction Writer."

What I hope to accomplish in this short frame of time is a defense of art—in particular, fiction writing and reading, filmmaking and film-going—as an act of faithful Christian

living. An immodest goal to be sure!

I want to first look at how Philippians 4:8, when applied carelessly to our artistic choices, can create an almost Manichean dualism which results in art that is either sentimental or obscene. What is needed, instead, is art that is in some way prophetic, and I would say, apocalyptic.

First, let's look at the famous text:

*Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*

This text was used to teach me how to choose what entertainment was suitable for a Christian. Whatsoever things are true—no fiction. Whatsoever things are pure—for sure no sex, and probably no violence. Whatsoever is pleasing—to my mother!

Our choices in entertainment, so the argument went, were to be guided by these principles and, in the end, we should only expose ourselves to praiseworthy movies, music, and literature—films that depict events you could emulate yourself. Unlike the Bible, of course, which is full of impure and unjust stories told in lurid detail.

Martin Doblmeier argues convincingly that there is so much in our world that is destructive, so many stories that tear down and offer nothing commendable. One could hardly disagree that we need more positive and uplifting stories. So why would I stand here this afternoon and argue for anything other? Because the way we often separate between what is pure and what is true creates in us a kind of dualistic thinking that gradually erodes deep Christian faith and discipleship and leaves Christians unable to adequately critique the world in which they live for the sake of Christ and His kingdom.

Our artistic ethic, and I think we could broaden this to a kind of cultural ethic, has created people who have learned to compartmentalize their lives. On the one hand we want a spiritual life. On the other hand, we want to enjoy the rest of our lives. There is the life of the Spirit, of God's grace and love. And there's my secular life. Church, and even Sabbath, becomes about a retreat from my secular life for 24 hours, or sometimes just an hour of church. When I get back to my regular life, I hope that something from my spiritual life has rubbed off, but there really isn't much connection

between my two lives except that perhaps I've learned to be a nicer, more well-adjusted person in my secular life as a result of time spent in church. Spiritual life is private, and it will affect a person's "regular" life only in personal and individual ways as they learn to be "better people." But the definition of those "better people" is often heavily controlled by the "secular" culture to which the spiritual world has no access. I see this compartmentalization at work in my church all of the time, especially in our young people.

We occasionally use film clips in worship or to illustrate a point in a sermon. These are films that most of our members will gladly, and even eagerly, see during the week, but to bring them into a discussion of spirituality and faith on Sabbath morning is a serious challenge.

Often our so-called secular counterparts in the media, because they are not constrained by a kind of purpose or mission for their art, are more apt to tell the truth, even if that truth isn't very redeeming. But why should Christians be afraid of the truth? Flannery O'Connor says this is a sign of a weak rather than strong faith!

*It is when the individual's faith is weak, not when it is strong, that he will be afraid of an honest fictional representation of life; and when there is a tendency to compartmentalize the spiritual and make it resident to a certain type of life only, the supernatural is apt to gradually be lost.<sup>1</sup>*

By using a thin and simplistic application of a text like Philippians 4:8, we may, in fact, be doing more harm than good, and actually aiding the disenchantment of the world by dividing it into spiritual and secular.

### **The Problem of Dualism: Sentimentality and Obscenity**

O'Connor continues, talking about Catholic [Christian] readers.

*By separating nature and grace as much as possible, [the reader/viewer] has reduced his conception of the supernatural to a pious cliché and has become able to recognize nature in literature in only two forms, the sentimental and the obscene. He would seem to prefer the former, while being more of an authority on the latter, but the similarity between the two generally escapes him. He forgets that sentimentality is an excess, a distortion of sentiment usually in the direction of an overemphasis on innocence, and that innocence, whenever it is overemphasized*

*in the ordinary human condition, tends by some natural law to become its opposite. We lost our innocence in the Fall, and our return to it is through the Redemption which was brought about by Christ's death and by our slow participation in it. Sentimentality is a skipping of this process in its concrete reality and an early arrival at a mock state of innocence, which strongly suggests its opposite.*<sup>2</sup>

In one succinct expression, O'Connor gets to the heart of the issue that I have been feeling for quite some time. She is talking about literature, but the same could be said for films. This is one key problem with what is called Christian films. Once you know what you're looking for, you see that there is too simple a separation between what O'Connor calls nature and grace or between evil and good. The solutions are also too simple. The story too often skips over the central narrative of Christian faith, the death of Christ.

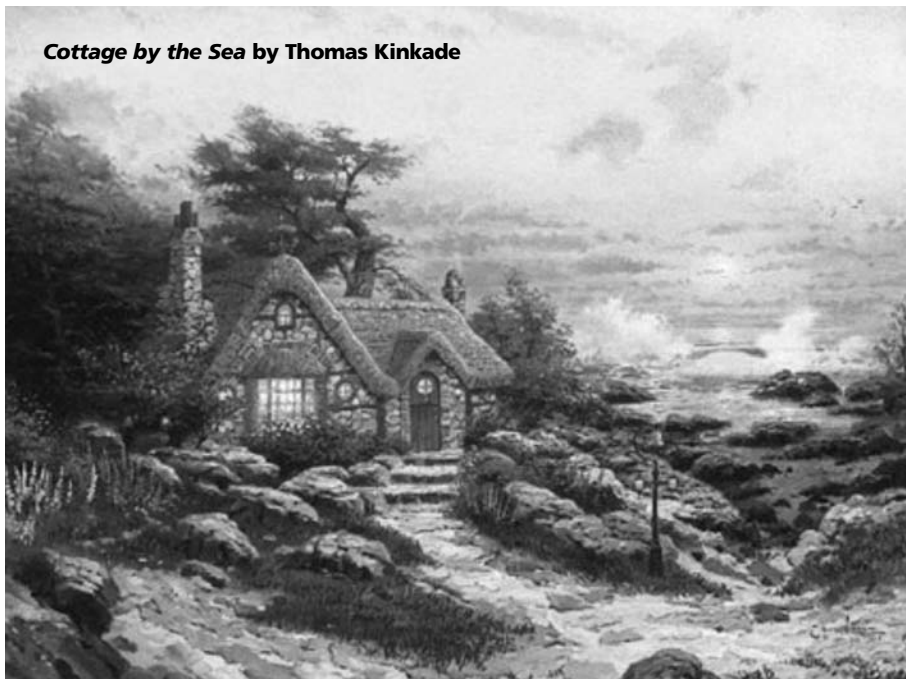
With sentimental film, genuine emotions are sometimes evoked. But even when that is true the viewer almost always feels manipulated. Or, as Ilana Simons, literature professor at The New School and a practicing psychotherapist, says, sentimental art is art that "bullies you into feeling a certain emotion." She adds, "Sentimental art could be called work that takes a short cut by relying on clichés to get us to feel. In contrast, non-sentimental art would be art that explores a situation in a more complex way."<sup>3</sup>



But the problem for the Christian isn't just that sentimental art isn't as "artsy" as non-sentimental art and therefore "bad" art, though that is definitely a problem. I've titled this sermon, "When What is True is Not Pure," hoping to address the question of how the Christian approaches art that takes seriously the pain and brokenness of the world. But I could just have easily posed the opposite question, "What about when what is Pure is not True?" And I think this is just the problem with sentimentality in art. As Christian artists there is no time for sentimentality. The stakes are too high in our world today to waste time in that way.

Let me give you one example that should hopefully not offend too many people, but might. Consider the painting below, *Cottage By the Sea*. This is a painting by Thomas Kinkade. What is wrong with this painting? Now look above at the other painting. Which do you like better?

Remember what Flannery O'Connor said:



*Sentimentality is an excess, a distortion of sentiment usually in the direction of an overemphasis on innocence, and that innocence, whenever it is overemphasized in the ordinary human condition, tends by some natural law to become its opposite.*<sup>4</sup>

It's like she anticipated Kinkade! And, when you mix this Disneyland sentimentality with Christianity you get this—*The Cross*.

To me, Kinkade is the prototypical sentimental artist. Ironically, he is sometimes called "the painter of light." Remarkably, he is the most collected artist alive.

