

 community through conversation

SPECTRUM



Why Liberalism Failed: Opportunity and Wake-Up Call • *“It Was Not Taught Me By Man”*: Ellen White’s Visions & 2 Esdras • **Sola Scriptura and the Future of Bible Interpretation** • *A Brief History of the Apocrypha* • *Erasmus and the New Testament* • **Ellen White and Blacks, Part III** • *Unintended Consequences, Accountability, and Being Loved*

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ABOUT THE COVER

ART AND ARTIST:

Besides creating art and writing poetry, **John McDowell** serves as Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Science at Burman University, in Alberta, Canada. He also does some teaching (Contact: jmcdowel@burmanu.ca).

On the cover piece, *Truth Secure*, McDowell states: "Almost all ecclesiastical authorities since the battles over canonization of the Biblical text have sought to fix or 'secure' what the Bible means for the Church. The Protestant Reformation, with the idea of the priesthood for all believers and that all should have access to the biblical text, has not prevented a multitude of denominations, including the Seventh-day Adventist Church from proclaiming and, in a very real sense, locking down a particular reading or meaning of specific passages of scripture that become codified into doctrine. When a particular 'locked down' doctrine is contested, there are, of course, serious and often dire consequences. This piece with its 28 antique and more modern locks seeks, I hope, to challenge the reader with the implications of securing 'Truth.'"

Editor Bonnie Dwyer

Editorial Assistants Wendy Trim, Linda Terry

Design Mark Dwyer

Spectrum Web Team Alita Byrd, Pam Dietrich, Bonnie Dwyer, Rich Hannon, Steve Hergert, Wendy Trim, Jared Wright, Alisa Williams; *managing editor*

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Editorial Correspondence

Direct all correspondence and letters to the editor to:

SPECTRUM
P. O. Box 619047
Roseville, CA 95661-9047

tel: (916) 774-1080
fax: (916) 791-4938
editor@spectrummagazine.org

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subscriptions@spectrummagazine.org
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What Inspires You? | BY BONNIE DWYER

Inspiration comes to more than just prophets and Biblical writers. Its very personal and cultural context plays a huge role.

Religious words get worn out. Used over and over, they can fix meaning in one way, blotting out other meanings. Take inspiration. Said today in an Adventist context, you can be pretty sure the conversation is headed to a discussion of the authority of a text, be it the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy. It will evoke legal or philosophical concepts, not personal motivation.

But inspiration comes to more than just prophets and Biblical writers. Its very personal and cultural context plays a huge role. What inspired scholars and artists in another era may speak differently to us today. What inspires you may not even matter to me. For some people, sports played at the highest level can be an inspiration, so they were glued to the television watching skaters, skiers, and curlers twirl, flip, and dazzle with their athleticism during the recent Winter Olympic Games. The beauty of nature speaks to the hiker arising early before the heat of the day, catching the glory of a desert sunrise. A well-crafted story can provide an aha moment, reframe an idea for the avid reader. Ethereal music can bring tears to someone who treasures sound. The tiniest molecule viewed in all its glory through a microscope can transport a researcher.

What experience outside of you, changes you on the inside?

Bad things that happen can actually be inspirational in their own way. After the Florida high school shooting, did you cheer the activism of the high school students, fire off a letter to your congressional representative

about gun control, for instance?

In this issue, inspiration is the back story to each article and art piece, beginning with the front cover, where artist John McDowell takes a metaphor to a very literal conclusion. To explain a general concept, use specific details. On the back cover, poet George Herbert finds inspiration in the King James Bible for his personal artistic expression. We hope reading this material motivates you to give new expression to your spiritual journey and leads to a revival of your ideas about inspiration. Take action, be it prayer, painting, feeding the hungry, or sharing hospitality, because inspiration has at its root the verb inspire, an action verb that requires doing.

Then, thinking about how our own personal inspiration occurs can also lead to new understanding of prophetic inspiration. Visualizing teenage Ellen White, overwhelmed by seeing heaven, grasping at how to describe her vision, and feeling that God tells her how to express what she has experienced, changes my view of her. Just putting the word teenager in front of her name affects me, given that the images of her we usually see are of an elderly woman. Can you imagine James and Ellen as teenage newlyweds?

With all this in mind, what then is the connection between the divine and personal inspiration?

Where do you meet God? Does knowing what inspires you give you a clue? For me, knowing that a spiritual life depends on inspiration, that a creative life is a spiritual life, gives everyday existence new meaning and possibilities. ■

Bonnie Dwyer is editor of Spectrum magazine.

Why Liberalism Failed: Opportunity and Wake-Up Call

| BY CHARLES SCRIVEN

Although publicists for the Enlightenment continue to rave (often with good reason) about its triumph over religious prejudice, thoughtful resistance does here and there sound forth and get a hearing. Contemporary culture has mostly consigned theologians proper, the people credentialed for seminaries and college or university religion departments, to its margins, along with the books they write. But when such distinguished literary figures as Wendell Berry and Marilynne Robinson raise a protest concerning what the Enlightenment has bequeathed us, they command attention. Now political theorist Patrick Deneen, invoking the name for Enlightenment political philosophy, has published a book called *Why Liberalism Failed*, and it's getting notice on mainstream bulletin boards like *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times*.

I was thinking about this book during a half-day meeting in San Diego some weeks back. As part of a focus on Christ—the “One” of what became the well-known One Project—several pastors had, over the past eight years, organized worship and preaching festivals that were held in various hotels on three continents. These two-day “gatherings,” the last one having occurred just before my half-day meeting, had attracted anywhere from 100 to a thousand or more participants, and the pastors behind them were now moving to a new initiative. If their energy was, after all, limited, their passion and vision were, like the sea breeze, fresh and robust. They were calling their new initiative the Global Resource Collective, and were convinced that if Christ is the center of a viable church life, individual congregations are its most important manifestation.

The Global Resource Collective would be the “next chapter” of these pastors’ service to the wider church. The point would be to re-energize what is “local” and to do so through the “working together” of engaged and

adventurous congregations. The half-day consisted mostly of presentations on the basic idea and on some of the details it would involve. Speakers said that congregations need each other, that by working together they can be better together, that the support envisioned would be “global” in scope. One said hierarchy “suffocates” the “democracy of ideas.” The Global Resource Initiative is meant to enhance it.

All this conversation would transpire with the aid of an Internet platform for collecting sermons, Bible curricula, experiments in children’s ministry, and the like. These would become available to planners worldwide. Ideas from everywhere would improve local Adventist cultures everywhere.

Actually, the word “culture” did not, at least in my recollection, come up. But that word does come up in *Why Liberalism Failed*, and it underscores what a fine opportunity and wake-up call may be a-borning. The Global Resource Collective could freshen and invigorate our Gospel work of addressing the world’s pain, self-deception and indomitable yearning. It may sound a wake-up call for the larger church, the spiritual community, precious to most of us, whose resilience and mission suffer today under both the hostility of surrounding elites and the pathologies that plague us from within.

But let me say more about the book.

Patrick Deneen has written a jeremiad, and some critics have faulted his work for invective so unrelenting that it overlooks the positive good the Enlightenment has brought. But you could grant a reproach like that and still allow that something truly insidious has crept into conventional Western thought, and that Deneen has put his finger on it. He does not aim at either the “left” or the “right,” but instead at central aspects of the political “ideology” that underlies them *both*. Symptoms anyone can see, from the rise of unaccountable oligarchies to

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the needs of
others.**

the waning of norms and institutions essential to personal and political self-governance, suggest the need, he says, for such analysis as he is offering.

What, then, is wrong with “liberalism”? The basic thing is that liberalism re-defines freedom, or liberty, as “the most extensive possible expansion” of the sphere of autonomy. Freedom liberates the populace from the authority of cultures and traditions, and removes so far as possible all limiting conditions; the ideal to which freedom speaks is the “self-fashioning expressive individual.”

We have mostly forgotten that both the Greek and Christian traditions took freedom to be quite different from this. In their light, Deneen points out, freedom is something you *achieve*, or achieve by God's grace. Through “habituation in virtue” you conquer self-preoccupation and “the slavish pursuit of base and hedonistic desires”; for the sake of the common good you work toward self-rule and embrace self-limitation.

But liberalism's hostility to authority tends to eviscerate the very institutions—the very *cultures*—from which we learn the moral priorities and virtues that enable us to look beyond self toward the needs of others. Cultures comprise “customs, practices, and rituals that are grounded in local and particular settings.” Liberalism has tended to undermine such cultures, to think of them as oppressive rather than sustaining. But human beings are in fact situated—located in—particular places, linked with particular families and communities, and this means that if you weaken local cultures and their authority, you threaten the very support system moral development requires.

Now consider this: a congregation is a prime example of a local, sustaining culture. As small, local communities embedded in the tradition associate with Jesus Christ, they question the ideal of sheer autonomy and attempt to inculcate the virtues and character that Jesus Christ embodied. They are thus a key part of the solution to the breakdown of relationships

that today must count as a main symptom of liberalism's failure. That is why I suggest that the Global Resource Collective may be an important opportunity; precisely by strengthening local congregations it could strengthen our witness to the flawed and often clueless wider world. Direct effort to deal with pain, self-deception, and yearning falls more to local communities than to abstract bureaucracies, whether ecclesiastical or political.

One piece of the vision set forth in San Diego was that of helping congregations to develop curricula of Bible study that would touch every age group at the same time. The preacher's sermon, the teen group's discussion, the children's memory verse, could all be coordinated around the same passage of Scripture. Kids in the lobby would be ready to tease the adults about whether they could recite the “Words to Remember” for the week. The preacher would try to address the very sorts of questions teenagers had, that very day, been thinking about.

To me, that seemed like a powerful enhancement of the congregation's effort to inculcate a moral and spiritual tradition. But someone might want to put a reminder into play. The Enlightenment's embrace of critique—of asking questions and raising doubts—was not all bad. And that is true. After the example of Jesus himself, traditions have to be not only inculcated but also refined. Local congregations can lead out in that process, too. Such a thing is what the Holy Spirit is *for*, and the Holy Spirit is a gift God keeps giving.

I mentioned a wake-up call. Everyone knows that Adventism is highly “organized,” or centralized. Considerable authority resides at, or is thought to reside at, the top. The Global Resource Collective, together with the prompting of *Why Liberalism Failed*, helps us see that a substantial part of that authority—not all, but a substantial part—needs to shift away from centralized bureaucracy. The real impact of church life, and the most important conversation, is local. ■

Charles Scriven chairs Adventist Forum.

“The Demise of *Insight*” by Tompaul Wheeler

Thank you for providing an “obituary” for *Insight* Magazine. When I learned of its impending demise last summer I was greatly saddened but hoped that the church had some creative plans for replacement. I left *Insight* staff forty years ago but always held my time there as a special period in my life.

As a teenager in rural Michigan I welcomed the release of our denomination’s new youth magazine and dreamed of being a part of its team. My first journalism class at Andrews University was taught by Mike Jones. When (later) I was hired to begin on staff, Mike Jones described my job as being the “quarterback” of the magazine. Moving to Maryland and working at the R&H was a huge step in my life and a great education from 1974–77. I was privileged to work and grow in my skills under the leadership of Mike Jones, Ken McFarland and later Donald John. I now treasure memories of weekly worships with some of the journalism and theological giants of that era.

In August 1974, our staff composed of an editor, assistant editor, editorial assistant, editorial secretary, art director and designer, and an office assistant. Early on we created a Declaration of our Principles for the magazine, striving for a circulation of 50,000 to reach a target of 18–25-year-olds. We recognized we printed an international magazine and wanted it to be stimulating yet practical. Mike Jones was a great advocate of “How-To” articles. We looked for bright minds to provide commentaries to the lesson, true life stories supplied by a yearly contest, features with real life and cultural dilemmas, interviews with church leaders, thought-provoking editorials, and fascinating cover art or photos.

By some point in 1975, the staff was shortened to editor, assistant editor, editorial secretary, and designer. The page proofs that we were asked to correct usually had the top tag line of “Incite” as an inside joke.

I knew that magazines must change but *Insight* really lost energy when it seemed that the target audience was for high school students.

