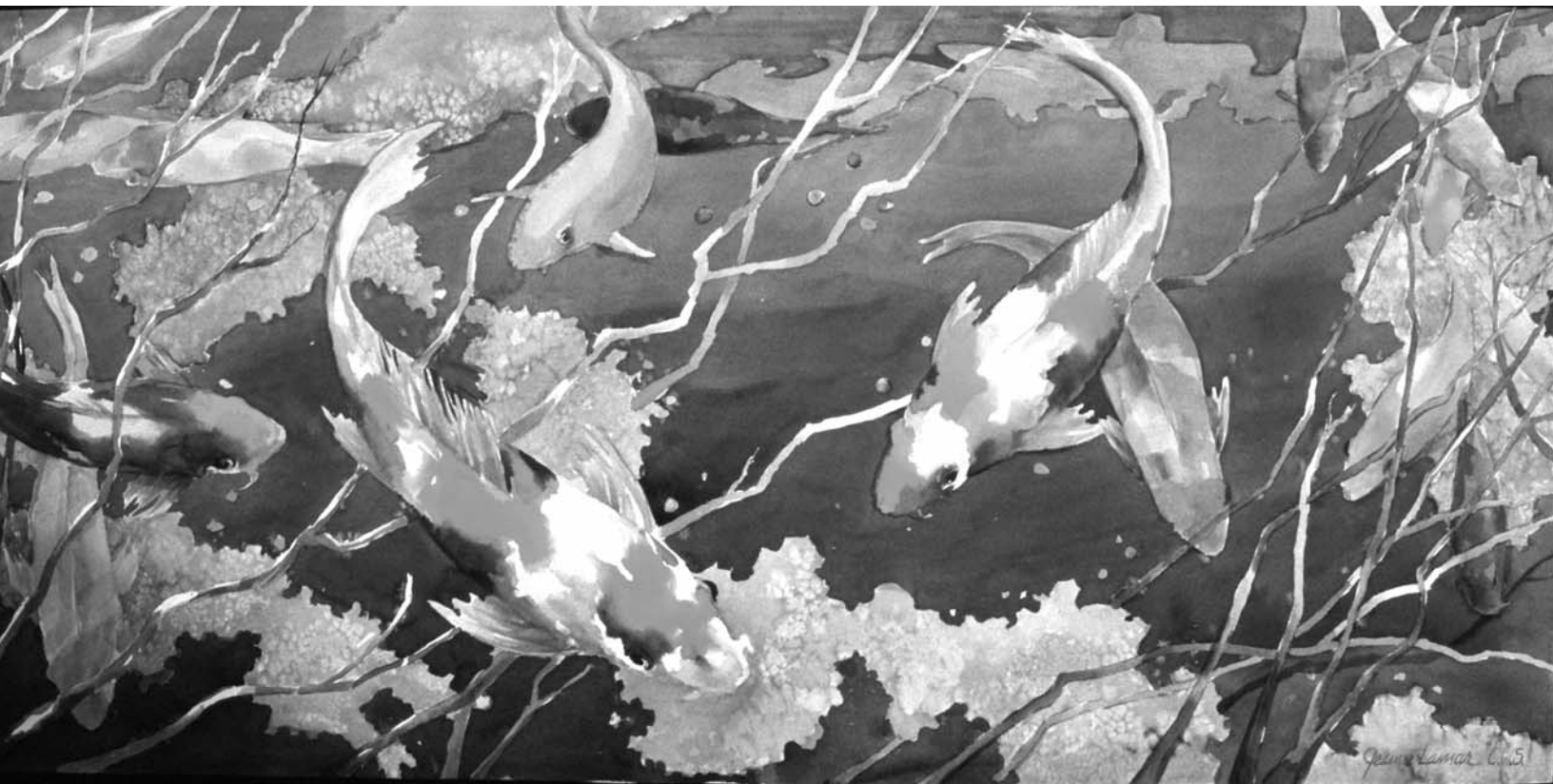


Adventism and the Present:
**BELIEVING
AND
BELONGING**



Koi | by Jeanne Lamar | watercolor

Fundamental Beliefs: Curse or Blessing? *On the Pros and Cons of Adventist Confessional Statements* | BY ROLF J. PÖHLER

From their beginnings in the late 1840s until today, Seventh-day Adventists have denied the need for a creed, believing it would hamper the continuous exploration of the Scriptures in search of “present truth.” In recent decades, however, the Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs have gradually assumed the function of a creedal statement that is being used to define the boundaries of the Adventist faith for converts and members alike. This is a noticeable departure from the traditional Adventist view.