This should offend us, this crass

attempt to manipulate our emotions by evoking a pretend world that is, at best, escapism and at worst, a mockery of the human condition which offers no hope.

On the other hand, we see hundreds of films produced by Hollywood that glorify evil and perversity. Brokenness is portrayed in a way that is disconnected from meaning. This is just the flip side of sentimentality. Pornography is the ultimate example of this. Any time the portrayal of brokenness and evil becomes gratuitous, that is, it serves no narrative or artistic purpose, but only to titillate the audience, we wander into the obscene.

You know this when you see it. You can tell the difference between an honest portrayal of war or domestic violence and gratuitous depictions of the same events. These lines are not clear, and an honest depiction of evil and corruption can very easily tip to the obscene. That tipping point is often that moment when you say to yourself, "Okay, I get the point!"

One such example for me is the very powerful, gripping and moving film, *The Stoning of Soriya M.* The film raises many valid issues related to corrupt religious systems and the abuse of women, which is still deeply engrained in many cultures. But many feel it is "too crude" or "manipulative" because it looks directly at its subject, lacking subtlety and nuance. Across the board viewers feel the film takes too many shortcuts and makes its point too directly.

The film is based on true events, which is a good example of how a story based on true events may still not qualify as completely "truthful," and in addition, the film's title gives away the ending. The stoning scene lasts a good 20 minutes and is more than really any viewer should be able to bear. One critic refers to it as "torture porn." Elisabeth and I turned our heads away for most of that scene and found ourselves literally saying out loud through sobs, "Enough already, I get the point!"

In many ways the film is excellent, but there is a critical flaw that allows stereotypes to prevail in the midst of a deeply complex situation and leaves the characters somewhat two-dimensional.

### **The Christian Artist as Prophet**

It was David Dark's 2002 book, *Everyday Apocalypse*, that really started me thinking about these things. Dark uses the word "apocalypse" in its original sense, not as a word that denotes the destruction of the world or predicting the future. Apocalypse is about revealing what is hidden, cov-

ered up or invisible to the usual way of looking at things. Apocalypse is an epiphany—when the truth that is right in front of our faces is suddenly visible in a new way. Usually when we experience apocalypse, things aren't the same after that. Dark says,

*Apocalyptic cracks the pavement of the status quo. It irritates and disrupts the feverishly defended norms of whatever culture it engages...<sup>5</sup>*

This powerfully evocative statement rings true. You know when you've experienced something like that. Something you saw, something you read, something you experienced broke through the status quo—the crust that has formed over "reality." Dark goes on:

*In this sense, apocalyptic is the place where the future pushes into the present. It's the breaking in of another dimension, a new wine for which our old wineskins are unprepared. That which apocalyptic proclaims cannot be fit into existing ways of thinking.<sup>6</sup>*

Isn't this what the ancient Hebrew prophets were up to? Isn't this what Isaiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, Jeremiah and Amos were doing? In spite of so much that has been said, this is precisely what John is doing in *The Revelation* as well. Aren't all the prophets attempting to crack through the status quo and open a space, creatively, imaginatively, for God's future to push into the present? David Dark evokes that well-worn Leonard Cohen lyric:

*There is a crack in everything  
That's how the light gets in.<sup>7</sup>*

The ancient Celts called these moments, experiences, and events "thin places," where the kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world overlap. The incarnation of God in the person of Jesus Christ was the greatest apocalypse of all. Jesus is our best "revelation"—or apocalypse—of God!

But there are also what Dark has termed "everyday apocalypses." These frequently come in the form of literature and sometimes what we might call "popular culture." This is not an uncritical celebration of popular culture. But there are moments of real glory where truth, goodness, beauty—God—shines through the ordinary. Once more, David Dark:



*By announcing a new world of unrealized possibility, apocalyptic serves to invest the details of the everyday with cosmic significance while awakening its audience to the presence of marginalizing forces otherwise unnamed and unchallenged.*<sup>8</sup>

Apocalyptic names the death-dealing forces of the powers that exist and exposes them for what they are. When apocalyptic has done its work, something profoundly life-changing is revealed. It may not seem that earth-shattering in the moment, but it plants a seed of discontent that grows and bears fruit in conversion and revolution. Art is uniquely suited for this apocalyptic work. Notice what James McClendon, the late Baptist theologian said:

*Art's necessary illusions serve to expose the illusory character of the experienced world. . . . Artists of necessity refer to the given world, yet to be art their work must imply (refer to) a whole new world of unrealized possibility.*<sup>9</sup>

**V**ery often, what is true is not pure. Art sometimes has a prophetic role, to reveal the truth of something—even an ugly truth. Too strong a focus on “staying positive” can allow oppression and evil to flourish, unchecked. Likewise, a glorification of evil that doesn’t deal honestly with the complexities also facilitates the status quo.

Christian artists have a prophetic role. Indeed, Christian writers and filmmakers have perhaps the best vantage point to shed light on our world and reveal the truth in transformative ways. But we won’t be able to do that if we’re bound to a sense of purity which is more like Victorian piety and modernist sentimentality.

Flannery O’Connor says much the same thing as McClendon:

*My own feeling is that writers who see by the light of their Christian faith will have, in these times, the sharpest eyes for the grotesque, for the perverse, and for the unacceptable. . . . Redemption is meaningless unless there is cause for it in the actual life we live, and for the last few centuries there has been operating in our culture the secular belief that there is no such cause.*

*The novelist with Christian concerns will find in modern life distortions which are repugnant to him, and his problem will be to make these appear as distortions to an audience which is used to seeing them as natural; and he may well be forced to take ever*

*more violent means to get his vision across to this hostile audience. . . . to the hard of hearing you shout, and for the almost-blind you draw large and startling figures.*<sup>10</sup>

What is the alternative? What is the risk in settling for a hyper-idealized, sentimentalized vision of the world?

*Unless we are willing to accept our artists as they are, the answer to the question, Who speaks for America today? will have to be: the advertising agencies. They are entirely capable of showing us our unparalleled prosperity and our almost classless society, and no one has ever accused them of not being affirmative. . . . Those who believe that art proceeds from a healthy, and not from a diseased, faculty of the mind will take what he shows them as a revelation, not of what we ought to be but of what we are at a given time and under given circumstances; that is, as a limited revelation but revelation nevertheless.*<sup>11</sup>

In high school I learned to love John Keats’ beautiful closing line from “Ode on a Grecian Urn”:

*Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all  
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.*