In eleven years my grandsons will be teenagers and I only hope that they can find something like *Insight* to help feed their minds and spirits. ■

Karen Spruill
Orlando, FL

“John Calvin, John Wesley, and Ellen White’s Steps to Christ” by Norman Young

While I am no scholar, my interpretation of Wesley’s statements on Sanctification differ remarkably from Dr. Young. Soteriology is a very complex collection of information, but I think EGW does one of the best jobs of simplifying it. But I think the primary issue is one of language and how we understand it; the excerpts that Young shares read differently to me than they apparently do to him. The very first quote on this from Wesley, for me, sets the tone: “in that very moment sanctification begins.” The very word “begins” implies a process in time, not a *fait accompli*. Continued quote from Wesley, “we wait for entire sanctification, for a full salvation from all our sins.” Again, language comes to the fore. Waiting for “entire” means it is not complete, therefore completion is in the future. Add to this “that we are to expect it not at death, but every moment,” and you, again in my opinion, find Wesley talking about a process, a growth in Grace. Where I think Wesley departs from Calvin is in his view that both Sanctification and Justification are gifts. I further believe that EGW supports that in the statement of hers that Young so nicely quotes in footnote 26: “the righteousness by which we are justified is imputed; the righteousness by which we are sanctified is imparted.” This very statement goes along with Wesley, more than with Calvin. Every statement of Wesley’s that Young quotes implies imparted righteousness, a gift.

Here is where I think that Wesley mirrors EGW more than Calvin. I agree that Wesley and Calvin do not agree about how Sanctification works, but I believe that Calvin’s approach is pure legalism, while Wesley’s is built on faith. That is my take.

I greatly enjoyed the mental stimulation of not only Dr. Young’s paper, but all the papers in this issue. ■

Dave Reynolds
Canby, Oregon

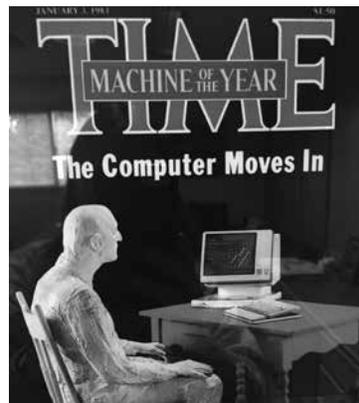
Rebel with a Cause: Don Hall, Father of Corporate Wellness | BY LYNN MCDOWELL

Anyone who knew Don Hall as a sickly twelve-year-old wouldn't have said that his name would become synonymous with "Wellness"—a term that wouldn't be coined for another twenty years. But the boy diagnosed with muscular dystrophy was never one to accept what others thought "unchangeable," and showed early signs of seeing beyond common practice. Don went head-to-head with his doctor, who insisted that Don's vegetarian mother give him meat and lots of it. Don was determined to stand by his principles (how many twelve-year-olds read *Ministry of Healing*, even in the 1950s?), and he wouldn't back down. Demonstrating the combination of conviction and business acumen that would attract corporate giants like Nike to his door, Don decided to do that very Adventist-child thing: he made a deal with God.

Don's deal with God was that if he got better, he'd be a life-long vegetarian—at first blush, not a big stretch for a kid who already was one, except that Don wasn't in the habit of challenging authority. The decision to whole-heartedly pursue the principles in *Ministry of Healing* set the course of Don's personal and professional life. That decision, and a fearless eagerness to try new things—like the first PC computer—resulted in the creation of WellSource, the first company (but far from the last) to use Don's ground-breaking computerized health analysis program. By the time he was thirty-five, Don was in *TIME Magazine*.¹

The Land Before *TIME*

Don's early dedication to Adventism and its health principals led him to prepare as a minister at Walla Walla College. In part because of his medically inexplicable recovery from childhood muscular dystrophy, Don always saw Adventism's emphasis on health as an important part



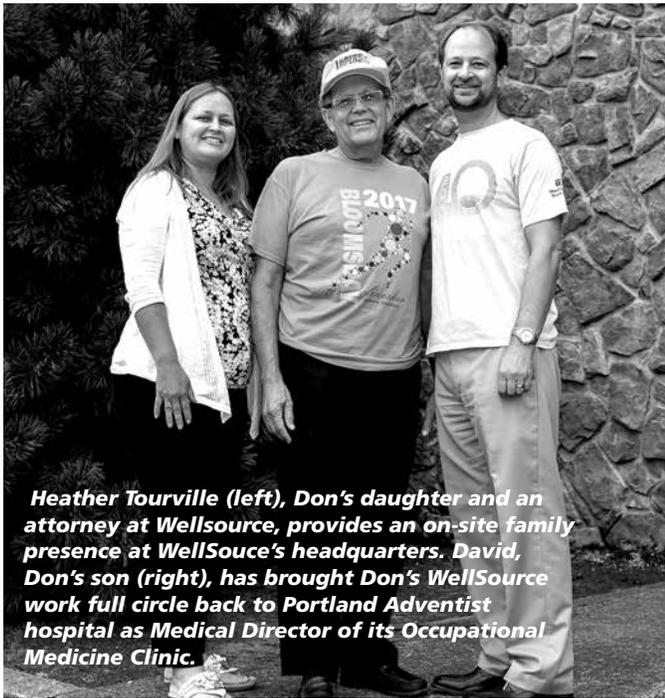
Don Hall in *TIME Magazine*, January 1983

of gospel ministry. So, he was all ears when he heard Loma Linda University's (LLU) Dr. Harding talk about the new School of Public Health—a place where one could become a doctor of health, alongside doctors of medicine. When it came time for Don to go to seminary, he made the case that, as head of Health Ministry for the Upper Columbia Conference, he should take LLU's Master of Public Health in Preventive Care instead. That turned out so well that Don went back to Loma Linda for his doctorate.²

Introducing Adventist Healthcare to the Computer Age

While at LLU, Don developed a computer program called "Health Age," based on factors identified in an Alameda County study showing seven habits linked to longevity. Don, who'd returned to his conference job with his new doctorate in 1978, put his PC—a TRS 80 with an astounding 16K memory—into the conference health van and took his program on the road. Don tested people in parking lots and other unconventional sites, sharing brochures on each of the seven healthy habits and *How to Study the Bible*.

Doors began to open—doors Don hadn't imagined in his wildest dreams, like a seminar series in a Catholic church in Spokane, and a cooperative venture with three hospitals attended by 760 people. More than 300 Eastern Washington University students took his computerized stress evaluation in one day prior to test week. "We had



Heather Tourville (left), Don's daughter and an attorney at WellSource, provides an on-site family presence at WellSource's headquarters. David, Don's son (right), has brought Don's WellSource work full circle back to Portland Adventist hospital as Medical Director of its Occupational Medicine Clinic.

some of the best talks," Don remembers. "They didn't have their guard up."

Word about Don's innovation spread, and Portland Adventist Hospital invited him to do something for their employees. Using a mix of incentives and fun, Don made employee participation the "in" thing, and administration was amazed: work loss time was cut in half. There was a 600% return on the money spent on Don's employee wellness initiative. Within a few months, over 600 hospitals were using Health Age, most of them with no previous connection to Adventism.

Don, now a full-time employee of Portland Adventist Hospital, suggested to its administration that "Corporate Wellness" could be a source of revenue. They didn't see that as part of their mandate, but Don felt strongly about the feasibility and potential to change lives on a grander scale, so they shook hands and Don went off to start WellSource, the company that pioneered Corporate Wellness and computerized health assessment.

Wellness—An Old Idea Whose Time Had Come

"In those days you couldn't even get training in wellness," says Don, so his programmatic approach and ability to get employees to buy in was revolutionary. Throw ground-breaking technology into the mix, and you have a product that "hip" new companies like Nike found irresistible. "Nike's employee recognition awards were fancier than my doctoral certificate," Don grins.

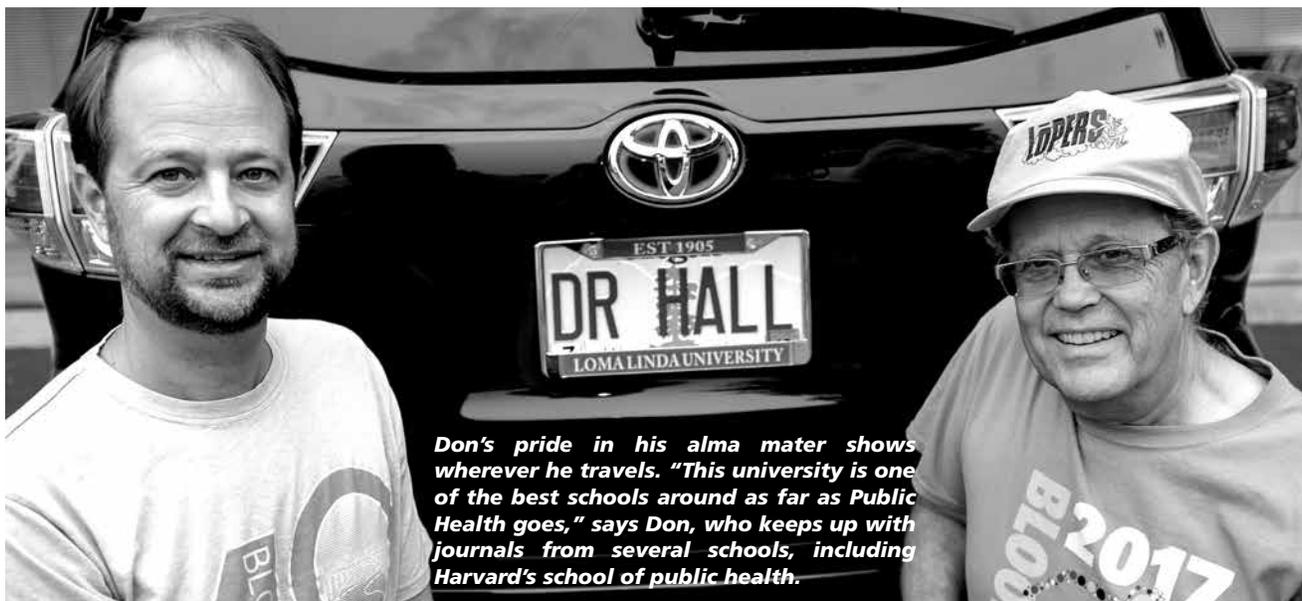
Overnight, the combination of an unprecedented fitness craze, the advent of personal computers, and rare wellness know-how created almost limitless opportunity. All that was required was Don's steady, visionary oversight, networking, and lots of hard work—in short, your average overnight success story.

"When WellSource started in 1980, it was located in my bedroom," recalls Dr. David Hall, medical director of Portland Adventist Hospital's Occupational Medicine Clinic, who, like his father, also holds a Master of Public Health degree from LLU. As Don's eleven-year-old son, he had a ring-side seat on health industry history in the making, and a summer job inputting data as long as he could stand it—which was right through college—alongside his sister, Heather Tourville, who's an attorney at WellSource. Don's computer program, WellSuite, attracted not only Nike, but clients like Vanderbilt University, Safeway, and Aramco. The multiplication factor of individuals impacted is impressive: one insurance client alone enrolled 1.5 million clients in one month.

Long-Term Intergenerational Change

A lifetime of practicing a healthy lifestyle has enabled Don to stay extraordinarily fit (think cycling vacations in Switzerland), and it's become a family lifestyle. For Don and the wife of his youth, Phyllis (who tragically died in a hiking accident), making WellSource a success was a mission as well as a vocation. Both were determined to overcome a genetic predisposition to obesity and avoid related diseases (several relatives died of heart attack). Ensuring that a healthy lifestyle was "normal" for their children was paramount. There are pictures of a family backpacking vacation in the Olympic Mountains when David was six and Heather was months old.

Their dedication paid dividends. Don's kids and grandkids think of plant-based, whole-food eating (Don avoids the term "vegan" so as not to possibly come across as "superior") as normal—like being physically active. And there's another bonus: David's children, McKenzie (12) and Zack (15), look forward to seeing Don and his wife, Trish, visit because it means an active good time. "They love doing things with Dad," says David, including running the Spokane Bloomsday Race. A family tradition since its inception in 1974, three generations of Halls now participate together, though Zack eventually just has to break away to catch the frontrunners.