What are the reasons for this development? Where will it lead? I suggest in this article that, on the one hand, a common confession of faith is essential to the Christian faith and indispensable for the Adventist witness in the world. And on the other hand, a creedal set of beliefs that serves as a binding rule of faith, minutely defines doctrines, and is used for disciplining members is ill-advised and should be avoided.

Do Seventh-day Adventists have a creed?

One of the ancient Christian confessions simply says: “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Acts 8:37, NKJV).¹ What the first Christians expressed in a few words was later replaced by carefully formed statements that expressed the principal teachings of the Christian church and churches.

Thus, creeds (from the Latin *credo*—“I believe”) became the common foundation of Christian faith and teaching. They are still regarded as foundational to the Christian church and recited week by week in Catholic and Protestant worship services around the world. Nearly half a century ago, Seventh-day Adventists expressed their basic approval of the Apostles’ Creed, though it is not recited in Adventist worship services.²

During the time of the Protestant Reformation, a number of new confessions were written up that expressed the

biblically grounded teachings of the Anglican, Lutheran, and Reformed churches. In them, Protestants took pains to explain and defend their disagreement with some of the traditional doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church.

Adventists do not claim to have a creed or “confession of faith”; instead, they have created expressions called Fundamental Beliefs, brief articles of faith geared to the general public that present the teachings of the Adventist denomination. Whether or to what extent this distinction is important remains to be seen.

Historical position toward church confessions

Early Sabbath-keeping Adventists were strong and united in their rejection of any creed having binding authority on believers. In their view, “The Bible, and the Bible alone, is to be our creed, the sole bond of union.”³ Repeatedly, the pioneers of the church—first and foremost James and Ellen White—emphasized the unique role of the Scriptures as “the only rule of faith and practice.”⁴ Nothing should hamper the progressive understanding of the Word of God, and no compulsory church confession should hinder believers from discovering truth for themselves and following the dictates of their own conscience.

Sabbatarian Adventists were not alone in this stance. Many of them had come from, or were influenced by, the Restoration Movement, which wanted to overcome the divisions of Christianity by returning to the “primitive” (original) faith as set forth in the New Testament, uniting believers on the plain teachings of the Bible as the norm of all Christian faith and practice. The slogan, “No creed but the Bible!” was expressive of this view.⁵

In the light of an inglorious Christian history, where often an oppressive state church had forced its dogmas on believers, denying their right to study the Bible for themselves and follow their own insights, early Adventists saw in church creeds an instrument of control by which the

church exerted her abusive power. Thus, to them, creeds were an unmistakable sign of Babylonian confusion and apostasy—Catholic and Protestants alike (see Rev. 12–18).

When, in the early 1860s, James White began to organize the Sabbatarian movement into a Christian denomination, there was widespread fear that, in spite of the best intentions, such a move would lead to the establishment of another church that one day would become just as intolerant and oppressive as others had been before. This fear of a gradual relapse into Babylonian structures was most forcefully expressed by John Loughborough in 1861:

*The first step of apostasy is to get up a creed, telling us what we shall believe. The second is, to make that creed a test of fellowship. The third is to try members by that creed. The fourth [is] to denounce as heretics those who do not believe that creed. And, fifth, to commence persecution against such.*⁶

In 1883, when the adoption of a church manual containing “simple rules” and “suggestions only” was proposed, it was opposed by a majority of the delegates of the General Conference as being unnecessary and potentially dangerous. A major reason for its rejection was the fear of a growing uniformity and a gradual fixing of the Adventist faith.⁷ However, only two years later, the mood was beginning to change as doctrinal controversies arose, causing some to look for other means than the Bible of keeping the church united in faith.