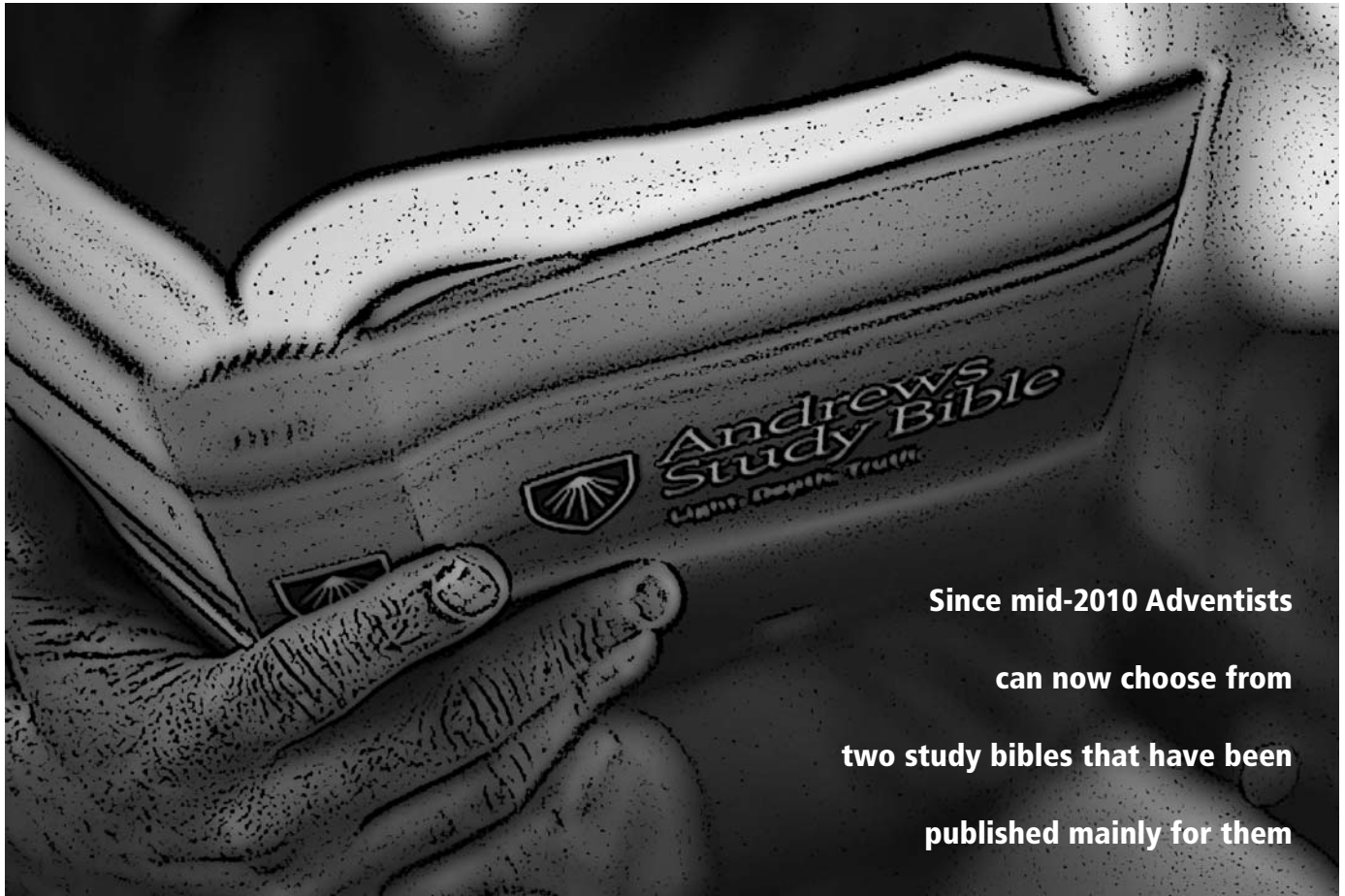
But it isn’t always true, is it? It’s a lovely sentiment, but in the end, it’s a drug that can be used by the powers that be to silence any and all dissent. Christians who take as their dictum, “Hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil,” are pawns in the Great Controversy—effectively neutralized. We cannot play our God-given role of pulling back the curtain on the lies and injustices of a world out of kilter or effectively point to a new world without dealing honestly with the world as we have it. And if we cannot do this, we are the theological equivalent of Thomas Kinkade.

But we have a high, if more challenging and risky, calling. As Christians we are driven by the logic of redemption to tell rich, compelling and world-transforming stories, and to become thoughtful readers and viewers of these stories as well.

We need Christian artists. We need Adventist artists—storytellers of all types—screenwriters, novelists, poets, actors, filmmakers, fine artists: poets and prophets of our time. The Christian artist must grapple honestly with the truth of the world as it is, become an astute observer and describer of the world and its perversity, and drink deeply from the narrative of redemption, remembering that

**true, not pure** ➔ **continued** on page 58...

## **New Tools for the People of the Book:** *Reviewing the Andrews Study Bible and the Remnant Study Bible* | BY REINDER BRUINSMA



**Since mid-2010 Adventists  
can now choose from  
two study bibles that have been  
published mainly for them**

**T**here seems to be no shortage of study bibles. I noticed this when I recently visited a large Christian bookstore which carries more than twenty of them. When I started work on this review, I typed the words “study bible” in the website, *Amazon.com*. This resulted in an amazing 66,701 hits. Of course, many of these refer to the same title in different formats and to books *about* study bibles, but by just browsing I noticed that most major Christian publishers have study bibles in their published lists—based on different versions of the

Bible and targeting a great variety of audiences. Since mid-2010 Adventists can now choose from two study bibles that have been published mainly for them; the publishing branch of Andrews University has presented its *Andrews Study Bible*, and Remnant Publications, an independent Adventist publisher, has launched its *Remnant Study Bible*.

Do Adventists need their own study bibles? If so, what specific needs should such publications address? And what about the two new study bibles that have recently come off the press? How similar are they?

Where they do differ? Is one better than the other? This article will attempt to answer these questions. I will use the following acronyms for the *Andrews Study Bible*—ASB, and the *Remnant Study Bible*—RSB.

### What is in a name?

The name of the *Andrews Study Bible* is somewhat surprising. Why not simply call it the *Adventist Study Bible*? That is, we may assume, what it is supposed to be. It was felt that there were some good reasons not to do so. The publishers of the ASB did not want to give the idea that their study bible would be seen as fully endorsed by the denomination, and as the final word about the meaning of every word in the Bible. The name *Andrews Study Bible* was chosen in honor of J.N. Andrews, a pioneering Bible scholar among Adventists. Another consideration was the fact that the project was carried forward by “the flagship university of the Adventist Church”: Andrews University (xi), with the aim of producing a study bible that would be “academically credible, theologically sound, and practically useful” (ix).

Even though Andrews University Press is the publisher, not all contributors to the ASB are connected with Andrews University. Several are from other Adventist universities, even though none of these universities carry the label “Adventist” in their name. The theological identity of the group leans toward the conservative side of the Adventist theological spectrum. Jon L. Dybdahl, a former president of Walla Walla University, served as the general editor of the project. Among the project committee, five of the nine members are clearly identified as Seventh-day Adventists (xv). All five editorial consultants are employed by the Biblical Research Institute at the headquarters of the Adventist Church, but are strangely not identified as Adventists (xvi). The Adventist identity of the project is, however, not completely hidden. All contributors and editors “acknowledge their Seventh-day Adventist background” (x), but the overall approach is apparently intended to make the book also attractive to a non-Adventist audience.

As its very name indicates, the RSB is much more overtly Adventist. On the front cover of the edition which I purchased (a request for a free review copy remained unanswered), it is indicated that E.G. White comments are a prominent part of this study bible. The very name of the publisher, Remnant Publications, an independent Adventist ministry located in Coldwater, Michigan, proclaims its mission in a jargon that traditional Adventists will readily

understand. In addition, the name *Remnant Study Bible* is a distinct selling point for a major segment of the Adventist Church. The list of the thirty contributors consists, with only a few exceptions, of people who are not employed by a denominational organization; many are connected with independent Adventist organizations—all with a conservative theological bent. The work of these contributors was mostly limited to selecting suitable quotations from ten Ellen G. White books. Most of the other materials, apart from the Bible text, were taken from external sources (several are copyrighted by Thomas Nelson, the publisher of the NKJV). Unfortunately, the ASB as well as the RSB do not credit any of the general articles, which are unique to their books, to any particular authors. It remains guesswork as to who has written what.

### The New King James Version (NKJV)

Both study bibles reviewed in this article have opted for the text of the *New King James Version* (NKJV). It does not come as a surprise that the RSB chose the NKJV, but it may come to many as rather unexpected that the ASB also chose this Bible version. Both have included the standard preface to the NKJV in the introductory materials, prior to Genesis (ASB, xvii-xxiii; RSB, xi-xiv). In that preface the KJV (the basis for the NKJV) is described as “a living legacy.” There is little modesty in the evaluation of the KJV: “The precision of translation for which it is historically renowned, and its majesty of style, have enabled that monumental version of the Word of God to become the mainspring of the religion, language, and legal foundation of our society.”