Don's pride in his alma mater shows wherever he travels. "This university is one of the best schools around as far as Public Health goes," says Don, who keeps up with journals from several schools, including Harvard's school of public health.

A Living Legacy

Now that WellSource “runs itself” as a computer product-based service with thirty-five employees—“2016 was our best year yet”—Don has time to focus on the things that got him excited about wellness in the first place: staying on top of health and wellness research, creating courses that church members can grasp and share, and seeing lives transformed. Trish, who effectively employed walking in her counseling practice, has teamed with Don to train thousands of church members, and the couple are regulars on the camp meeting circuit. Don has published Review & Herald best-sellers like *Preventing Diabetes*, and he’s thinking of taking his book manuscript on blood pressure to a commercial publisher to reach an even wider audience because, for Don, it’s all about the power of public health/wellness to reach the masses.

Indeed, it’s a recent Southern California Conference *Recorder* cover, rather than his *TIME Magazine* photo, that draws the biggest smile of the interview. Don reaches for the latest *Recorder*, the cover of which features a woman wearing a t-shirt that says “Loma Linda Lopers”—a running/walking group Don started forty-one years ago when he was a student. “This is probably the most successful thing I’ve done to change people’s lives,” Don smiles, “because it’s social.”

But Don’s assessment of his achievements may be different in a few years. Between his hobbies of writing, creating new seminars and training presenters, and travel, Don has researched the best ways to make his philanthropy dollars go further. Don’s never lost sight of the impera-

tive to do the most good that he can, so he and Trish are funding the Don and Trish Hall Research Professorship, which oversees the Adventist Health Study that’s expected to shine increasing light on North America’s only Blue Zone, Loma Linda.

Trish shares Don’s enthusiasm for the study that attracted national attention to the Adventist lifestyle when Oprah picked up the *National Geographic* story. “That this professor will be able to convince the rest of the world exactly *how* Mrs. White’s message is right,” she says, is a prospect that really excites them both.

“I think Adventists take for granted the Health message and define it by ‘don’ts’ rather than ‘dos,’” observes David. “Dad is so genuinely excited and passionate about being healthy!”

“My Dad is my hero,” David explains. “He’s humble and gracious, not a self-promoter. But he’s infectiously excited about living healthy.”

“You like your life, even though it ends, to go on and be a blessing,” Don reflects in his soft-spoken, understated way.

And he leaves it at that. ■

Lynn McDowell is Director of Planned Giving/Philanthropy for the Alberta Conference.

Footnotes:

1. *TIME*, January 3, 1983.
2. Don tells more of the story in his own words in a video that can be found at www.llulegacy.org/ps.

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To keep the mind sharp, attendees participated in regular five-minute fitness activities, led by a variety of fitness experts (Photo courtesy of Loma Linda Health).

Expanding the Vegetarian Nutrition Conversation to Include the Health of the Planet and the Quality of the Food | BY BONNIE DWYER AND VICKI SAUNDERS

Every five years, scientists, nutritionists, and physicians gather in Loma Linda to share their research on plant-based nutrition and the latest ways to incorporate it into everyday life. It is a big event, drawing 600-700 people from around the world. This year's program also included reports on environmental nutrition—planetary health, a relatively new frontier for public health. Epidemiology and the correlation between nutrition and specific diseases is always discussed at the Congress. Plus, there were tastings of barley risotto with seasonal vegetables, curried quinoa with peas and almonds, and a posole soup made with beans instead of pork (see recipes on the following pages). Because what good is a purely theoretical discussion of nutrition?

“Environmental nutrition addresses the sustainability of food systems by integrating the environmental sciences with the nutritional sciences,” says Joan Sabate, director of the LLU Center for Nutrition, Lifestyle and Disease Prevention, and chair of the Congress. It includes a range of issues from farming production practices to societal food demands on a biospheric scale. In a 2016 article for the *American Journal of Public Health*, Sabate and fellow researchers, Helen Hanwatt and Samuel Soret, outlined an environmental nutrition agenda for food production, food consumption, nutrition policy, and the integrated assessment of these areas.

Research over the last fifteen years has shown that vegetarian and plant foods are soft on the environment; they

leave less of a footprint. Production of the foods for a vegetarian diet decreases greenhouse gases by 30 percent when compared with production for animal-based diets. Vegetarians consume less carcinogens and have a lower mortality rate. Their diet is environmentally friendly and more healthy, Sabate says.

At the February 2018 Congress in Loma Linda, the program began with reports on epidemiological studies, including the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition (EPIC), plus cohort studies of the Adventist Health Study 2.

In a keynote address, Dr. Frank Hu, chair of Harvard's Department of Nutrition, made the point that plant-based diets are good for health and only some of them are vegetarian. The Mediterranean, Okinawan, and DASH diets, for example, are plant based without being vegetarian. He also stated that only some vegetarian diets are healthful. A diet high in refined starches and sugars, hydrogenated fats and saturated dairy fats, and low in fruits and vegetables is not a healthful diet be it ever so meat free. On the far right of the continuum are the healthful plant foods and on the far left of the continu-

Posole Soup

Portions: 6

Ingredients:

½ lb	hominy, dried, soaked overnight in water
5 ea	New Mexico chilies, dried
½ lb	Ayocote Blanco beans (or white navy bean), dry, soaked overnight
1 ea	yellow onion, small
2 ea	cloves
1 ea	bay leaf
2 cloves	garlic, chopped
1 tsp	cumin seeds, toasted, ground to a powder
½ cup	vegetable oil
1 cup	white onion, diced, soaked in ice water
1 ea	lime, cut into 6 wedges
As needed	cilantro leaves

Method:

1. Drain hominy and put into large pot with enough water to cover. Bring to a boil and reduce heat to a simmer, let simmer 1 hour.
2. Toast dried chilies lightly in a heavy bottomed skillet. Wearing gloves, split chilies in half and remove the seeds, stems, and white veins. Soften chilies by simmering in 2 cups water about 15 minutes, then removing from heat and letting sit another 15 minutes. Blend well in a high power blender to puree. Strain through a fine mesh strainer and set aside.
3. Peel and cut onion in half. Stick cloves into onion.
4. Drain beans and add to cooking hominy along with onion, bay leaf, garlic, cumin and oil. Add enough water to cover by at least 2 inches and bring back to a simmer. Cook an additional 1 to 1 ½ hours until beans are tender and creamy.
5. Stir in ½ cup of the chili puree and simmer for 10 minutes. Taste and correct seasoning with additional chili paste, salt and/or honey to taste. Remove the onion, cloves, and bay leaf.
6. To serve, ladle into bowls and garnish with soaked onion, lime juice and cilantro as desired.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving size (approx 2/3 cup) (147g)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	380
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 19g	24%
Saturated Fat 1.5g	8%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 140mg	6%
Total Carbohydrate 40g	15%
Dietary Fiber 13g	46%
Total Sugars 6g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 13g	26%

Not a significant source of vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium
*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

um are the unhealthy plant foods along with the high animal foods. The data is strong that a diet of healthful plants reduces the risk of Type 2 diabetes significantly, and a diet of animal products, especially red meats and processed meats, promote diabetes. Unhealthy plant products may have a slightly higher risk of diabetes than the non-vegetarian diet. He identified saturated fat as risky and said that trans fats are so bad they should be

banned by law. Another population intervention he recommends is a tax on sodas. Berkley, CA passed such a law and their soda intake has dropped significantly accompanied by an increase in water intake.

Next, conference attendees listened to presentations on plant-based diets and life-cycle stages from infancy through childhood and on to aging. Gut microbiomes are now a major focus of research, too. Three presentations touched

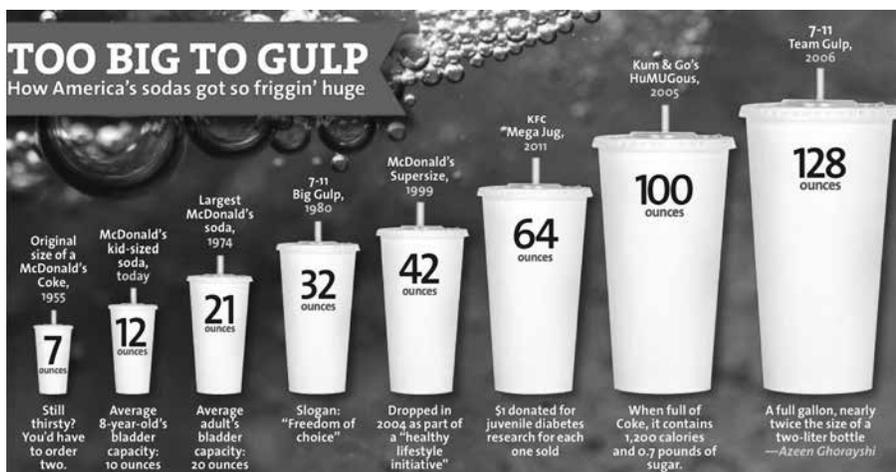


Chart from presentation by Frank Hu showing the increase in American soda sizes



Attendees visited exhibitors present throughout the event. Pictured here are attendees learning more information about programs offered at the Loma Linda University School of Public Health booth (Photo courtesy of Loma Linda Health).

on the subject assessing the microbiomes.

Cancer, stroke, heart disease, and diabetes all were addressed as researchers presented their findings on vegetarian diets and health outcomes.

And then came the environmental studies about protecting biodiversity with healthy soil, and healthy seeds, and the effect of vegetarian diets on planetary and population health outcomes.

The task of bringing research to the table in the form of food fell to Chef Cory, also known as P. Cory Gheen, assistant professor of Nutrition and Dietetics at LLU. Congress organizers requested recipes combining legumes and grains. Chef Cory wanted to create something that people would actually make in

Curried Quinoa with Peas and Almonds

Portions: 4

Ingredients:

2 Tbsp	vegetable oil
1 medium	onion, ¼ fine dice, ¾ coarse chop
1 cup	quinoa, white, rinsed
2 tsp	curry powder, yellow
¾ tsp	salt, kosher
2 ea	zucchini, small dice
1 cup	carrot juice
1 cup	peas
¼ cup	green onion
½ cup	almond, slivered
2 Tbsp	cilantro leaves, rough chop

Method:

1. Heat 1 Tbsp of the oil in a small soup pot. Add the fine diced onion. Cook over medium heat about 3 minutes until soft.
2. Stir in quinoa, ½ tsp curry powder, and ¼ tsp of the salt. Cook 2 minutes while stirring.
3. Add 2 cups boiling water, lower heat to low simmer, cover and cook 15 minutes.
4. Heat remaining oil in a large skillet. Add large chopped onion, zucchini and remaining curry powder.
5. Cook, stirring frequently, over medium heat for 5 minutes.
6. Add ½ cup water, carrot juice and remaining salt.
7. Cover and simmer for 5 minutes.
8. Add peas and green onion, cook an additional 2 minutes.
9. Stir in the nuts and cooked quinoa.
10. Taste and adjust seasoning as needed.
11. Garnish with cilantro.

Nutrition Facts

Serving size (approx 1 cup) (267g)

Amount Per Serving
Calories 380

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 17g	22%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 450mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 48g	17%
Dietary Fiber 9g	32%
Total Sugars 13g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 12g	24%

Not a significant source of vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium

*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

their kitchen. It needed to be very approachable, offer the nutrition that people need, and still be interesting. He decided upon barley risotto to show that you can use any grain for risotto and added fresh vegetables to make the dish all the more tasty. "Mix and match ingredients," he says, "because great ingredients are what make a great dish. In other words, find the ingredients first and then look for a recipe, rather than the other way around. The job in the kitchen is to take a great ingredient and keep it great," he says. "Ingredients don't get better." He also likes to simplify recipes, taking out unnecessary ingredients. "Focus on one thing and make it great," he says. "Find good local sources. Be a locavore."

Dietitian Nasira Burkholder-Colley provided the nutritional information during the presentation of the dishes. While the food demonstrations enlivened the Vegetarian Congress, Chef Cory makes a point of saying that the Vegetarian Congress is a venue for researchers. It is not a culinary event.