Changing attitudes toward creedal statements⁸

After the mid-1880s, new and conflicting views on exegetical and doctrinal matters were troubling the church. They involved the function of the law in the process of salvation and the interpretation of apocalyptic symbols (10 horns, Dan. 7). To counter such divergent views, ministers were expected to adhere to all the fundamental doctrines of the church. Several articles in the *Review and Herald* argued that some kind of creed was necessary in order to prevent errors from creeping into the church and to teach the true faith. While the term *creed* was freely used, it was not understood in the sense of a fixed rule of faith. It was also emphasized that the Bible remained the ultimate source of appeal.⁹

The ambiguity arising from the continuing opposition

to the formation of a creed and the simultaneous affirmation of a creedal statement persisted and increased in the 20th century. While doctrinal rigidity and stagnation were opposed, the need for certain non-negotiable points of faith was upheld. The Fundamental Beliefs published in the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* since 1932 were looked upon as the official statement of the Adventist faith, and assent to it was regarded as a condition of church membership. In this way, differing interpretations of Bible teachings could be prevented, erroneous views and heresies be opposed, and non-negotiable teachings be defined. In other words, the Fundamental Beliefs statement served both to present the established faith of the church and to prevent opposing views from within.¹⁰

In his book on the Apostles' Creed, W. R. Beach defended church creeds as a means of bringing about unity of faith, securing uniformity of teaching, and protecting against errors—benefits that Adventists had previously ascribed to the Bible and the prophetic gift (i.e., Ellen White). Thus, in the 1970s, the Adventist Church came closer than ever to attributing to their Fundamental Beliefs a criteriological function, ideally surpassed only by the Scriptures.

When, in the late 1970s, church leaders proposed a set of explanatory statements on certain controversial teachings—like revelation/inspiration and creation/creationism—they evoked a heavy controversy in North America. Reactions were both supportive and critical. Opposition came particularly from the academic community, which felt strongly inhibited by this move, which would enable administrators, leaders, and controlling boards to evaluate the commitment to Adventism of current and prospective employees.¹¹ While many church members were supportive of the move to protect the faith against erosion, others were concerned that it would bring the church dangerously close to becoming a creedal church.

With the acceptance of a newly written statement of Fundamental Beliefs at the General Conference Session in Dallas in 1980, the Adventist Church entered a new phase in its attitude toward a creed. The strong opposition of the past had given way to a positive appreciation, with a growing regard for the Fundamental Beliefs as the criterion of church membership and reference point for defining Adventist faith. Since that time, adherence to Adventism was more and more measured by someone's agreement, or lack of it, to the 28 Fundamental Beliefs. The latter serve

as the benchmark of orthodoxy and the precondition of employment by church entities. Loyalty to the church is equated with full agreement with the 28 “points.”

This has led to a somewhat paradoxical situation. In order to be regarded as “orthodox,” one must not question what is explicitly stated in the 28 points of faith. On the other hand, what remains unsaid in that statement is regarded as non-binding. Thus, certain traditional teachings, such as the view on apocalyptic Babylon, the mark of the beast, and other end-time events, which are regarded by many as “present truth,” have actually become *adiaphora*. On the other hand, any deviation from the officially voted text is viewed with suspicion.

Do Seventh-day Adventists have a binding, authoritative creed after all? Many in the church, including theologians, will affirm this and, beyond that, defend the importance of having such a declaration of faith. The question, therefore, is not so much whether Adventists have, or need, a creedal statement but rather how detailed and explicit it should be and how it is actually being used by the church. A survey of Adventism’s doctrinal history reveals a variety of confessional statements, differing from each other with respect to style (form), emphasis (content), and authority (function).

How did the Adventist Fundamental Beliefs develop?

The historical development of Adventists doctrines has been described in detail elsewhere.¹² Here the focus will be limited to the general direction these developments have taken and the diverse manner in which Adventists have expressed the central points of their faith. There are at least five major trends.¹³

From simple and concise statements to detailed and sophisticated texts. From 1850 until 1938, the *Review and Herald* printed on its masthead the text of Rev. 14:12 in order to express the Adventist faith in a nutshell. To the earliest Sabbatarian Adventists, this required obedience to the law of God and the teachings of Jesus,

meaning the Old and New Testament in toto (*sola scriptura*). More specifically, they focused on two doctrines, the Sabbath and the second Advent (including the sanctuary teaching). When local congregations were organized in the 1860s, members signed a pledge “covenanting to keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus Christ.”

In 1872, Uriah Smith wrote and published a 2,500-word “Declaration” containing 25 “Fundamental Principles Taught and Practiced by the Seventh-day Adventists.” Major texts of a similar kind were published in 1931/1932 and in 1980. The latter is the longest and most sophisticated creedal statement the church has produced thus far. Its 27 (now 28) articles of faith reflect the expertise of the theologians that drafted the text.