The editors of the ASB tone down these superlatives in their own statement of appreciation for the NKJV. They refer to it as a version of the Bible that “has been helpful and inspiring” to many people, and they regard this “modernization” of the *King James Version* “as a continuation of ‘a great and honored standard of faithful translation’” (x). Dr. Niels-Erik Andreasen, one of the key persons involved in the ASB initiative, said in an interview in the *Adventist Review*: “We used the *New King James Version* because there was a sense that, among the English versions, it probably still has the widest appeal and acceptance among those who would want an *Andrews Study Bible*, particularly in North America. It is possible that in the future other well-known English versions may be used for the *Andrews Study Bible*.”<sup>1</sup>

I do not have the expertise to make a well-founded judg-

ment with regard to all of the pros and cons of the NKJV when compared to newer translations, such as the RSV or the NIV or NLT.<sup>2</sup> However, it is well known that the KJV dates from 1611. The translators had to work with the manuscripts that were available to them. Since that time a great number of other manuscripts have been found. Even the most informed lay people have heard of such discoveries as the *Codex Sinaiticus* (almost the entire New Testament) and the Dead Sea Scrolls (many parts of the Old Testament). Some scholars are of the opinion that the manuscripts that were available to the seventeenth-century translators belong to the “text family” that should even now be considered as superior and most reliable. The editors of the NKJV agree, but in some cases refer to the readings in manuscripts that have become available in more recent times.<sup>3</sup> Most experts do not share this view and stress the value of making a judgment after a careful examination of *all* available manuscripts. The often vicious debate continues between those who belong to the “KJV-only” defenders and those who welcome new translations.

There is not only the issue of the provenance and date of the various manuscripts in Hebrew or Greek, or of very early translations in Syriac or Latin, or of translations of the Old Testament in Greek (as the *Septuagint*), and the relative value we may attach to them. The *method* of translation also plays an important role in the choice of a Bible version. The KJV wanted to provide a translation that is as close to the actual original text as possible. Other (and many later) translations have opted for a dynamic equivalent translation in which the communication of the *meaning* of the text rather than the literal rendering of the individual words is the main criterion. Paraphrases of the Bible have gone yet a step further in making the Bible more readable for contemporary readers.<sup>4</sup> This is not the place to discuss this matter at length, but it would seem to me that the very fact that God revealed himself in his Word, in order to communicate with us in our language, should inspire us to continuously look for the best possible ways to make his Word available in trustworthy, unbiased translations that can be understood by the reader of today—whether a veteran Bible reader or first-time Bible reader.

The Adventist Church has repeatedly stated that it does not want to be classified with the “KJV-only” people. The church has consistently justified new translations with two arguments: new discoveries have enriched our understanding, and living languages constantly develop. The Biblical

Research Institute of the General Conference (BRI) has published several articles in the recent past, suggesting that one should not rely solely on the KJV because it is not always based on the best manuscripts.<sup>5</sup> Of special interest for Adventists (and especially, it would seem, for the editors of the RSB) is the fact that Ellen White freely used the various English versions of the Bible that were available in her day, and never made any derogatory remarks with regard to recent versions or statements in defense of a “KJV-only” standpoint.<sup>6</sup>

The choice for the use of the NKJV by the editors of the ASB remains somewhat puzzling. When in the 1990s the series of commentaries in the *Abundant Life Bible Amplifier* series was published (unfortunately discontinued after some 15 volumes had appeared), the *New International Version* was adopted as its basis. In his recent series of commentaries on individual Bible books, George R. Knight (one of the contributors to the ASB) either uses his own translation or prefers different modern translations over the KJV/NKJV. Has the ASB choice for the NKJV been motivated by listening to voices on the conservative side of the Adventist Church, which are quite vocal in promoting a “KJV-only” position?<sup>7</sup> Or might there also be a commercial element in this decision, and is the licensing fee that publisher Thomas Nelson charges for use of the NKJV text and the various study bibles lower than what other publishers charge for the versions for which they own the copyright?

With regard to the status and the inspiration of scripture, the publishers of the NKJV operate on the basis of a fundamentalist view of inspiration that differs from official Adventist theology. In the Preface to the NKJV it states: “In faithfulness to God and to our readers, it was deemed appropriate that all participating scholars sign a statement affirming their belief in the verbal and plenary inspiration of Scripture, and in the inerrancy of the original autographs.” Although admittedly (and regrettably) many individual Adventists would feel comfortable with that position, it has never been endorsed by the Adventist Church<sup>8</sup> nor by Ellen White.<sup>9</sup> The official Adventist position is clearly set forth in an introductory article in the ASB (xxv, xxvi).

Concerning the primacy of Scriptures over any human interpretation, both the ASB and the RSB are quite clear, even though Ellen White’s comments clearly are given a special status in the RSB. The ASB states: “The Bible stands alone.... The Bible is subject to no one but the God who inspired it” (ix). Although Ellen White is not mentioned by

name in the ASB, her presence is certainly felt, probably most clearly in the general article about the “Message of the Bible” (xxvii–xxx), which defines the core of the biblical message in terms of the “great controversy” theme.

## Study helps

It may be useful to list side-by-side the various features the two publications offer:

Feature	Andrews Study Bible	Remnant Study Bible
<b>General Articles</b>	Inspiration  Following the Bible	Messianic prophecies Message of the Bible How sin began Nothing to fear except we forget (re: sanctuary) Prophecies of Daniel 2, 7 2300-day prophecy
<b>NKJV</b>	Preface Text Center reference column  Bible Reading Plan	Preface Text References in text Words of Christ in red Bible Reading Plan
<b>Study helps</b>	Introduction to Bible books  ca. 12,000 notes In-Text maps (11) Color Maps (15) Index to maps Charts and illustrations Harmony of the Gospels Miracles of Jesus Parables of Jesus  Concordance Annotated Theme Index	Introduction to Bible books Includes Nelson introductions Bible Timeline E.G. White comments  Color Maps (8)  Miracles of Jesus Parables of Jesus Prayers of the Bible Monies, weights, measures Jewish Calendar Concordance Chain reference Bible topics

It is impossible to discuss all these features in detail. Several of the features have been provided by Thomas Nelson, together with the NKJV text. The color maps in the RBS, for instance, originate with Thomas Nelson. The color maps in the ASB are of better quality and are more user-friendly. They are owned by Andrews University Press and have been created by David P. Barrett, a cartographer who has also contributed to such publications as the *Crossways ESV Bible Atlas*.

The general articles in the RSB focus on a number of specifically Adventist topics and provide the traditional Adventist view on the “Great Controversy” theme, the sanctuary doctrine, and the standard interpretation of

Daniel 2, 7, 8 and 9. The explanation of Biblical symbols in the RSB also conforms to traditional Adventist views.

The Chain Reference Topics in the RSB guide the reader from one text to the next to cover twenty Adventist doctrines. They offer little more than the series of Bible studies that might be given to a baptismal candidate and appear to encourage a kind of proof text approach to the study of the Bible that not everybody will appreciate.

The Annotated Theme Index in the ASB takes a somewhat different approach. Specific icons in the notes point to 28 short doctrinal statements, which are accompanied by a number of biblical references. These 28 statements resemble the 28 Fundamental Doctrines of the Adventist Church, but care is taken not to present these statements as *Adventist* doctrines. Some of the 28 Fundamentals are divided into two themes, while such specific Adventist themes as the remnant and the spirit of prophecy are not included as a specific “annotated theme.”

The introductions to the individual Bible books follow different approaches. The RSB accepts the conservative tradition with regard to authorship and suggested dates of origin. An interesting paragraph in those introductions is how Christ is reflected in each Bible book. The choice of “key word,” “key verses” and “key chapter” in each Bible book is rather subjective, but interesting.

The introductions to the Bible books in the ASB have a more academic character and are, in general, more informative. Their statements about authorship and date are likewise conservative, but do leave a little room for alternative opinions. The Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is “more than likely,” and thus these “five books of Moses” (3). While the critical theories concerning different sources in the Pentateuch, dating from different times and much later than Moses, are rejected, it is suggested that Moses “apart from having received divine guidance and visions” also made use “of collected stories and genealogical notes, records and traditions” (3).

It is acknowledged that many scholars believe that the book of Isaiah was written by two or three authors. But “this view does not need to be accepted” (ASB, 857). A number of arguments are given as to why the single authorship of the book of Isaiah remains the best option, but no conclusion is drawn. With regard to the synoptic gospels, Adventists have usually had far fewer problems in accepting critical theories. As was already the case in the *Seventh-*



day *Adventist Bible Commentary*,<sup>10</sup> the ASB also accepts the priority of Mark and the existence of various ancient sources, usually referred to by the capital letters Q, M and L,<sup>11</sup> to which the authors of the gospels had access when writing their story of the life of Christ (1247).