Thirty years ago, when the first Congress was held in Washington, DC, it was envisioned as a way to bring cultural and political attention to the significance of the vegetarian diet. Allan Buller, then president of Worthington Foods, came up with the idea and solicited the help of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in sponsoring it. The organizers soon realized they needed a scientific component to the event and requested that Loma Linda University step in. From the third congress on, Loma Linda University researchers have been in charge. Sabate took over the event twenty years ago. At LLU, with research as the focus, it has flourished. The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition has published the proceedings of all of the meetings. This year, scientists from Harvard, Yale, Tufts, Oxford, and of course Loma Linda University are involved. There are researchers from Taiwan, Brazil, the UK, Chile, India, the Netherlands, Spain, Canada, and the United States. Sabate says that scientists in Europe are leading the way in research regarding nutrition and the environment.

Barley Risotto with Seasonal Vegetables

Portions: 4

Ingredients:

1 Tbsp	vegetable oil
1 medium	onion, spring*, small dice
2 cups	pearled barley, pre-cooked
1 cup	vegetable stock
1 cup	green garbanzo Beans, shelled
½ cup	asparagus tips
1 Tbsp	heavy cream
1 Tbsp	parmesan, grated
1 Tbsp	parsley, chopped fine

*spring onions have not been dried so they still have green tops and no yellow skins (paper) on the outside

Method:

1. Heat oil in a large, wide sauté pan over medium-high heat.
2. Add onion and cook until it begins to brown (caramelize).
3. Add barley and ½ cup of vegetable stock. Cook and stir until liquid has been absorbed. Add enough remaining liquid to create a slightly thickened sauce consistency.
4. Add the vegetables and cook 2 minutes until heated through, adding more stock as needed to maintain sauce. Remove from the heat.
5. Finish by adding the cream, parmesan and parsley, stirring until the cheese is melted.
6. Taste and adjust the seasoning with a bit of salt if needed.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving size (approx 1 cup) (266g)	
Amount Per Serving	250
Calories	
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 7g	9%
Saturated Fat 2g	10%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 110mg	5%
Total Carbohydrate 42g	15%
Dietary Fiber 8g	29%
Total Sugars 6g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 8g	16%

Not a significant source of vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium

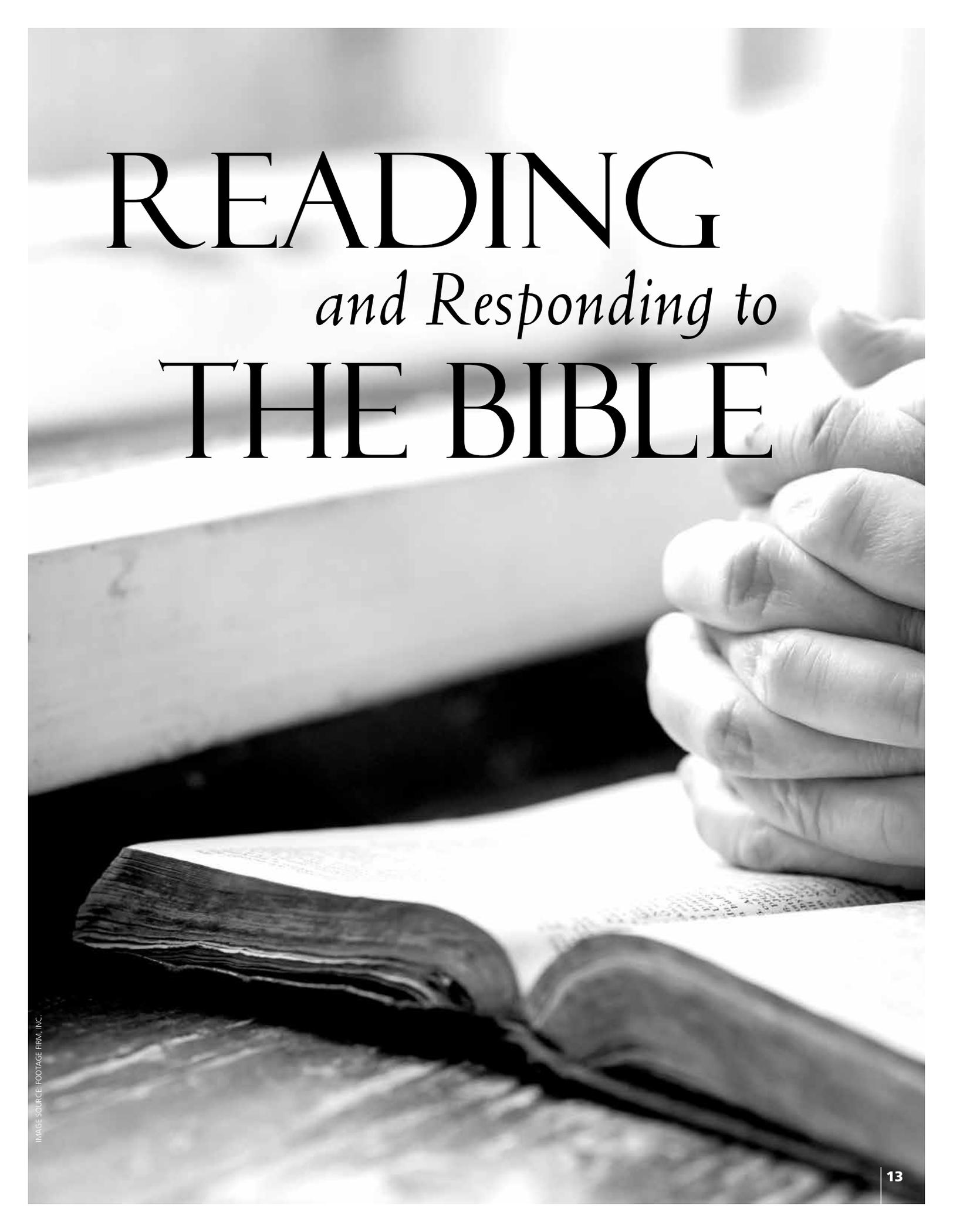
*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

And while plant-based diets are environmentally friendly, that does not mean they are without challenges and controversies, as Marco Springmann, from the University of Oxford, reminded attendees. Consumer attitudes towards meatless diets are one challenge. Ruben Sanchez, from the Universidad de La Frontera in Chile, provided details. Matthew Ruscigno, a registered dietitian from Nutrinic Inc., Los Angeles, talked about the vegetarian athlete. The cultural context for vegetarian diets was provided by Sharon Palmer, from The Plant-Powered Dietitian. Nasira Burkholder-Cooley closed the conference with a discussion of what replaces meat? Are meat analogs the best protein? Not everyone thinks so.

Research on new foods continues. As do studies on the effect of a vegetarian diet on people and the planet. The Eighth Vegetarian Nutrition Congress will be in 2023. ■

Bonnie Dwyer is editor of Spectrum magazine.

Vicki Saunders is Coordinator of Health Science Program and Professor of Nutrition at Pacific Union College and past president of the Seventh-day Adventist Dietetic Association (SDADA).



READING *and Responding to* THE BIBLE

Sola Scriptura, Truth, and the Future of Bible Interpretation

| BY OLIVE J. HEMMING



IMAGE SOURCE: FOOTAGE FRM, INC.

For five centuries, the so-called “Protestant Method”¹ of Bible interpretation has served competing ideological, doctrinal, cultural, and ecclesiological interests with no clear *telos* in sight. However, it is important to note that the principle of *sola scriptura* was in essence not a concern for method.² The overarching concern was to encounter Christ the Word as the sole authority and *telos* of Scripture—a concern which proceeds from and is preceded by the principle of *sola fide*. As Luther scholar Kenneth Hagen argues, for Luther, “*Christus* is not a *sensus*, a meaning,” but “the *res*, the reality of the truth of God.”³

Sola scriptura is a quest for the *logos*, the pure truth of scripture shrouded by centuries of church dogma and traditions that eclipse the Spirit of Scripture. However, what the Reformation sought to undo, namely the Roman Catholic Church’s control over the Bible and its meaning, ironically becomes more widespread and entrenched in Protestantism, as various Christian communities lay claim to their particular interpretation of Scripture as “the truth”, and some employ coercive means (beginning

with Luther himself) to maintain such. As a result, *sola scriptura* has morphed into a (sometimes rabid) bibliolatry that in many instances leaves Bible scholars and preachers walking around the Bible as though walking on eggshells, for fear of losing their livelihood, or position in the mainstream of the institution. Protestant bibliolatry is the exploitation of the religious/cultural power of Scripture to stem dissent under the pretext of “biblical authority.”⁵ It leaves many proponents of *sola scriptura* on a treadmill, well worked out, each using Scripture to prove their particular point of view, but going nowhere in freeing the pure Light⁶ of Scripture from dogmatic, ideological, and institutional control. If this is true, the Reformation quest remains largely unfulfilled and our work as scholars remains before us.

My purpose is to examine the Reformation ideal of *sola scriptura* in its advocacy for Christ—the *logos*, the Truth, and the *telos* of Scripture. I examine this towards a biblical perspective of *sola scriptura* based on the *logos* philosophy in the Johannine writings, out of which I construct a *logos* hermeneutic. To embrace the principle of *sola scriptura*

towards truth is to embrace a profound ethic of oneness in Being, as the one consistent principle of Bible interpretation used by Jesus of Nazareth, Paul of Tarsus, and the Hebrew prophets before them.

Sola Scriptura

What do the Reformers mean by *sola scriptura*? Two points are important to this conversation.

1. Scripture Is its Own Authority and its Own Interpreter

The Bible has no authority and needs no hermeneutic external to itself. For Luther, the Bible is not only its own authority, but its own critic. The Spirit that interprets Scripture is within Scripture and not outside of it, even if the external interpreter is the Church. Luther and Calvin argue that the “plain sense” in Scripture is Christ and it is the Spirit of Christ present within the text that authenticates the text, not the interpreter.⁷ Luther argues, “If you take Christ from Scripture, what else will you find in it?”⁸ With regards to obscure texts, Luther speaks of an external and internal clarity of Scripture. The internal clarity is the Spirit-enlightened heart, cleansed of the ego as it embraces and is embraced by God. This inner clarity emerges from an encounter with the Word—the proclamation of Christ by Scripture. From this encounter with Christ, the external clarity (i.e., the meaning of the text) emerges. This dialectic describes Luther’s story of his encounter with Christ through his study of Romans (1:17), and this is the lens through which he understands the nature of Scripture, reads everything in Scripture, and develops his theology. Thus, obscure passages need not be ignored “in mystical silence,”⁹ rather, they find meaning (or meaninglessness) in light of Christ. The “canon”—the measuring rod—is Christ, the only absolute truth against which everything in scripture may be judged. Thus, Luther says, “Whatever does not teach Christ is certainly not apostolic, even if St. Peter or St. Paul teaches it....whatever preaches Christ

would be apostolic, even if it were presented by Judas, Annas, Pilate, and Herod.”¹⁰

2. Scripture Has a Literal Meaning or a “Plain Sense”

This is directly connected to the first point. By “plain sense” the reformers mean to recover the real meaning of texts from the mystifying subjectivism of allegorical interpretation that dominated in Medieval Christianity.¹¹ The context of *sola scriptura* is the Medieval Church’s assumption that Scripture is unclear;¹² thereby it justified an interpretive framework based on the authority of the church and of tradition. This mystification of scripture gives the church sole authority over the scriptures to determine its meaning.¹³

It is also very important to stress what *sola scriptura* is not.

The Reformation understanding of the Bible as its own interpreter is not a literalistic, anti-intellectual, or even constrained¹⁴ contextual approach to the Bible. Allowing scripture to interpret scripture is not proof-text interpretation. There can be no consistent outcome to Scripture with this approach because it allows the interpreter to harvest the religious/cultural power of the text towards particular beliefs, interests, and ideologies, and the authority exerted is not of the scripture, but of the interpreter. This eclipses the reconciling power of the Bible’s own interpreter, namely, the *logos*, and transforms Scripture into a weapon of control.

The Task of the Twenty-First Century

As scholars, we are called to be ministers of the Word—prophets—and so our primary witness must be to the Word and nothing else. By the Word I do not mean scriptures, because biblically, those two—scriptures (*αἱ γραφαί*) and the Word (*ὁ λόγος*)—are not one and the same thing. In John, Jesus says to his antagonists of his own faith, “You search the scriptures because you think you have eternal life in them, but it is those (scriptures) that testify about me”

**To embrace
the principle
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Being.**



IMAGE SOURCE: FOOTAGE FIRM, INC.