From non-binding and flexible to authoritative and precisely worded texts. In the preface to his “Fundamental Principles,” Uriah Smith emphasized that they were not “articles of faith” or “creed” having “any authority” and were not “designed to secure uniformity.” They merely stated what Adventists believed “with great unanimity,” providing a synopsis of the Adventist faith, the “only object” of which was to accurately inform the public, correct erroneous views and prejudices, and distinguish Seventh-day Adventists from other Adventist groups. Even the 1931/1932 statement of Fundamental Beliefs was published without being officially voted by the church.

However, in 1946, any future revisions of this text were made dependent on a formal vote by a General Conference session. The declaration of 1980 in turn went through a long process of preparation, discussion, and revision before it was voted at a plenary session. The proposed changes of 2015, while consisting of minor restatements only, went through an even more extended and elaborate process than that.¹⁴ The revised Fundamental Beliefs statement will likely be considered more official, binding, and authoritative than ever.

From Adventist distinctives to Christian fundamentals. If one compares the synopsis of Uriah Smith with later summary statements, the change

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from heterodox to orthodox teachings is evident. While Smith rejected the doctrine of the Trinity, the classical Christian teaching on the nature of Christ and the atonement, and also proposed a heterodox view on the “new birth,” later statements reflected some noteworthy changes in Adventist beliefs. In addition, recent confessional statements reveal a shift from an earlier emphasis on distinctive doctrines (law, judgment) to an accentuation of basic Christian teachings (salvation by grace through faith). Closely related to this is the move away from the law-centered (and even legalistic) thinking of the early decades to a more Christ-centered approach, focusing on the gospel and offering believers assurance of salvation—even in view of the pre-Advent judgment.

From focusing on the future to paying attention to the present. One significant side effect of the increasing concentration on the gospel message was a decreasing emphasis on the apocalyptic focus of Millerite Adventism. It resulted from a deeper understanding of New Testament eschatology, which is characterized by a tension between the completed salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus (“already”) and the final consummation of the kingdom of God at the coming of Christ (“not yet”). While upholding the future-oriented teachings of the church (final events, millennium, new earth), the 1980 declaration gives increased attention to the present time and its challenges—care for the environment, stewardship of the earth, marriage and family, healthful living, social relations, and so on. The traditional emphasis on the “last things” has been supplemented by a growing concern for the penultimate things.

From an apologetic and polemical approach to a positive Christian stance. When Uriah Smith wrote his synopsis, the church was engaged in theological debates with Christians of other denominations. It is no surprise, therefore, that the “Declaration” of 1872 was also engaged in opposing erroneous views and even attacking other denominations, while presenting the Sabbath-keepers as the only true Adventists who are being faithful to the teachings of the Bible. In the spirit of his time, Smith polemicized against the “the papal power, with all its abominations” (#8) and noted that the “the man of sin, the papacy . . . has misled almost all Christendom” (#13).

In the 1931/1932 “Declaration,” no accusations were raised against other denominations. Later, L. E. Froom noted that “the old largely negative approach—emphasizing chiefly the things wherein we differ from all other

religious groups—is past, definitely past. And that is as it should be.”¹⁵ Likewise, the 1980 Statement of Fundamental Beliefs is free from any polemical and apologetic overtones, presenting Adventist beliefs on the basis of biblical and theological reasoning alone. While this may be seen as evidence of the progressive maturing of Adventism, others may look upon it as a sign of the gradual loss of distinctive Adventist identity.

In looking upon these developments it becomes clear that Seventh-day Adventism is sharing in the same processes that other Christian churches have experienced in the past. Beginning as a small movement with loose structures and beliefs still in the making, they gradually grow into large and well-organized denominations that find it judicious and even indispensable to more narrowly define and minutely refine their beliefs until they become settled teachings cast in theological concrete.

It seems that this process is for the most part inescapable. The very success of the movement—its constant growth, its worldwide expansion, and its increasing diversification—calls for a clear profile that helps preserve the group’s identity. The homogeneous character of the incipient movement gradually gives way to a heterogeneous and pluriform body of believers who no longer share the same intellectual framework, social imprint, cultural context, or behavior and lifestyle. In order to keep their church united in the faith, leaders tend to resort to creeds or confessional statements that define the boundaries of the community and thus strengthen its cohesiveness.