By including a Bible Timeline, the RSB leaves us in no doubt whatsoever that it supports an ultra-short chronology (1564, 1565). It places creation at 4,000 BC. Although the ASB also supports a short chronology, it avoids mentioning any specific date for creation. In the note on Genesis 1, it emphasizes the importance of understanding that the universe has a beginning, without suggesting when that beginning might have been. But in the note on Genesis 5:3–5 it is indicated that a total of ten generations, “spanning 1,656 years, links creation to the flood” (12).

### Apocalyptic prophecy

In any Adventist tool for Bible study the interpretation of Daniel and the Revelation is an important issue. As may be expected, the RSB is very outspoken in its support of the traditional Adventist historicist position. The idea that the book of Daniel is a second century document, written by an anonymous author, with Antiochus Epiphanes (175–163 BC) as one of the key players, is strongly rejected. The general articles about Daniel 2 and 7 and the 2,300 day prophecy (1575–1587) are very similar to what is found in the classical exposition by Uriah Smith.<sup>12</sup> The “little horn” may be “fully and fairly” identified as the papacy (1581). And the key to the time prophecies is found in the so-called “day-year” principle. When explaining the meaning of the 1,260 days or 42 months, it is simply stated: “Since a day is equal to a year in Bible prophecy, this power was to rule for 1,260 years” (1581). A similar matter-of-fact statement is found a few pages later: “In Bible prophecy, literal time periods are often a symbol of a much longer time period. A twenty-four hour day, for instance, stands for a year” (see Num. 14:34 and Ezek. 4:6) (1584).

The Ellen G. White quotations that accompany the text of the books of Daniel and the Revelation clearly identify the “little horn” (Dan. 7) and the “sea-beast” (Rev. 13) as Roman Catholicism, and the “land-beast” (Rev. 13) as the United States of America. Yet, many users of the RSB may be struck by the fact that the Ellen White comments for Daniel and Revelation are not as abundant as they might expect, and may wonder why she remained totally silent on many details of these prophetic books. For example,

there is nothing from her pen regarding Daniel 11, no word of comment regarding the seven seals or the seven trumpets, no explanatory comment on the meaning of 666. In order to ensure that a fairly complete picture of Adventist eschatological thinking would emerge, a few general articles were apparently deemed necessary.

The prophetic picture that emerges from the ASB largely conforms to Adventist tradition, but the descriptions are more circumspect than in the RSB. Daniel is dated in the sixth century BC and a number of reasons are given to support the conclusion that the second century BC theory for the writing of Daniel is “mistaken” (1108). For an explanation of why the historicist approach to Daniel and Revelation has the best papers, a short statement (“Approaches to Understanding”) is provided in the introduction to Revelation (1659). But it is also admitted that the other approaches (preterist, futurist and idealist), while they “are too limiting,” nonetheless “have a point.” In this same section it also explained that often-tentative language is used in the notes because “while the overall soundness of the [historicist] method may be clear, exact applications are often not.”

The day-year principle is also employed in the ASB with minimal supporting evidence—just a short referral to Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:4–6, the usual proof texts for the day-year principle (1673). A chart with the timeline of the Daniel 8 and 9 prophecies informs the reader that the “2,300 days or 2,300 years” of Daniel 8:14, end in 1844 (1127). In the notes, the “little horn” and the “sea-beast” of Revelation 13 are said to be powers with a religious agenda, but no specific mention is made of the papacy. Somewhat surprisingly, the note for Revelation 13:11 states that the “land-beast” of Revelation 13 “according to many interpreters, is a symbol for the United States of America” (1676). The remnant is described as “the end-time people of God,” and the “testimony of Jesus” and the “spirit of prophecy” are described as “a visionary gift, like John’s” (1675).

### Notes and Ellen G. White’s comments

The Ellen G. White comments in the RSB are, as stated earlier, taken from just ten of her books. Most prominent among these are the five volumes of the *Conflict of the Ages* series.<sup>13</sup> The five other sources are also well-known classics.<sup>14</sup> The editors are to be commended for the fact that they have only used books that were produced as complete

books by Ellen White, or under her direct supervision<sup>15</sup> and have avoided taking snippets from later compilations. They have taken care to ensure that the quotations are long enough to provide at least a little context. Just skimming through the RSB confirms that Ellen White did not write about many lengthy portions of the Bible. In many cases when one would have liked some clarification of difficult texts, she remained silent.

A study bible is not a bible commentary, and one must adjust one's expectations accordingly. This is also true for the ASB. Thus, the actual historicity of biblical events and persons is assumed and not supported with evidence. Job, for instance, is simply identified as "a non-Israelite follower of God, apparently an Edomite" (628). Jonah is described as a historical figure, and mention is made of "the miraculous intervention by a fish" (1179), but without any reference to the much debated historicity of this strange event. However, the ASB says a little more about texts that have been questioned with regard to their historic accuracy. The OT text tells us that some 600,000 Israelites (with their wives and children making a total of at least 2 million people) traveled through the desert. This has raised all kinds of critical questions. The ASB mentions some of the problems and suggests a solution that reduces the huge amount of people very considerably (note on Num. 1:46) (168).

The ASB stays with the text and does not use the notes for extensive dogmatic exposition or aggressive support for Adventist convictions. On the other hand, the Adventist tradition is clearly present. Some important textual and linguistic issues are not avoided. They are treated in a somewhat low-key manner, but always from an Adventist perspective.

The Ellen White comments that have been included in the RSB may be characterized as mostly of a devotional nature, in contrast to most of the notes in the ASB, which intend to provide information. "Their purpose is to explain, define, clarify and illuminate some aspect of the referenced passage" (xiii). Having read a rather arbitrary, but quite wide, selection of the more than 12,000 notes, I am convinced that the ASB succeeds in that respect. The meaning of names, the clarification of geographical locations, the meaning of specific Hebrew idioms, the explanation of ancient customs and short information on historical background—these issues are well covered and very helpful.

## Conclusion

I regret that these study bibles have opted for the NKJV rather than for a modern contemporary version. But apart from that, I ask myself the question: Would I buy either of these two study bibles? Both have their value. But if I had to limit myself to one of the two, I would certainly prefer the *Andrews Study Bible*. The multitude of notes certainly makes it a valuable tool that is fully worth its price. It also has many useful additional features. For those interested in the Ellen White comments, I would advise to buy (or download) the ten books from which the comments in the RSB are taken, but read them as complete books *after* you have read the Bible! ■



### Andrews Study Bible

Published by Andrews University Press, 2010

1,908 pages

Various editions, priced from \$69.99 to \$119.99



### Remnant Study Bible

Published by Remnant Publications, 2010

1,815 pages

Various editions, priced from \$85.95 to \$99.95

The books may be ordered directly from the publishers, from the ABC's or [www.adventistbookcenter.com](http://www.adventistbookcenter.com) and through such internet shops as [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

**Reinder Bruinsma** recently retired after a long and varied career in the Adventist Church. His last assignment was serving as president of the Netherlands Union. Bruinsma holds a PhD from the University of London and continues to write and teach. He is the author of some 20 books and numerous articles.

## Footnotes

1. <http://adventistreview.org.issue.php?issue=2010-1517&page=18>.
2. A useful book by an Adventist author is Hugh Dunton, *Bible Versions: A Consumer's Guide to the Bible* (Grantham, UK: Autumn House, 1998).
3. See for instance the noteworthy text in 1 John 5:7 which has long been considered one of the clearest texts in support of the concept of the Trinity. It is widely accepted that these words about the oneness of Father, Son and Spirit are a later addition to the original text, as is clear from later discovered manuscripts which the KJV translators did not have. The textual evidence for omitting these words is referred to in the small print in the center column of traditional KJV editions. Another important example of a

major textual variant is the so-called “longer ending” of Mark 16:9–20, which is not found in many ancient manuscripts.

4. A popular example is Eugene H. Petterson, *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language*. An Adventist example is: Jack J. Blanco, *The Clear Word*, which was printed and distributed by the Review and Herald Publishing Association. This Adventist paraphrase is often guilty of more theological interpretation and doctrinal bias than is desirable, even in a paraphrase.