The truth in John is not a dogma, but an ethical demand to love, based on the affirmation of oneness in Being demonstrated in the incarnation of the *logos*.

(John 5:39). In the Johannine conversation, truth (*αληθεια*) resides in the *logos*¹⁵ (“...in it was light...”[John 1:4]), and the *logos* is Being of God (καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος [John 1:1])¹⁶ which incarnates in Jesus of Nazareth (John 1:14). So, in John, the scriptures are not ends in themselves, rather the *logos* is the end of Scripture. This is the Spirit of Scripture that Luther struggled to find in his many sermons and lectures.¹⁷

Truth and the *Logos* in John

What is truth? The truth in John is not a dogma, but an ethical demand to love, based on the affirmation of oneness in Being demonstrated in the incarnation of the *logos*.

The question arises in the trial of Jesus of Nazareth, and is central to the deeply philosophical Johannine conversation representing the late first-century Scripture interpretive debate between church and synagogue.¹⁸ The *Life and Death*¹⁹ question, “what is truth?” appears just as Jesus is about to meet a hideous execution based on un-truth—trumped up charges before the Roman authority because his interpretation of Scripture does not conform to the then-dominant teachings and traditions of his own religion. But the untruth extends far beyond the trial. The untruth is the ground of a religious way of being, based on ecclesiological and political power and the self-preservation that such power demands.²⁰ Pilate’s question “what is truth?” is a “cliff hanger” in the trial drama. It concludes the first trial scene before Pontius Pilate (one of two Roman heads of the Jewish state now under Roman occupation). The question ends

the scene without an answer, but John has already answered the question in his account of the Jesus story.²¹

The answer to the question in John becomes evident when the reader looks at the big picture of the conversation. While the conversation takes place between synagogue and church, it engages the Gnostic philosophical system in which the Johannine community is immersed. It is a debate between the religious separatist compulsion to exclude the “other”, and prophetic demand to include: “For God so loved the world...that everyone who believes... may have eternal life” (John 3:16).²² John 3:16, the central truth in John, is a reinterpretation (or rather re-membering)²³ of the Abrahamic covenant and its Messianic fulfilment. The beneficiary of the covenant is not one group of people based on their religious practices, but the whole world. Messiah is not the servant of a religious superstructure;²⁴ rather Messiah is the *logos* of God, “I am” Being itself—an experience of life eternal into which every human being may enter.

In John, this is the truth of which Jesus declares, “...you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.” It is not an egoistic assertion by or about Jesus of Nazareth, but an assurance of the immanence of *logos*—the very Being of God enfleshed in the human Jesus. Appearing in Chapter 8, the statement instigates a debate between Jesus’ teachings and the traditional teachings of his religion signified by an ethnocentric interpretation of the Abrahamic covenant. The conversation concludes with Jesus’

assertion “before Abraham came (γίνομαι) I am (εἰμι)”. If one considers its context, John uses this statement to steer his audience away from redundant tradition (“before Abraham came”) and to open their consciousness to the immediacy of Being (I am)—the *logos* incarnate. Being is prior to, and infinitely exceeds, tradition.²⁵

The *logos*, Being of God, is life available to humanity through one thing—love. “I give you a new commandment that you should love one another...” (John 13:34, 35; cf. 1 John 2:7–11). “God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.” (1 John 4:16). “We know that we have passed from death to life because we love one another” (1 John 3:14). John reinforces this truth in the following ways:

1. *Contra* Gnostic sentiments,²⁶ the miracles for John are “signs” (σημεῖα), that the *logos* actually incarnates in the human Jesus. So, his overarching purpose, that his audience believe that Jesus is Messiah (John 20:30–31), is a profound interpretation of the covenant Messiah. Messiah is the *logos*, the life, an experience available to all of humanity (“so that by believing you may have life in his name” [John 20:31]).
2. Twice John says, “No One has ever (πώποτε) seen God” (John 1:18; 1 John 4:12); but in both instances he counters the statement with the assurance that God has been made known. In the first instance, the only son, who is close to God’s heart and who makes God known. In the second instance, those who love make God known.
3. John quotes Jesus as saying that whoever has seen him (Jesus) has seen God, and then challenges his audience saying, “those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen” so that “those who love God must love their brother and sister also.” (1 John 4:20–21). This reflects Jesus’ own statement in John’s passion narrative: “Whoever hates me, hates God also.” (John 15:23).

So here is the seldom-told, plain truth in John; the story of the *logos* incarnate is not only the story of God, but it is the story of humanity. John affirms this (*contra* dogmatic literalistic interpretation of scripture of his day), as ethical demand and moral responsibility in Being—love. This radical ontological ethic is the dominant theme of the early church teachings. In the Lukan genealogy, Jesus is son of Adam, (who is) son of God. In Matthew, love for God is identical to love for one’s fellow human, and whatever one does to one’s fellow human, one does to God. Paul, the herald of this very Christ ethic to the church, declares that God is One (Romans 3:30), and by that he exhorts the church to accept the different ways in which Jews and non-Jews practice the *faith of Christ*.²⁷ Paul does not say there is one God, he says God is One (εἷς ὁ θεός). This is a radical monotheism²⁸ that recognizes no “other” and no competing elements in Being. That ethic is the basis of Paul’s teachings on righteousness. This is the Spirit of the *logos*, “the Spirit of Truth,” embraced only through love. It is the Spirit by which the early church interpreted and applied Scripture, and this is how we today should seek to interpret and apply it. I call this a “*logos* hermeneutic.”

Finding Truth in Scriptures: Logos Hermeneutic

A *logos* hermeneutic is one that embraces the oneness and immediacy of Being—God incarnate. As such, it approaches Scripture from the standpoint of ethics, rather than dogma and ideology. This embrace is the very faith of Jesus Messiah which manifests itself through love. It is the hermeneutic of Jesus of Nazareth²⁹ and Paul of Tarsus, and the Hebrew prophets before them. The Hebrew prophets call it “justice” (the same word misleadingly translated “righteousness” in both the New Testament and the Hebrew Bible); for the prophets, it is all that God requires.³⁰ In the early church understanding of Jesus’ teaching, love/justice is the end of Scripture: “In everything do to others as you would have them do to you, for this is the law and the

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I contend that the Reformation application of this hermeneutic is essentially flawed because it is rooted in medieval piety—personal piety, rather than community.

prophets” (Matthew 7:12). It is the conclusion of Paul’s teaching on righteousness: “Owe no one anything, except to love one another...love is the fulfillment of the law” (Romans 13:8–10). Love/justice is the stamp of God manifested in Jesus of Nazareth, and is the measuring stick that interprets and judges Scripture. It is this hermeneutic, central to the Johannine debate, that pulled the early church through the controversies over application of scripture as the hearers of the gospel³¹ became more and more culturally diverse.³²

As I have noted above, Luther identified this “canon” within the canon. However, his application falls short because its frame of reference is medieval personal piety, and centuries of assumed church dogma, rather than the ecumenical ethic of the early church.

Logos Hermeneutic and the Protestant Ethic

The essential Reformation hermeneutic *à la face value* is a *logos* hermeneutic. In fact, Luther regards the Gospel and first letter of John as pre-eminent in the New Testament, along with Romans and Galatians, because they “masterfully show how faith in Christ overcomes sin, death, and hell and gives life, righteousness, and blessedness.”³³ Yet, I contend that the Reformation application of this hermeneutic is essentially flawed because it is rooted in medieval piety—personal piety,³⁴ rather than community. In medieval piety, preparing for the final judgement consumed a person’s daily life. Luther’s *sola fide* did not change this attitude, it only changed the way the individual seeks piety. This becomes the Protestant ethic that prioritizes *personal* freedom. His attempt to apply a *logos* hermeneutic failed because it was divorced from the *logos* ethic of oneness in Being; and because it worked within the parameters of a dogma/credo-centric Roman Catholic tradition rather than through *sola scriptura*. No surprise then that Luther called for the death penalty for those Protestants who did not subscribe to infant baptism, original sin, and

other doctrines and creeds. No surprise that having failed to convert the Jews to Christianity, Luther called for their persecution—destruction of their school, synagogues, homes, businesses, and even for their enslavement; so that he has been identified as the real criminal of the Holocaust.³⁵

Based on Paul’s teaching about justification by faith rather than works of law in Galatians and Romans, Luther proposes two kinds of righteousness—“passive righteousness” and “active righteousness.”³⁶ Neither of these capture the intent of Paul in Galatians and Romans, because they register a fundamentally individualistic ethic. What Luther interprets from Paul as “passive righteousness”—the individual freedom before God—is, in its proper context,³⁷ about the universality of the Abrahamic covenant vis-à-vis an andro-ethnocentric interpretation of it. It is a call for the inclusion of all—Jew and Gentile, male and female, slave and free—in the promise of the Abrahamic Covenant. This promise is justice (δικαιοσύνη [again, the same word translated righteousness or justification]). This justice is about God’s vindication/liberation of a broken and alienated humanity, not just a particular group. This justice is the faith of Messiah (who fulfills the covenant through his own faithfulness) into which the believer is called to participate.³⁸ So the life of faith is not subscription to a set of dogmas and peculiar practices. Rather, it is about a life of justice—care for the creation well-being and fullness of life.

Luther’s idea of “active righteousness” is his *attempt* to account for the individual responsibility to community, but it does not arise in the writing of Paul. Paul makes no distinction between “righteousness before God” and “righteousness in the eyes of the world.”³⁹ In the gospels (and specifically as we observe in John) righteousness is *in* God (who is One), not *before* God. Luther’s teaching, as it characterizes the Reformation, though universal in its parts,⁴⁰ is fundamentally individualistic. Paul’s teaching, as it characterizes the teaching of the early church, demands profound individual accountability,⁴¹ but this in

the context of an activist ethic of inclusion, diversity, and *universal* liberation.

So, for 500 years the church has in many places misapplied Paul's teaching on righteousness, transforming it from the profoundly ecumenical ethic of oneness in a diverse creation "groaning to be free" into a dogma of personal piety—"righteousness by faith." For 500 years, without a clear and consistent application of the *logos* ethic in the inclusive context of the early church, the so-called "Protestant Method" has served competing ideological, doctrinal, cultural, and ecclesiological interests with no clear *telos* in sight.

Logos Hermeneutic: Implications for Bible Interpretation

Having observed the Johannine philosophy of *logos*, these are some vital implications for Bible interpretation:

1. A *logos* hermeneutic frees Scripture from the conditions that interpreters place upon its authenticity. The inspiration of Scripture lies in its *witness* to the *logos*, not in the *means* or *nature* of that witness which in many places may seem flawed. If the *logos* is the very "Spirit of life,"⁴² to deny the reality of various genres and sources of Scripture in the interest of a narrow⁴³ view of inspiration is, in the end, counterproductive to its unconditional acceptance as a witness to the incarnation. Divine voice is present in every vehicle of human understanding, and the Scripture reflects various vehicles. Bible-thumping fundamentalism that requires everything to be literal and accurate, and Scripture-rejecting liberalism that requires everything to fit its version of reality; both of these place conditions on Scripture. The Scripture is what it is, a (flawed?) human vehicle of Divine revelation; and that in and of itself is a witness to the miracle of the incarnation.
2. Any interpretive outcome that violates the fundamental principle of love/justice violates the Spirit of Scripture.⁴⁴ Interpretation should

not serve the interest of some against the full affirmation of others. For example, a hermeneutic that justifies even a *semblance* of domination and subjugation violates the authority of Scripture. The apostle Paul has passed down a legacy of *logos* hermeneutic in this regard. He rejects the headship ideology, which he so patiently outlines in 1 Corinthians 11: 3–10, by judging it with the *logos* in verses 11 and 12: "In the Lord... everything comes from God." In light of the *logos*, male headship usurps the sovereignty of God in the creation and perpetuates a culture of alienation. Further, Paul subverts a Roman household code of domination and subjugation (Ephesians 5:21–6:7) by stating, "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Ephesians 5:21).