Benefits and ill effects of creedal statements

Obviously, there are benefits in having a creed. On the other hand, there also seem to be serious risks in producing such statements, as John Loughborough forcibly argued in 1861. We look next at the advantages and disadvantages of creedal statements from an Adventist viewpoint, using a SWOT analysis¹⁶—an acronym for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats—that lists the benefits and drawbacks of such authoritative texts. To keep the survey brief, only a listing of the “boon and bane” of church creeds will be provided here.

Strengths and opportunities

1. A neatly arranged summary of the core beliefs of the community, thereby explaining them to insiders and outsiders alike.

2. A united and uniting expression of the community's faith convictions, which strengthens its identity and "the unity in the faith" (Eph. 4:13). A common confession belongs to the very essence of the believing church.
3. A clear and concise testimony to the world about the beliefs of the church and an answer to the call of the apostle Peter, who admonished the Christians of his time: "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Pet. 3:15).¹⁷
4. Protection for the church against misinterpretations and misrepresentations of its beliefs within and without and saving it from being "blown here and there by every wind of teaching" (Eph. 4:14).

Weaknesses and threats

1. Reflect a particular phase, level, or degree of understanding that tends to be canonized and consequently impedes and stifles further growth and future advancement or correction of the understanding and expression of the faith. In this way, today's present truth may become an impediment to "new light."
2. Are treated as the criterion of orthodoxy/heresy and as an instrument to marginalize non-conformist members. Rather than serving as a descriptive tool, they are used prescriptively to ostracize and eventually expel dissidents.
3. May gradually lose their timeliness in a constantly changing world, having been formulated in a specific historical, religious, and cultural context, and become unsuitable in different religious and cultural environments.
4. For all intents and purposes, take the place of the Scriptures, which ostensibly is "the only rule of faith and practice" for Adventist Christians. This stands in sharp contrast to the conviction of the pioneers of the church.

What should an Adventist "Confession of Faith" look like?

On the assumption that some kind of creedal statement is useful and actually desirable, the question needs to be asked, What characteristics should such a statement of belief possess? Rather than proposing or enumerating particular points of faith, we should be concerned with the properties of a meaningful and consistent "creed" that is suitable for confessing the Adventist Christian faith in today's multicultural and pluriform world. After proposing ten features of such a creedal statement, we will look at some sample texts before turning our attention to the upcoming revision of the 28 Fundamental Beliefs.

Desirable features of an Adventist "creed"

The following enumeration is a kind of "wish list" that can be used as criteria for evaluating creedal statements.

"Brevity is the soul of wit." A confession of faith should be as brief and concise as possible. A handful of paragraphs or articles fitting on a single page would suffice. The current Adventist Statement of Fundamental Beliefs encompasses a whopping 4,200 words, making it far too cumbersome for being memorized or recited in public.

Focus on essentials. A Christian confession should focus on weighty matters, leaving less important issues aside. Points of faith need to be weighed, not merely counted. This calls for a deliberate distinction between central and peripheral issues. This is not to argue for a "low-calorie" creed that waters down the harder points of faith. Adventist faith is holistic, encompassing all aspects of life. Still, there are essentials and non-essentials (cf. Matt. 23:23; Rom. 14:17).

Trinitarian structure. The ancient Christian creeds are characterized by a Trinitarian structure. While Adventist declarations of Fundamental Beliefs do not, until now, follow a Trinitarian outline, still such an approach would be quite appropriate. Traditional Christian creeds attach

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such crucial topics as the church, forgiveness of sin, resurrection, and eternal life to the third article on the Holy Spirit, while omitting the question of Christian discipleship. Thus, a Trinitarian structure necessitates careful thinking and drafting so that nothing of importance is left out, while allocating everything that is said to the triune God.