5. See the documents “Modern Versions and the KJV” (1997); Arthur Ferch, “Which Version Can We Trust?” (1998), and Johannes Kovar, “The Textus Receptus and Modern Bible Translations.” <http://www.adventist-biblicalresearch.org>. The paper by Kovar was also published in the *BRI Newsletter* of January 2008.

6. Arthur White, “The E.G. White Counsel on Versions of the Bible,” see <http://whiteestate.org/issues/versions.html>.

7. Probably most influential (and outspoken) is in this respect the independent ministry *Amazing Discoveries*, led by Dr. Walter Veith, who argues that the moderns versions are at least in part the result of Jesuit conspiracies. In his defense of the KJV he is inspired by Benjamin G. Wilkinson, an Adventist educator who, in 1930, published his book *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*. The influence of this book extended to other denominations. Wilkinson’s books are sold via the *Amazing Discoveries* website, <http://amazingdiscoveries.org>. See also: <http://kjonlydebate.com/2009/06/05/youtube-response-the-niv-is-a-jesuit-bible>.

8. For a recent, authoritative study of the concept of inspiration, see: Peter M. van Bemmelen, “Revelation and Inspiration,” in Raoul Dederen, ed., *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), 22–57.

9. White, Ellen G. *Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 21; *Great Controversy*, p. v.

10. See vol. 5, pp. 175–176.

11. Q is derived from the German *Quelle*, the code name for a collection of sayings of Jesus, which appears to have been available to Matthew, Mark and Luke. M refers to a source from which Matthew drew materials that are unique to his gospel, while L stands for a source that was apparently only known to Luke.

12. Smith, Uriah. *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1944).

13. The titles of the five books include *Patriarchs and Prophets*, *Prophets and Kings*, *Desire of Ages*, *Acts of the Apostles* and *The Great Controversy*.

14. *Christ’s Object Lessons*, *Education*, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, *The Ministry of Healing* and *Steps to Christ*.

15. Except *Prophets and Kings*, which was not fully finished when Ellen White died. The last section was compiled from materials she had written earlier.

**true, not pure** → continued from page 51

resurrection comes only after death. There are no shortcuts.

We cannot merely tolerate artists in the church. We urgently need them. We must find ways to bless them and give them space to do their creative work. Hope itself is at stake. While the world is in a tug of war between sentimental optimism and nihilistic, sometimes obscene, pessimism, Christian artists have the chance to transcend both and convey hope. When people challenge this position, as they surely will, we must respond, with Flannery O’Connor:

*When people have told me that because I am a Catholic, I cannot be an artist, I have had to reply, ruefully, that because I am a Catholic, I cannot afford to be less than an artist.*<sup>12</sup> ■

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## Footnotes

1. O’Connor, Flannery. “The Church and the Fiction Writer” in *Mystery and Manners: Occasional Prose*. (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1957), 151.

2. *Ibid.*, 147–148.

3. Simmons, Ilana. Quoted in <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-literary-mind/200912/what-makes-art-sentimental>

4. O’Connor, 147.

5. Dark, David. *Everyday Apocalypse: The Sacred Revealed in Radiohead, The Simpsons, and Other Pop Culture Icons*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic/Brazos Press, 2002), 12.

6. *Ibid.*, 12.

7. Cohen, Leonard. *Anthem*. Quoted in David Dark.

8. Dark, 11.

9. McClendon, James. *Witness: Systematic Theology*, v. 3, quoted in Dark, 9.

10. O’Connor, Flannery. “The Fiction Writer and His Country” in *Mystery and Manners: Occasional Prose*. (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1957), 33–34.

11. *Ibid.*, 34.

12. O’Connor. “The Church and the Fiction Writer” in *Mystery and Manners: Occasional Prose* (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1957), 146.

we do not agree with. We have this unfortunate tendency to equate a particular interpretation of scripture as scripture, forgetting that every act of reading is an act of interpretation. Coming to meaning—what a text *means* is establishing a relationship between the self and the text. Introduce the self into the equation and, like it or not, one introduces human fallibility. No one likes to be fallible, or worse, wrong. Thus, it is easy to get defensive and even aggressive when challenged. A value in Adventism, the priesthood of all believers, appears to be on the wane. A frontal system is moving in with winds that proclaim that while all Adventists are equal, some are more equal than others. There exists a remarkable readiness to attack those within who are perceived to be less “Adventist” than others. When one’s *modus operandi* is concern and fear—for the church, for doctrines, for identity—and there is the feeling of being under attack, it is instinctive to reach for weapons at hand—even the Bible. And we are back to the *Ax*. In the moment one wields a weapon one loses the ability to recognize, appreciate, or even acknowledge consequences: the damage done—the hurt, the deep pain, the heartache inflicted on others.

**Interviewer:** I see your point, but we cannot be satisfied with any old interpretation. “Everything goes” does not work.

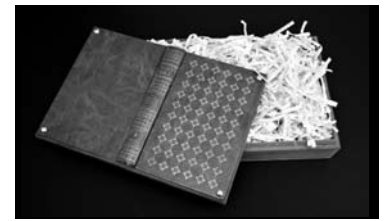
**Besides, in the Bible the words of St. Paul urge us to “Put on the whole armor of God.”**

**Artist:** True enough, but note that the text’s emphasis is not on armor, but on the virtues of truth, righteousness, faith, and note: peace. We are to fight evil—not flesh and blood. I believe, to adapt an idea from the Czech author Ludvik Vaculik in his wonderful little book, *A Cup of Coffee with My Interrogator*, the degree of a church’s (or an individual’s) Christian maturity is not measured by how the church deals with those who agree with it, but how it treats those who don’t. As he goes on to say, “Where there is agreement, freedom doesn’t come into it—freedom only begins where dissent begins.”

**Interviewer:** To shift to the last and one of your most puzzling pieces: *Boxed*. What’s going on?

**Artist:** Yes, perhaps it is not as straightforward as some of the others. I do like ambiguity because it helps entice the viewer to take a second look, to more fully engage

with the piece. I like it best when a viewer has made the piece his or her own by looking at it more than once.



Meaning, as I’ve said, is relational. One idea that you might entertain with this piece is that when the Bible is read in a way that boxes it into a particular ideology, one consequence is that one shreds the Bible. To put it another way, unwavering allegiance to a particular ideology or belief becomes a lens that turns everything one reads into a refraction of that ideology or belief. I am not saying that one should not have an ideological lens; in fact, it is important that one does. Caution, however, is invaluable. One should be continually conscious of the lens one is using and be ready to adjust the lens—rather than operating as if the lens is always correct. Things eventually get blurry if this is the case, and what one reads is no longer the text but the ideology. It seems to me that the Bible refuses to be boxed and contained. To do so, in a sense, destroys it. The Bible does not survive being boxed up.

**Interviewer:** You mentioned that these pieces are part of an ongoing series. Could you talk about other ideas you have, about what you plan on doing next?

**Artist:** No. I don’t mean to be rude, but I do not talk about work before it has come into its own. Too much can change between conception and creation. Sometimes the idea does not work at all. Talking about it beforehand is premature and has the tendency to kill the creative impulse. I have several more ideas on my list, and I would like to see how and if they work out. I am, however, always open to ideas you or anyone else may have for the series.

**Interviewer:** I’ll keep that in mind. If I think of anything, I’ll send it along.

**Artist:** Thank you. For me, one of the great pleasures in life is a new idea. ■

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## From Montevideo to the New Jerusalem: Herold Weiss's Rediscovery of Apocalyptic | BY ROY BRANSON

A review of *Finding My Way in Christianity: Recollections of a Journey* by Herold Weiss (Gonzalez, FL: Energion Publications, 2010).