It is unclear why so much resource and interpretive rigmarole goes into the reinforcement of a fundamentalist ideology of headship when the "plain reading" ("in Christ") lies at hand in these so-called texts of headship.

3. To accept scientific or historical findings that may run contrary to what appears in Scripture does not necessarily disavow the authority of scripture. To accept the *logos* as radically present Being of God is to affirm all knowledge and understanding of the creation and human affairs as divine revelation. A radical monotheism⁴⁵ cannot assign the vast body of knowledge obtained since the close of the biblical canon to some other. In a sense then, to disregard science may be, in and of itself, to disregard the true authority of Scripture, if that authority is the *logos*. Have we learnt anything from the case of Galileo⁴⁶ and the Roman Catholic Church of his time? His findings went against what the Church believed to be scientific data in scripture. They tortured and banished him before forcing him to recant; but today his findings are fundamental knowledge.
4. The Bible claims no other discipline outside of its own discipline, i.e., its witness to the redemptive presence of God in the creative/historical process. Scripture testifies that

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principle of
love/justice
violates the
Spirit of
Scripture.**

**Dogmas and
tradition
often function
to justify
the walls
we put up in
the interest
of self-
preservation.**

Divine revelation fills up time and space—God is present—*I am*. It seems to be an exercise in futility for scientists to measure the authenticity of Scripture with scientific data,⁴⁷ or for theologians to use Scripture to measure the accuracy of science. The Church will not soon win that battle if history is to teach anything.⁴⁸ What if we prioritize the profound lesson of grace, salvation, and human responsibility in the story of creation, over the obsession with scientific facts?⁴⁹ Will we then hear the creation story in the ways it yearns to be heard towards renewal and restoration? What if we embrace Sabbath observance as the *timeless* lesson of the miracle of existence, of human liberation and God’s justice as Jesus has taught us? Should we subject that life-giving word to scientific debate?

5. Human responsibility and the Church’s responsibility increases proportionally to the increase of knowledge. Cultural values of the past reflected in Scripture emerge from a place of knowledge significantly less than the present. To behold Christ in Scripture is to embrace what God continues to reveal toward the healing of a culture of alienation. The *logos* speaks to Divine omniscience, love/justice, providence, and grace, out of which a perpetually developing and learning humanity emerges.

Kerygma: Truth as Re-membering

John states that the commandment to love is not a new commandment; it is, as the *logos*, in the beginning⁵⁰ (ἐν ἀρχῇ)⁵¹ with God who is love. In the mind of his original audience, ἀρχή is about metaphysics (not time)—the very nature of reality, the ground of Being. Truth as love manifests itself in the darkness of this alienated world as re-membering of Divine Being with humanity as in ἀρχῇ (as is the nature of Being). Ἀλήθεια—truth—is the opposite of λήθη (which means “concealment” or “forgetfulness”). Truth is ἀ-λήθεια—literally the state of being unconcealed, or remembering. The source of ἀλήθεια in Greek philosophy is

not judgement (as in a determination of what or who is right or wrong), rather, its source is Being in and of itself, independent of time and space.⁵² At this point it becomes evident that in John, ἀρχή, θεός, λόγος, ἀγαπή, and ἀλήθεια co-exist as life. The *logos* incarnation is the truth calling fallen humanity back into that fellowship of life⁵³—re-membering.

In the history of humankind, often what makes something “truth” is its repetition and/or practice for a long enough period of time. So that what one calls “truth” often amounts to entrenchment or indoctrination, which often functions to conceal to the point of forgetfulness. Ἀλήθεια in John is profound encounter with God in the declaration “I am” without (self)consciousness of “other”—plainly awesome reality in the midst of which is trembling and total surrender to the miracle of life. Truth is *in God*, not in a body of beliefs.

What makes people stand to sing: “*I love thee I love thee and that thou dost know, and how much I love thee my action will show,*” and yet feel uncomfortable with someone “different” seated amongst them—singing with them in a different tempo? What caused people to leave church and go directly to the town square to take part in a lynching—faith communities to aid and abet oppressive political systems? What makes a woman oppose the affirmation of another woman as God’s mouthpiece through the ceremony of ordination; and support religious dogmas that subjugate her—leading to the chronic objectification, abuse, and exploitation of women in so many cultures? What caused Martin Luther himself, having failed to convert the Jews, to call for their social, political, and economic destruction and expulsion from provinces where they refuse to convert? What makes religious people from the ancient of days, the furthest corner of the earth to the present day, perhaps here in this very place, exploit the name of God against fellow beings. I contend that it is not hate, it is forgetfulness—λήθη—forgetfulness of Being—who we are—who *I am*—forgetfulness of what issues from beginning—ἀρχή—the ground of Being.

The early church proclamation of the life and teachings of Jesus is a re-membering of an original creation that reflects oneness in Being, laid buried under scrolls and scrolls of tradition and egoistic interpretation of Scripture. The early church teaching on the faith(fullness) of Messiah, which seals God's universal covenant, created a humble body of believers—men and women, Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free persons working together in inclusion, equality, and mutuality for the liberation of a groaning creation, as Paul calls it. It eventually became the Roman state religion of power and control, exclusion and separatism that suppressed the very religion from which it sprang, namely Judaism. Luther, steeped in Christian tradition, transformed the teachings of Jesus, Paul, and the apostles into a separatist Christianity. Luther's Paul and Luther's Jesus are decidedly Christians converted from Judaism by Augustine before him. Luther's doctrine of *sola fide*, crafted out of the forgetfulness of centuries of Christian dogma, could not return the church to its root in the original ecumenical gospel of righteousness by faith. Power and control, intolerance, exclusion, and separatism remain firmly rooted among many who stridently embrace Reformation *sola fide/sola scriptura*. This kind of piety translates into works of dogma and tradition by which the believer/community forgets its full responsibility in an alienated creation as each vies for its own purity, identity, and self-preservation through the observance and enforcement of unexamined traditional values.

Forgetfulness of Being in God creates fear of "difference"—fear that my clan's life is at risk from the other. Dogmas and tradition *often* function to justify the walls we put up in the interest of self-preservation. And thus continues the cycle of forgetfulness and alienation. If the church can salvage the noble Reformation goal of *sola scriptura* by which, in Scripture, we encounter none but the *logos*—the truth of who are—then we can enter a dialectic of beholding and becoming into the image of God from whence we have fallen.

So, this is my appeal: Let not our deliberation here be a mere flex of intellectual muscle, or pledge of loyalty to particular ideologies, dogmas, and cliques, but let this be, year after year, a place of encounter with the *logos*, and a place from which we conspire to transform and re-member. ■



Olive Hemmings has been teaching in Seventh-day Adventist higher education since 1982. She began teaching at her Alma Mater, West Indies College (now Northern Caribbean University), in 1982, one year before graduating, and continued teaching there until 1998, when she moved to California to further her studies. She earned the MA in New Testament and Biblical languages from the SDA Theological Seminary at Andrews University in 1989, and the PhD in Theology, Ethics, and Culture from Claremont Graduate University in 2004. She taught at Northern Caribbean University for fifteen years, and has been teaching at Washington Adventist University for the past eleven years in the areas of New Testament Bible and Greek, World Religions, Social, Biblical, and Theological Ethics, and Dogmatic Theology both in graduate and undergraduate programs.

Footnotes:

1. This method is based on the assumption that the scripture has a literal meaning, as opposed to having a mystical sense. Thus, if one reads Scripture in historical and literary context, one can know precisely what the text means. This approach became known as "Historical Grammatical Method."

2. Kenneth Hagen, in his book *Luther's Approach to Scripture as Seen in His Commentaries on Galatians, 1519–1538* (London, England: Coronet Books, 1993), 18, argues that concepts such as "hermeneutic" and "method" are nineteenth-century, post-enlightenment and modern concepts which are alien to Luther and his approach to Scripture.

3. *Ibid.*, 15–17.

4. Luther called for the death penalty for "doctrinal heretics" and in particularly Anabaptists who, though they developed out of the teachings of Luther and Ulrich Zwingli, these men considered to be too radical. Anabaptists oppose infant baptism and other doctrines which ironically emerge from Roman Catholic tradition rather than *sola scriptura*. See also, John S. Oyer, *Lutheran Reformers against Anabaptists (Dissent and Non-conformity)* (Paris, Arkansas: The Baptist Standard Bearers Inc., 2001).

5. There is no doubt among sociologists that sacred canons such as the Bible or the Qur'an in and of themselves hold the most powerful sway over the minds of any culture.

6. "In it (the *logos*) was light, and the light was the life of humanity." John 1:2.

7. *Luther's Works*, 10:332; John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1.7.1

8. Weimar Ausgabe 18:609. 1–14 cited in Oswald Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 84.

9. *Ibid.* This is Erasmus' approach to passages that do not make sense.

10. *Luther's Works*, 35:136, cited in Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 83.

11. The Reformers oppose a subjective arbitrary interpretation that, according to Origen before them, requires special spiritual insight by select people to decipher the meaning of the objects, parts, and elements of scripture. Origen, *On First Principles* 4.1.6 (Butterworth, *Origen*, 265).

12. Luther protests that there is nothing recondite in scripture. He goes on to say, "many passages in scripture are obscure and hard to elucidate, but that is due not to the exalted nature of the subject, but to our linguistic and grammatical ignorance; and it does not prevent in any way our knowing all the contents of the Scripture." See John Dillenberger, ed., *Martin Luther: Selections from his Writings* (New York: Doubleday, 1962), 172.

13. Calvin rails against this usurping of Biblical authority by the church saying, "But a most pernicious error widely prevails that scripture only has so much weight as is conceded to it by the consent of the church." Calvin, *Instit.* 1.7.1. According to Luther, "the church does not constitute the Word but is constituted by the Word." *Luther's Works*, 35:138.

14. "Constrained" because often interpreters attend to context only when it does not uncover error in an already established doctrine or practice.

15. From here on I will use the actual Greek word *logos* (English transliteration), because, as becomes evident in the progress of this conversation, the Greek term *logos* and its literal English translation "word" are not equivalent. The prologue of John reflects the marriage of Greek philosophy and Hebrew wisdom. *Logos* in Platonic legacy designates the very mind of the cosmos that gives it form and meaning. In John 1:3–4, life and light reside in the *logos* and everything comes into being through it. This brings to the Judaic mind σοφία (wisdom). In Wisdom 9:12, "God made all things by your word, and by your wisdom fashioned man" [sic].

16. In this construction, λόγος having the definite article ὁ, is the subject, while θεός, without the article, functions as complement of ἦν ("was" [from the verb "to be" which is not an action but a state of being]). Θεός appearing as compliment without the article is not identifier, but modifier or describer, so that the *logos* finds description and definition in God as Being of God.

17. See especially "Sermons on John 1 and 2", 1537–1538; *Luther's Works* 22. See also, Robert Kolb and Charles P. Arand, *The Genius of Luther's Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 161–220.

18. The church began in the synagogue, but separation evolved as its interpretation of the Gospel continued to clash with the orthodox interpretation.

19. John crafts the debate as a choice between life and death.

20. The drama of the trial indicates that Jesus' teaching not only disrupts the structure of an entire religious system, but it threatens the authority of its leader Caiaphas. Jesus' teaching was a disclosure, ἀληθεια: divine love that sets a people free, unearthed from layers of religious dogma, ritualistic obsession, and hierarchical power structure that hinder the flow of divine love. The crowd follows Jesus and listens to his condemnation of

a corrupt religious system, and witnesses his life-giving power in the *signs* (miracles). This being the time of the biggest Jewish festival, the Passover, with millions of Jews in Jerusalem, Caiaphas must not lose control or lose face. He fears an uprising, and this uprising could be the end of the Jewish nation in a Roman Empire that brutally crushes any kind of uprising (John 11:45–51). It is because of this that Caiaphas "advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people." (11:40; 18:14). And Pontius Pilate yields to the untruth (John 19:1–16) because he is ultimately responsible for keeping the peace in his province, short of which Rome would depose or execute him.

21. The debate about truth climaxes with the last of the seven signs—the raising of Lazarus from the dead and Jesus' declaration "I am the resurrection and the life... everyone who lives and believes in me will never die" (John 11:25–26). This appears just before the passion narrative.