Christ-centeredness. Undoubtedly of greater importance than a Trinitarian structure is the Christ-centeredness of an Adventist statement of faith. According to the book *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, all Adventist doctrines are Christ-centered and should be understood in relationship to Him.¹⁸ It is one thing to make this claim and another to answer it. A Christian creed is essentially a confession of faith in Christ, the living Word of God. Therefore, every doctrine should contribute to a better understanding of the meaning of our confession to Christ as Lord.¹⁹

Testimonial character. A confession is a personal or shared affirmation of faith most properly expressed in the first-person singular or plural. While neutral language in the third person has the ring of objectivity and factuality (“There will be a resurrection of the dead”), the subjective form (“I/we believe in the resurrection of the dead”) more closely corresponds to the nature of a confession. The church may *teach* doctrines, but only people can *believe* and *confess* them. In other words, a confession is not an incontestable line of argument but the act of professing one’s faith. While “fundamental principles of faith” refers to a written statement, “confession” denotes the act of acknowledging Christ. Only in a secondary sense does it refer to the content of the “confession.”

Biblical terminology. In order to remain true to the biblical testimony, it is judicious to follow the language of the Scriptures closely in presenting the truths of faith. This reduces the risk of deviating from the intended meaning of biblical teachings and misinterpreting their message. It is the strength of the 28 Fundamental Beliefs that the theologians who wrote them followed this principle. In addition, using biblical terminology is a tacit acknowledgment of the *sola scriptura* principle.

Scripture-boundedness (scripturality). For a church that upholds the *sola scriptura* principle, it goes without saying that its credo will submit to the final authority of the Word of God. This is the unquestioned position of Seventh-day Adventists and is clearly expressed in the Preamble of the Fundamental Beliefs.²⁰ However, to consider the Fundamental Beliefs also binding and authoritative may lead to

a conflict between these two authorities.

This is not just a hypothetical risk, as can be illustrated from the *Church Manual*. The alternative baptismal vow contains only three questions, the second of which reads as follows: “Do you accept the *teachings of the Bible* as expressed in the *Statement of Fundamental Beliefs* of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and do you pledge by God’s grace to live your life in harmony with *these teachings*?”²¹ It is not clear whether *these teachings* refer to the Bible or the Fundamental Beliefs. It is even less certain that those who answer in the affirmative have a clear understanding of the crucial difference between the two. It would therefore be judicious to reword this sentence in order to make its meaning clear to all.²²

Identity markers (traditionality). If a denomination desires to retain its unique identity, its credo must express the distinctive teachings of the group. These distinctives are part of the denomination’s collective memory and form its special tradition. In the case of Seventh-day Adventists, three such experiences stand out and are even reflected in the church’s name: the Millerite movement, the “remnant” experience, and the rediscovery of the Sabbath. The distinctive teachings that grew out of these experiences have been developed further and constitute crucial identity markers for an Adventist credo: the Sabbath as a divine gift for mankind, the Advent hope as an energizing force, and the Adventist Church as a worldwide family of faith. With these core beliefs, an Adventist credo may indeed have a unifying effect on the church.

Cultural relevance (contemporaneity). A credal statement must be relevant and applicable to the society in which the believers are living. It is not enough to repeat the fundamental teachings of the Bible and to keep the distinctive insights of previous generations alive. A credo must also relate to the intellectual and practical challenges of living in the here and now. The Statement of 1980 and its later addendum reveal a growing awareness of the need to address actual life questions that have a direct bearing on the faith.²³

Open-endedness. Finally, a creed should never be written in stone but always on paper. This is to say, it should remain open for change, improvement, and correction. While the historic Christian creeds constitute fixed declarations that are not subject to changes, the Adventist credo may be revised if the need arises. After all, a confession of faith is not the ultimate truth but merely an

authentic witness to it. As such, it should be treated as descriptive and informative rather than as prescriptive and normative. How else could the Bible, *de facto*, be “the only creed”?

Quo vadis, Adventism?

Regardless of how the delegates to the 2015 General Conference Session respond to the proposed revisions, it is likely that they will follow the tendency of the present leadership to codify the more traditional Adventist language and teaching in order to protect the exclusive identity and mission of the Adventist Church. This explains the restrictive language of several of the proposed changes. If this trend continues, it will increasingly polarize the church and lead to the marginalization of more open-minded and critical church members. It is to be feared that this will cause quite a few to leave the church or go into internal exile. It will also deter others from joining in the first place. An outward and/or inward differentiation may strengthen the unity of the “remnant,” but it entails the risk of the church regressing into a more sectarian mode of thought.