It is 1968 in Southwestern Michigan. Herold Weiss, teaching Old Testament Theology at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, sits across from Richard Hammill, President of Andrews University. Herold tells President Hammill that he does not think that the first chapter of Genesis is trying to argue that the earth was created a certain number of years ago. Weiss pleads for the academic freedom to teach that Genesis, chapters one and two, are theological documents affirming that God has created everything that is. He is taken aback when President Hammill, an Old Testament scholar who has known and mentored him since he was a college freshman, begins to cry. They agree to resume their conversation later. When they convene a second time to discuss whether or not Hammill will tell the incoming president of the Adventist Church that Weiss can remain a professor at the Seminary, Weiss is the one who is overwhelmed emotionally and breaks down crying. In the end, Hammill does tell the General Conference President that Weiss deserves to remain teaching at Andrews. But at the end of that 1968-1969 school year, Weiss leaves the Seminary faculty. He moves 20 miles down the road to join the religion faculty of St Mary's College, a Catholic school affiliated with Notre Dame University, where he had a distinguished career.

For Adventist readers these scenes are the emotional heart of *Finding My Way in Christianity: Recollections of a Journey*. Herold Weiss was a formidable presence at the SDA Theological Seminary. With a solid frame, a hearty personality and a booming voice, Weiss galvanized classes by saying what he believed—bluntly and passionately. Some students hated what he said; others loved him. All respected him for being authentic—at a time when authenticity reigned as one of the very highest of virtues. This book tells the story of the man who came to Andrews and left

it—a man who has since become even more proud of his Seventh-day Adventist beliefs than he was before.

Weiss's memoir is an Adventist pilgrim's progress, and gives us a glimpse of a great Adventist clan—one of many whose sagas deserve to be told and retold—for example, the Oliveiras of Brazil, the Hassos of Iraq, the Wilsons of America, the Maxwells and Murdochs of Britain. He points out several times that his maternal grandparents, the Rifels, in 1898 established the first Seventh-day Adventist congregation in South American in their home. Evening devotions in Montevideo were dominated by studying the Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly, “undoubtedly,” he declares, “the most important formative element in the denomination” (13). Listening to relatives recount stories of missionary work up and down the Amazon, Weiss made a characteristic Adventist commitment to be a missionary. From his teen years through his doctoral program at Duke University, Weiss understood himself to be preparing to return to the Amazon to translate the Bible into the languages of the tribes along its banks.

Looking back, Weiss introduces every stage of his pilgrimage, with variations of the same refrain. “There was no doubt that God's hand kept opening doors for me” (101). He attended what is now Southern Adventist University, enrolled at the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary, studied the New Testament at Duke, received an invitation to be a visiting professor at Andrews University, and pastored a Spanish Adventist congregation in New York City.

Weiss's first internal crisis came during his doctoral studies at Duke University. Studying how to analyze the New Testament, Weiss became convinced that he must understand the Bible within its historical context, specifically the ideas, concepts and symbols of the time in which it was written. But what, then, to do with apocalyptic books such as *Revelation*, so filled with metaphors and symbols of the



ancient Near East and so central to Adventism? “The struggle within me was quite intense.” Indeed, he was “being torn apart” (117).

One answer Weiss found at Duke persists to this day: participating in the life of a local Seventh-day Adventist congregation. In Durham, the pastor often invited Weiss to preach on Sabbath, reminding him that the parishioners were not graduate students. He devotes a whole chapter to his three years pastoring a small Spanish SDA Church in Manhattan. While finishing his doctoral dissertation, Weiss translated for poorly educated parishioners at immigration and labor proceedings, advised them about the education of their children, and negotiated peace among warring street gangs.

When he arrived at Andrews University to teach, Weiss was one of the founders, then building manager, Sabbath School teacher and first elder of the Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Church in Berrien Springs, Michigan. For the last 37 years, this mixture of migrant farm workers, graduate students, immigrants and professors, has been Weiss’s “congregational home.”

**T**he second time in his life when Weiss says that his “inner self felt torn,” as it had at Duke, was when he was “severing his professional ties with the denomination.” The latter part of the memoir shares how Weiss has progressed—as a person of faith, as a Christian, as a Seventh-day Adventist.

One affirmation important to Adventists that has expanded in Weiss’s thinking is the doctrine of creation. Not only does God create the whole individual person—body, mind and spirit, but God is the creator of communities of persons—the creator of “the cultural achievements of the human race” (175). Weiss has come to connect the resurrection of persons to God’s ongoing creative power to create civilization, to inspire “the imagination, creativity, the vision of the beautiful, the need to lift one’s existence to the realm of the spiritual” (176).

Since leaving the SDA Theological Seminary, Weiss has produced the most complete historical and literary analysis ever written of the richly distinctive theologies of the Sabbath found in the four gospels and the writings of Paul. *A Day of Gladness: The Sabbath Among Jews and Christian in Antiquity* (University of South Carolina Press, 2003) is the scholarly achievement that lies behind Weiss’s affirmation in his memoir that “I still retain a particular appreciation for the Sabbath as a tangible metaphor of the connection that

humans must have with the source of life . . . the Sabbath is an incomparable gift . . . a compass that points both to the past and the future as a remembrance and an anticipation of God’s purposes.” He places the Sabbath in the category of worship, where its seventhness has a particular meaning. “Human beings give significance to their lives when they mimetically repeat divine archetypal acts . . . My neighbor and I just happen to pay attention to two different and very specific acts of God.” Worship on the seventh day celebrates God’s resting on the seventh day. Worship on Sunday honors God’s raising Christ on Easter Sunday” (214–215).

In his last chapter, Weiss expands on perhaps the most important direction he has taken as a believer, a Christian and an Adventist: rediscovering the power of biblical apocalyptic. His memoir, he says, is not an autobiography; it is a narrative making an argument: “We are in need of transforming our apocalyptic visions” (227). For too long, Weiss declares, fundamentalist Christians have constricted apocalyptic visions in books like *Revelation* to signposts of the End Times. Simultaneously, other mainstream Christians have separated Jesus from apocalyptic.

Weiss had confronted that possibility at Duke. But now a “transformed” apocalyptic has become for him not a crisis but a conviction. All Christians must realize the centrality of apocalyptic. After all, “the death and the resurrection of Christ was an apocalyptic cosmic event” (227). If Christians appreciate the apocalyptic vision of the Bible, they can share in its confidence that evil is weaker than good and that God’s peace and justice will triumph. Weiss says in the penultimate sentence of the book, his purpose in writing his memoir was “to be an agent of peace” (228).

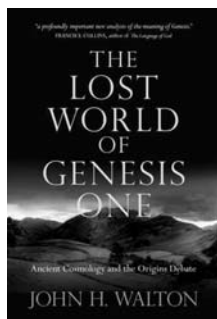
Some analysts of the Seventh-day Adventist community emphasize those born into Adventist families who ride the escalator of education and professional recognition out of the church. Weiss is one of those many, often overlooked members who love their Adventist community so much they insist on expanding and enriching its vision. ■

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**Roy Branson** is Associate Dean of the Loma Linda University’s School of Religion and Director of its Center for Christian Ethics. He has been a member of the faculty of Washington Adventist University and the SDA Theological Seminary at Andrews University. His years establishing the Christian ethics offerings at the Seminary overlapped with those of Herold Weiss. Branson conceived of *Spectrum* magazine and was its editor for 23 years.

# Discovering Common Ground in *The Lost World of Genesis One* | BY BRENTON READING

A review of *The Lost World of Genesis One* by John H. Walton (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009).



**John H. Walton, below; his latest book, above.**



**Y**ou are a materialist. Actually, to one degree or another, we all are. From God-fearing, young-earth creationists to atheistic evolutionists, all of us assume a material ontology. That is, we understand the existence of the universe from the perspective of how the material got here. This perspective has been dominant since the time of the enlightenment and the rise of modernity when Sir Isaac Newton described a mechanistic universe ruled by a God who is the biggest, most skillful mechanical engineer in...well, in the universe.

Prior to modernity, scientific understanding was vastly different from our own. The ancients believed from a functional ontology. In other words, they considered existence from the perspective of how things function in an ordered system and are useful to daily life. These differences are vital to understanding ancient creation accounts and in particular the first chapter of Genesis. At least, this is the contention of John H. Walton in his book *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate*.