22. See also John 1:11–13: "He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him...but as many as believed...he gave power to become children of God."

23. The Abrahamic Covenant is a recapitulation of humanity in the blessing of God: "...in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). Its devolution into an ethnocentric interpretation signifies the state of alienation that the incarnation means to rectify.

24. Foundational to Jewish apocalyptic understanding, especially in the period of the second temple, was the coming in of a new age of God's reign through Messiah, the arbiter of justice who liberates God's people from oppressive principalities and powers. In powerful Judaic quarters, based on their interpretation of the prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea), Messiah was to bring about political and spiritual redemption of Israel and establish a world government in Jerusalem. See "Mashiach: Messiah" in *Judaism 101*, <http://www.jewfaq.org/mashiach.htm>.

25. Cf., John 1: 17: "The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

26. At the onset of both the gospel and the first epistle, John resists the Gnostic philosophical impulse in his community to deny that God can mingle so intimately with fallen humanity. The assertion at the onset of the gospel and the first epistle is that the *logos* became flesh (John 1:14), that their eye saw it and their hands touched it—the *logos* which is life revealed by God. John invites his audience into this intimate fellowship of life (1 John 1:1–3). He further dismisses the Gnostic denial of the *logos* incarnation calling it the anti-Christ spirit (1 John 4:1–3).

27. The term translations render "faith" (πίστις) actually means "faithfulness." The English word "belief" is not equal in meaning to the Greek word πίστις. Paul's reference to Abraham's faithfulness in Romans 4 is about his "commitment, trust and devotion," not merely an intellectual affirmation versus doubt as the English word "belief" implies. (In Greek argumentation the πίστις is the proof of, or faithfulness to, one's claim). The phrase "faith in Jesus Christ" (πίστις του Ιησού Χριστού) both in the Greek

and in the context of Paul's discussion literally reads "faithfulness of Jesus Messiah." God's people receive justice through the faithful mediation of Messiah; and this is the actual meaning of the Abrahamic covenant in the context of Jewish Messianic expectation. See Pamela Eisenbaum, *Paul Was Not a Christian: The Original Message of a Misunderstood Apostle* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), 191–194.

28. See H. Richard Niebuhr, *Radical Monotheism and Western Culture* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1943). Foundational to Niebuhr's moral philosophy is his interpretation of the Christ event as a demonstration of oneness in being, so that all institutions, all religions, all ideological processes, all nations, all cultural activities and scientific breakthroughs, all life forms, all living experiences connect in the One (beyond the many) as essential parts of the process of being.

29. See the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7).

30. Isaiah 1:10–17, Micah 6:8, Amos 5:21–24.

31. The Gospel is Judaic and was the content of the preaching of the Hebrew prophets. It did not begin with the church as some may assume. See Isaiah 61 and Luke 4:8, 19.

32. Gentiles regard matters such as circumcision and diet as cultural with no inherent spiritual value; and Paul for example agreed. This was the contention of his teaching on righteousness.

33. *Luther's Works* 35:396, cited in Althaus, 83.

34. See Kolb and Arand, *The Genius of Luther's Theology*, 34.

35. See Christopher J. Probst, *Demonizing the Jews: Luther and the Protestant Church in Nazi Germany* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2012)

36. "In the former we receive righteousness before God through faith on account of Christ. In the latter, we receive righteousness in the eyes of the world by works when we carry out our God given responsibilities." See Charles Arand, "Two Kinds of Righteousness as a Framework for Law and Gospels in the Apologies," *Lutheran Quarterly* XV (2001): 421.

37. Contrary to centuries of indoctrination, Paul did not address legalism. Jews did not believe that they receive God's righteousness/justice because of what they do. On the contrary they receive it because God chose them through covenant (Abrahamic Covenant [condensed in the Davidic covenant in view of the separation from the ten northern tribes {See 2 Sam 7:12–13; 1 Kings 12; 2 Chronicle 10})). Their religious norms (which Gentiles saw as cultural) identified them as God's covenant community of the righteous. E. P. Sanders calls this *covenantal nomism*. Covenantal nomism is the belief that all who seek the promise of the Abrahamic Covenant, namely God's just vindication or God's righteousness, must become members of the covenant community by means of proselytization (one must take on Jewish ethnicity/identity). This is what Paul argues against in Galatians and Romans. See E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Mineapolis: Fortress Press, 1977), 2.5.5

38. *Ibid.*, 2.5.4

39. See note 26, above.

40. Assuming one may interpret "active righteousness" as such.

41. See for example, 1 Corinthians 10:23–30; Romans 14.

42. Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992).

43. A narrow view of inspiration is the insistence that everything in Scripture has to be literal and accurate according to modern standards of accuracy.

44. Moltmann puts it thus: "We... work out whatever in the text furthers life, and we ... subject to criticism whatever is hostile to life." I go further to say however, that it is the Spirit of the *logos* in Scripture that subjects Scripture "to criticism." See Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 57.

45. See note 26, above.

46. When the churchman Galileo, in the sixteenth century, embraced the heliocentric view of Copernicus based on his own astronomical observations, the church subjected him to torture and banishment before forcing him to recant. This was because the church believed that heliocentrism was contrary to the teaching of the Bible (See 1 Chronicles 16:30, Psalm 93:1, Psalm 96:10, Psalm 104:5, Ecclesiastes 1:5; cf. note 13, above). Now heliocentrism is a foregone conclusion, and Galileo is named the father of modern science. Yet many have rejected the Bible because of this very controversy. The church therefore has to take the responsibility to explain carefully the process of Biblical inspiration.

47. Joshua commanded, "O sun, stand still at Gibeon, And O moon in the valley of Aijalon" (Josh 10:12). If Joshua did not know that the sun was stationary relative to the earth, it is not because he was not inspired; rather it is because he was not involved in a scientific debate. The text rather speaks to a miracle for more daylight hours in a manner that was familiar to Joshua. "It is not the words... that are inspired, but the men...." (1 SM 1:21.2).

48. See note 18, above.

49. History has demonstrated that the attempt to transform the Bible into a science book will only create unbelievers, or otherwise mute conformists. This was indeed the case in the controversy over Galileo's findings. See note 14, above.

50. 1 John 2:7; 3:11.

51. In Greek philosophy, ἀρχή is not about time, rather it indicates the "first principle of intelligibility" or the ground of Being.

52. Vladislav Suvák, *The Essence of Truth (alētheia) and the Western Tradition in the Thought of Heidegger and Patocka*, in *Thinking Fundamentals*, IWM Junior Visiting Fellows Conferences, Vol. 9: Vienna 2000, 5.

53. At the climatic *sign* in John, Jesus pronounces: "I am the resurrection and the life...." (John 11:25–26).

Erasmus, the Protestant Reformation, and the Text of the New Testament

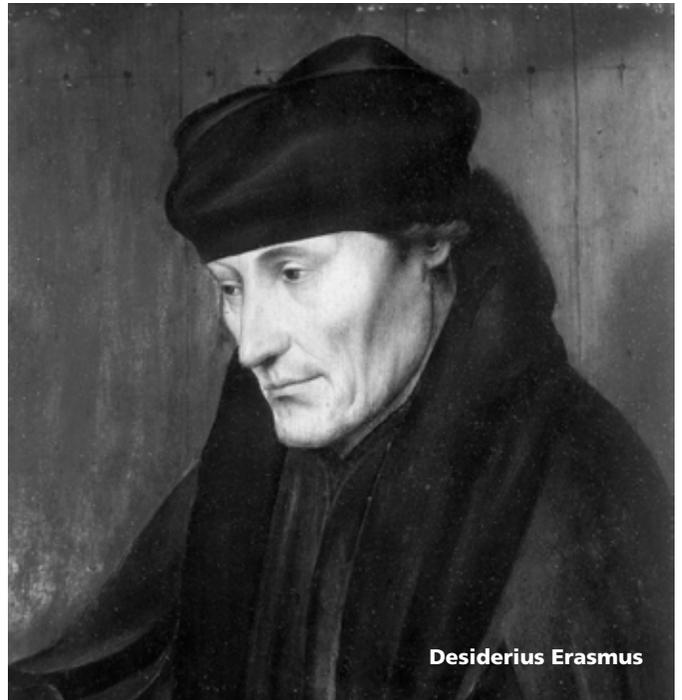
| BY CARL P. COSAERT

This year marks the five-hundredth anniversary of Martin Luther's posting of his revolutionary 95 Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg and the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. While Luther's bold action is often identified as the seminal event that led to the birth of Protestantism, it does not stand alone. It is intimately connected to an event that occurred a year earlier—the publication of the Greek New Testament (NT) in 1516 by the Dutch scholar Desiderius Erasmus. It is in the pages of the Greek NT that Luther discovered the truth of the gospel and found the strength to stand against the secular and religious powers that opposed him. Luther would later base his own German version of the NT on the second edition of Erasmus' Greek text. The Protestant Reformation would certainly have been very different—if it even would have occurred—if it were not for the publication of Erasmus' Greek NT.

Despite the influential role Erasmus' Greek text played at the outset of the Protestant Reformation, his text is no longer widely acclaimed today—at least among the majority of textual scholars. On this historic anniversary of the Reformation, I would like to briefly examine the circumstances that led to its publication as well as the challenges and limitations that ultimately undermined its significance as a definitive edition of the Greek NT. I will then reflect on the current status of the text of the Greek NT as it relates to the modern field of New Testament Textual Criticism, which Erasmus inadvertently helped create.

The Race to Publish the Greek New Testament

The invention of the printing press with its movable type during the middle of the fifteenth century opened up an entirely new era in the history of the world. For the first time, a manuscript could be printed and published in multiple copies—and each of those copies agreed with



Desiderius Erasmus

each other in their entirety. Publishers would no longer be dependent on the varying levels of scribal skill and copying speed. Books could be produced more quickly and efficiently—and more cheaply.

Scholars and publishers rushed to be the first to produce the volumes that would become the definitive work in this new era. Under the leadership of the Spanish cardinal Ximenes de Cisneros, work on a multivolume edition of the Bible in Hebrew, Aramaic, Latin, and Greek was undertaken in 1502. Spanning six separate volumes, the edition, which came to be known as the Complutensian Polyglot, was a huge undertaking. It took twelve years before one of the volumes in the series was finished and printed. It was not volume one that was printed first, however. It was volume five, which contained the New Testament in Greek, with a Greek glossary with Latin equivalents to help the reader. Although it was printed in 1514, a decision was made not to publish the volume until



Left: first page of Ximenes' Polyglot Bible. Right: inside Polyglot Bible, beginning of Matthew recto page (Left to right: Greek, Latin Vulgate, cross-references in the margin).

the entire work was completed and received the Pope's blessing. Unfortunately, it took three years to finish the remaining volumes, and three more years before it received Pope Leo X's official sanction. It was finally published in 1522.

Aware of the forthcoming but delayed publication of Ximenes' Polyglot Bible, Johann Froben, a well-known publisher in Basel, decided to capitalize on the opportunity by publishing an edition of the Greek NT sooner. He first discussed the possibility of the venture with Erasmus in August 1514, but apparently without success. It was not until the following year that Froben finally convinced Erasmus to tackle the project in April 1515—perhaps as result of promising to compensate Erasmus well for his services. If the venture was to be a success, time was of the essence. Working nearly day and night, Erasmus produced his edition of the NT within the span of a mere six months. While it was not the first NT printed in Greek, it won the more important prize when, on March 1, 1516, it became the first published Greek NT. By the time the Complutensian Polyglot Bible

was finally published and made available eight years later, Erasmus' Greek text, which was well-received and already available in a second edition, dominated the market. If Luther would have had to wait for the Polyglot Greek NT, we would not be celebrating the five-hundredth anniversary of the Reformation this year, but perhaps sometime around 2023—if at all.