The future will show which trend will prevail in the long run and how the Seventh-day Adventist Church—particularly its younger generations—will react to the challenges of the postmodern world. The mission of the church is clear: “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have” (1 Pet. 3:15, NIV). Much will depend, however, on how the church understands the authority and function of its Fundamental Beliefs—as an established “creed” that protects the doctrinal traditions from challenges from without or within, or as an expression of the community’s dynamic faith that remains open to new insights coming from biblical studies, theological reflection, and contemporary world experience.

To opt for “present truth” entails the challenge to avoid both rigid dogmatism (where all believe what is prescribed) as much as indifferent relativism (where all believe what they like).

Adventists should resist the temptation to codify their beliefs in a way that stifles growth while learning to express their faith in ways that appeal to people with different intellectual, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Then an Adventist “creed” will truly become a confession of faith: “*credo*—I believe.” ■

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1. While this verse is not found in the oldest manuscripts, it seems to reflect an ancient Christian practice.
2. See W. R. Beach, *The Creed That Changed the World* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1971). This book appeared in the wake of Vatican Council II, in which Adventists participated as observers.
3. Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1958), 1:416.
4. *A Word to the “Little Flock”* (Brunswick, ME: James White, 1847), 13. For more such quotations, see Rolf J. Pöhler, “Adventisten, Ellen White und das Sola-Scriptura-Prinzip,” *Spes Christiana* 17 (2006): 45–48.
5. On Christian Restorationism in 19th-century North America and its impact on Adventism, see Rolf J. Pöhler, *Continuity and Change in Adventist Teaching*, Friedensauer Schriftenreihe A. Theologie, Bd. 3 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2000), 27–30.
6. “Doings of the Battle Creek Conference, Oct. 5 & 6, 1861,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, October 8, 1861, 148 (emphasis supplied).
7. “General Conference Proceedings,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, November 20, 1883, 732–733.
8. For details and references, see Pöhler, *Continuity and Change*, 191–196.
9. “If in anything it can be shown that what we hold in faith and practice is not according to the Bible, we are ready to modify it accordingly” (Uriah Smith, “In the Question Chair,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, September 20, 1892, 600).

**In the 1970s,
the Adventist
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10. According to the *Church Manual*, "Denial of faith in the fundamentals of the gospel and in the cardinal doctrines of the church or teaching doctrines contrary to the same" is a sufficient reason for disfellowshipping (1951 ed., 224).

11. W. J. Hackett, "Preserve the Landmarks," *Review and Herald*, May 26, 1977, 2.

12. See George R. Knight, *A Search for Identity: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000); and Pöhler, *Continuity and Change*.

13. For more details, see Pöhler, *Continuity and Change*, 123–134.

14. The procedure started in 2010 and gave all church members an opportunity to make suggestions regarding the rewording of the 28 articles. See "Statement of Fundamental Beliefs—A Living Document," *Reflections – The BRI Newsletter*, October 2011, 2; and "Listening, Studying, and Sharing," *Adventist World*, April 2012, 6.

15. L. E. Froom, "New Approaches Imperative for a New Day," *Ministry*, March 1966, 10–13.

16. The SWOT analysis was developed in the 1960s by the Harvard Business School and is widely used as an instrument of strategic management and development.

17. It was a request from the African Union for an official statement that could be used in talking to state authorities that prompted the drafting and publishing of the 1931/1932 Statement of Fundamental Beliefs.

18. *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* (Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005), vii–ix.

19. In 1905, at a conference of the German Union, an unusual set of Fundamental Beliefs was printed in the conference brochure. It relates practically all doctrinal assertions to Christ himself by using phrases like "his glorious gospel [atonement, life in Christ]," "his law of love [Decalogue]," "his day of rest [Sabbath]," "his gifts of the holy Spirit," "his divine plan [tithing]," "his counsel as the true physician [health, abstinence]," "his attitude towards authorities [state, taxes]" and "his prophetic word." In this way, the Christ-centered nature of the Adventist faith is very conspicuous. To my knowledge, this was a singular approach.

20. "Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teachings of the Holy Scriptures" (cf. #1 and #18).

21. *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, 18th ed. (2010), 47 (emphasis supplied).

22. The German *Church Manual* has clarified the meaning of the sentence in this way: ". . . and do you want to live according to *the teachings of the Bible*" (emphasis supplied).

23. For example, responsibility for the environment is addressed in #6 and #7, the question of non-discrimination is treated in #14, while marriage/family and child education are discussed in #23.