Walton proposes understanding Genesis 1 from an ancient functional ontology rather than a modern material ontology. This perspective is “faithful to the context of the original audience and author, and one that preserves and enhances the theological vitality of this text.” Astute readers will recognize that Walton’s exegesis of Genesis’ creation account presents a way to honor the biblical account of origins in an ancient and literal sense while at the same time allowing openness to the moving target

that is the best and most current scientific consensus on origins.

Readers who interpret Genesis from a traditional, fundamentalist perspective may be tempted to read into Walton’s exegesis that God was not involved in material origins. Therefore, Walton clearly states, “*Viewing Genesis 1 as an account of functional origins of the cosmos as temple does not in any way suggest or imply that God was uninvolved in material origins—it only contends that Genesis 1 is not that story.*” Furthermore, Walton specifies, “The point is *not* that the biblical text therefore supports an old earth, but simply that there is no biblical position on the age of the earth.” However, whether one finds these assertions and Walton’s 18 well-organized, succinctly-presented propositions persuasive will largely be determined by one’s preconceived assumptions and where one falls along the spectrum of perspectives on the origins debate.

That this spectrum even exists is often unrecognized since the dominant poles of biblical-literalist, young-earth creationists and atheistic dysteleological (without discernable purpose) evolutionists effectively encompass or exclude into their mutually reinforcing antagonistic orbits all other views (e.g. old earth/young life creationists, gap theorists, progressive creationists, creationary evolutionists, etc.). Those of us inhabiting the no man’s land between the warring dominant poles will likely find Walton’s exploration of Genesis 1 from the ancient audience’s perspective intriguing and even faith-building. Others, in the more extreme positions, who still recognize the necessity of different

**Walton grounds the text on the firm foundation of the sanctuary, and he further highlights the seventh day of creation—heralding the present truth of the Sabbath.**

viewpoints for diverse personalities and a more complete perspective may at least find that Walton's book opens room for conversation.

**A Range of Interpretations**

Interpretations of Genesis can be broadly divided into two categories. The "concordist" view attempts to read the ancient text in modern scientific terms. This category includes young earth creationists, day-age creationists, and gap theory creationists, all of whom look for scientific information in the Genesis text to both answer modern questions and to establish divine inspiration. The other "literary" view sees in the Genesis creation account literary devices which serve to make theological points rather than answer scientific questions. Since Walton rejects scientific concordance, his book would seem to fall within the "literary" category. In fact, he mentions that his interpretation of Genesis does not preclude a literary reading but could instead provide additional depth alongside a literary perspective.

However, in addition to scientific concordance, there are at least two other types of concordance to consider. Theological concordance is held in common by all theistic readings of Genesis. Historical concordance has generally been expected only with scientific concordance in so-called "concordist" views—until now. Walton's interpretation establishes common ground between the two broad interpretive categories. Unlike strict concordist interpretations, Walton gives respect to the human author and the ancient context. On the other hand, in contrast to some literary approaches, he affirms that the Israelites would have understood Genesis 1 in a literal historical sense and more importantly used the text as more than just literary/theological metaphor.

**The Sabbath and the Sanctuary**

So, how does this novel approach to Genesis unfold? Well, it might not be such a novel approach for those of us with an Adventist background. You see, Walton grounds the text

on the firm foundation of the sanctuary, and he further highlights the seventh day of creation—heralding the present truth of the Sabbath. He reads Genesis 1 as a cosmic temple inauguration culminating in God's rest on day seven. In this inauguration, the cosmos represents a functional temple or sanctuary. God's rest at the conclusion of the creation account is understood as God's presence in a now functional and stable cosmos with the role of ruling, sustaining, and providentially guiding creation toward the fullness of the Kingdom of God through a process of ongoing creation.

In Walton's view, the first three days of creation are about assigning the fundamental functions of life: time, weather, and food. Days four through six then describe the sequential installation of functionaries within each of these functional realms. At the end of each day's activity, God's pronouncement "It was good" is often interpreted as a statement of completed perfection with moral implications. However, given this functional framework, God's statement could be interpreted, "It was working well." "By naming the functions and installing the functionaries, and finally by deity entering his resting place, the temple comes into existence—it is created in the inauguration ceremony."

Then comes Sabbath. Walton's view of Genesis 1 provides a significant contribution to our theology of the Sabbath. At least it will for some. He writes, "In the traditional view that Genesis 1 is an account of material origins, day seven is mystifying. It appears to be nothing more than an afterthought with theological concerns about Israelites observing the Sabbath—an appendix, a postscript, a tack on." This critique certainly applies to fundamentalists outside the Seventh-day Adventist tradition. For example, a slick multimedia presentation on the days of creation at the Creation Museum in Petersburg, Kentucky, ends abruptly after the sixth day with a blank screen and an awkward silence echoing the absent climax—the celebratory fulfillment of creation on day seven. In distinction, traditional Adventists, even with a deeply ingrained materi-

alistic understanding of the Genesis creation account, see the Sabbath as quite literally a central command to honor God as creator—anything but a tack on.

However, Walton also speaks to this traditional Adventist view of the Sabbath as an arbitrary command to memorialize God as creator. In this view, God's example and later command of rest is the reason for the Sabbath observance, and we therefore observe Sabbath by ceasing from our work as God did. Walton responds, "God is not asking us to imitate his Sabbath rest... Instead, he is asking us to recognize that he is at the controls, not us." He goes on to stress that "Sabbath isn't the sort of thing that should have to be regulated by rules. It is the way we acknowledge that God is on the throne, that this world is his world, that our time is his gift to us." The meaning of the Sabbath is expanded through an understanding of divine rest as God inhabiting the cosmos and calling us forward toward a unified future in which, as E.G. White puts it, "one pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation."<sup>1</sup> In this view, the material resources of creation are anything but natural and are not just for us and our exploitation. Rather, the material world deserves our care and respect since it is an integral part of God's whole sacred sanctuary.

Walton's view of the sanctuary is remarkably similar in substance if not in scope to the Adventist view of the earthly sanctuary as a copy of the true sanctuary in heaven. However, rather than boxing God the Father and Jesus within a literal structure in heaven, moving from room to room on pre-specified dates, this cosmic view expands our view of the sanctuary and affirms a more intimate association of the Triune God with all of creation. Walton provides a guided tour of the sanctuary, or temple as he calls it, revealing a movement from chaos to order. He demonstrates that the familiar sanctuary furnishings which Adventists correctly see pointing forward to Jesus and ultimately to God in heaven also send us back to God and the installation of the functions of life on earth during the days of creation.

### A Singular Focus

Admittedly, Walton's perspective on distinctive Adventist themes such as Sabbath, sanctuary, and creation is at variance with traditional Adventist beliefs. Some will see this as a faith-challenging weakness while others will find the fresh perspective a horizon-expanding strength. Similarly,

depending on one's perspective, the book's distinctive strength may also be its greatest weakness—the singular focus on Genesis 1. In a very brief section on Genesis 2 and Romans 5, Walton acknowledges the understanding of a literal Adam and Eve in both old and new testaments. He writes, "Whatever evolutionary processes led to the development of animal life, primates, and even prehuman hominids, my theological convictions lead me to posit substantive discontinuity between that process and the creation of the historical Adam and Eve. Rather than cause-and-effect continuity, there is material and spiritual discontinuity, though it remains difficult to articulate how God accomplished this." His concluding understatement offers a challenging direction for those inclined to pick up where Walton trails off and continue re-discovering Genesis into chapter two and beyond.

There is much more in the book worthy of discussion, including Walton's definitions of original Hebrew terms, explorations of other ancient creation stories, and opinions on science education. On these topics and more, Walton's book is a unique combination of academic insight and accessible writing. Whether or not there is ultimately agreement that Genesis 1 is best understood as a description of functional rather than material creation, *The Lost World of Genesis One* clears new ground for launching further theological exploration, discovers common ground for everyone to join in conversation, and creates functional ground in which to sink deep roots of faith. ■

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**Brenton Reading** writes from Shawnee, KS, where he lives with his wife Nola and their three children. He is a pediatric interventional radiologist at Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, MO.

### Footnotes

1. White, Ellen G. *The Great Controversy between Christ and Satan*. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1888, 1950), 678.

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