Problems with Erasmus' Greek Text

As significant and influential as Erasmus' work was at that time, it was far from perfect. In fact, if the truth be told, it was filled with numerous mistakes and flaws.¹ The problems in the first edition were so extensive that even the conservative nineteenth-century textual scholar, Frederick H. A. Scrivener (1813–1891), went so far as to say that it was "the most faulty book" he had ever encountered.² Of course, many of the errors Scrivener lamented were simply the result of the frantic pace at which Erasmus worked in order to complete and publish his Greek text in just six months. While hundreds of the mistakes were the result of poor copyediting on the part of the printer, including the challenge

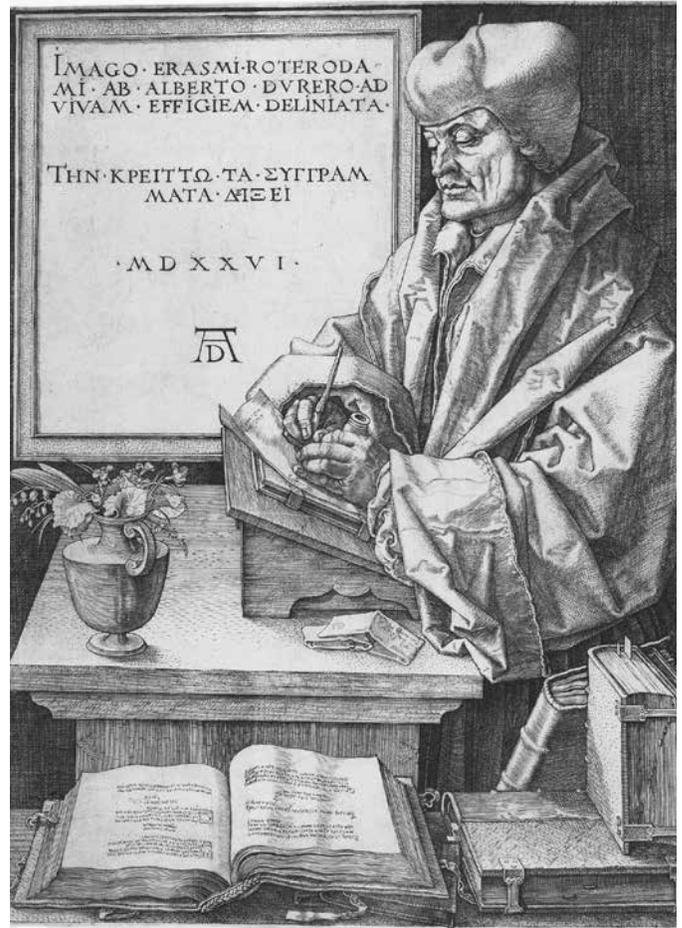
Scholars and publishers rushed to be the first to produce the volumes that would become the definitive work in this new era.

the typesetters faced in working directly off the edited Greek manuscripts themselves, Erasmus was also guilty of inaccurately transcribing a large number of Greek manuscripts himself.³ Commenting on the challenge he faced in producing roughly a printed sheet a day, Erasmus admitted to a friend, “The accession of labor, which I thought would be very light, I found in effect to be extremely heavy.... Some things I purposely passed over, and shut my eyes to many points upon which soon after publication I had a different opinion.”⁴

Compounding the issue even further—and ultimately the work’s undoing—was Erasmus’ reliance on only a handful of Greek manuscripts from the tenth to the twelfth centuries. Unbeknown to Erasmus at the time, these manuscripts would later turn out to be of inferior quality. He appears to have selected them based on the convenience of their accessibility rather than on the quality of their text. Of the already limited number of manuscripts available to him, Erasmus based his text primarily on two minuscule manuscripts from the twelfth century, known today as MS 2815 and, for Revelation, MS 2814. This turned out to be a serious problem since the one and only manuscript Erasmus had of Revelation was missing its final leaf—a leaf that contained the last six verses of the book. Not wanting to take the time to obtain another Greek manuscript, Erasmus decided to simply transcribe the missing verses from Latin into Greek—resulting in a form of Revelation that agrees with no extant manuscript today!

While Erasmus corrected most of the typographical mistakes in the second edition of his work, published in 1519, many of the errors inherent in his base Greek text remained. The eighteenth-century NT theologian and textual scholar, John Mill, calculated that the second edition of the text was changed in 400 places—and in his opinion, only 330 of them were for the better. Erasmus continued his attempt to improve the text over three more editions.

It was in his third edition, in 1522, that Erasmus made the unfortunate decision to give into pressure from church clerics who were upset that his Greek text did not include the popular Trinitarian statement found in the Latin Vulgate in 1 John 5:7–8 that states “the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth.” Known as the Johannine Comma (meaning a short clause), this reading is clearly not original. It does not appear in manuscripts of the



Albrecht Dürer, *Portrait of Erasmus*

Latin Vulgate before the ninth century, and it is found in only eight late-Greek manuscripts, four of which include it merely as a marginal reading.⁵

Erasmus made an additional ninety changes to his Greek text of Revelation in the fourth edition of his work, published in 1527. Surprisingly some of the erroneous readings he had inadvertently invented from translating Latin into Greek in his first edition were left unchanged! Outside of these changes to the Greek text, Erasmus made only ten other changes to the text. A fifth and final edition was published in 1535, just a year before his death. With mere four corrections made to his Greek text, this edition was nearly identical with his earlier edition.

Assuming Erasmus’ Greek Testament was firmly established, his text became the basis upon which later editions continued to be produced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. His text became so commonly accepted by scholars and readers of the Greek NT that Abraham and Bonaventure Elzevir refer to it in an edition they published in 1633 as “the text [textum] now received

[receptum] by all, in which we have given nothing changed or corrupted." It is from this description, originally written in Latin, that the Greek text published by Erasmus came to be known as the Textus Receptus, that is, "the text received by all."

In spite of this flattering terminology, there was a growing awareness that Erasmus' Greek text was not as well established as many had once thought. In his 1550 edition of the Greek NT, Stephens compared Erasmus' text with fourteen other Greek manuscripts and noted in the margins all the places where he discovered variant readings. The real challenge came in 1707 when John Mill published the results of his comparison of the Textus Receptus with 100 other Greek manuscripts from that same era. The results revealed over 1,000 differences. This news shocked the faith of many. Fearing that the trustworthiness of the Scriptures was itself under attack, a number of Christian apologists rose up to defend Erasmus' Greek text at all costs—an unfortunate decision which lives on in some church circles today. Lest one conclude that Mill's work was somehow unfairly biased against Erasmus, it is important to note that conservative textual scholars who favor the majority readings present in the later manuscripts over the much earlier copies, which are the basis of most modern Bibles, themselves note that there are over 1,800 places in which Erasmus' text differs from the majority reading of the manuscripts in his day.⁶

Despite the obvious shortcomings of Erasmus' Greek text, the spiritual darkness of the day was so dense that even a less than perfect NT still had a powerful influence—and it is an influence that we can and should be thankful for today. While Froben's interest in hurriedly publishing an edition of the Greek NT may have been primarily commercial, Erasmus had a much more worthy goal in mind. This can be seen in the words that appear in the preface of his work:

I totally disagree with those who are unwilling that the Holy Scriptures, trans-

lated into the common tongue, should be read by the unlearned. Christ desires His mysteries to be published abroad as widely as possible. I could wish that even all women should read the Gospel and St Paul's Epistles, and I would that they were translated into all the languages of all Christian people, that they might be read and known not merely by the Scots and the Irish but even by the Turks and the Saracens. I wish that the farm worker might sing parts of them at the plough, that the weaver might hum them at the shuttle, and that the traveler might beguile the weariness of the way by reciting them.⁷

With such a worthy goal in mind, we must not be too critical of the shortcomings of Erasmus' work. After all, Martin Luther was one of the types of individuals whom Erasmus hoped his Greek NT would touch. If Luther would have had to wait until 1520 for the Polyglot Greek NT, history would have certainly been very different.

In a sense we are also indebted to the limitations of Erasmus' Greek NT. Its shortcomings inadvertently led to the desire to produce an edition of the NT that was a more faithful witness of the original—in fact, even more than that, the desire to recover, as far as possible, the text of the original NT itself. This lofty goal led to the search for and discovery of older and better copies of the NT and gave birth to the modern NT discipline known as Textual Criticism and the edition of the Greek NT available to us today.

Problems Facing New Testament Textual Critics Today

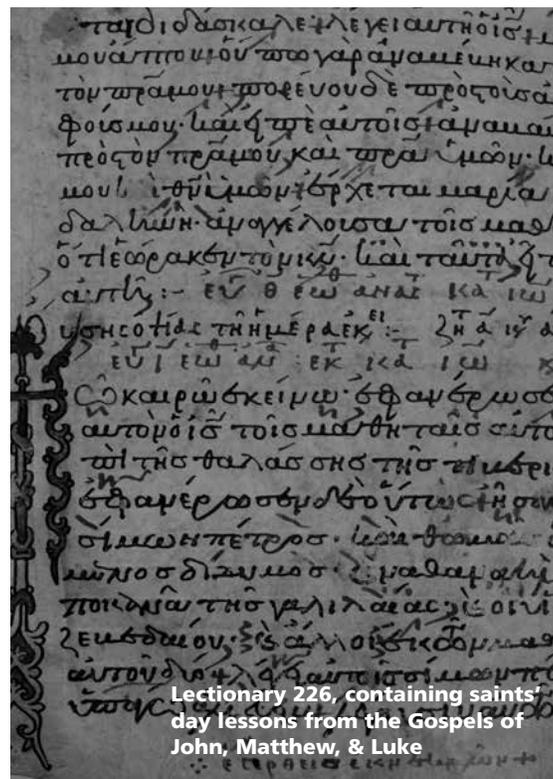
The fundamental challenge Erasmus faced in the publication of his Greek NT was the lack of sufficient Greek manuscripts upon which his text was based. That is not the problem that textual scholars face today. The difficulty today is just the opposite—we have far more copies

Fearing that the trustworthiness of the Scriptures was itself under attack, a number of Christian apologists rose up to defend Erasmus' Greek text at all costs.

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Greek Minuscule 447, Gospel of Matthew



Lectionary 226, containing saints' day lessons from the Gospels of John, Matthew, & Luke

of the NT than any scholar could ever hope to encompass. While Erasmus had a mere half dozen manuscripts of the NT, and those only covered portions of the NT, today there are over 6,000 copies of the NT in Greek alone. The number increases by an additional 2,400 if we include Greek Lectionaries—copies of liturgical readings in which various portions of the NT is cited.

Scholars have divided these primary Greek manuscripts into four basic categories: (1) Minuscules; (2) Lectionaries; (3) Majuscules; and (4) Papyri.

Minuscules

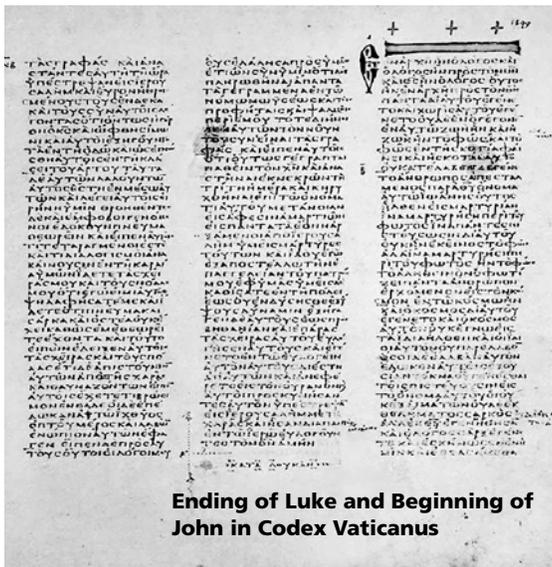
Minuscule manuscripts are copies of the NT written between the ninth and eighteenth centuries in a small cursive script that had arisen to facilitate the ease of writing. All of the manuscripts Erasmus consulted fall into this category. Since these manuscripts are more recent than the others they make up the largest portion of extant NT manuscripts, totalling 2,936 as of November 2017, including two not yet catalogued.⁸ A small number of these include copies of the entire NT, while most contain only por-

tions of it. The number of manuscripts in this category increases by a dozen or so every year.

The vast majority of these manuscripts represent a text that dates back to a form of the text that began to emerge in the fifth century. It is referred to as the Byzantine or the Majority text. Referring to it as the Majority text is somewhat of a misnomer, however, since this text does not appear in any Greek manuscript before the fourth century, and it only became the dominant form of the text around the ninth century. The Majority text appears to represent an attempt in the Church to produce a more standardized form of the text in light of the diversity of readings found in the early forms of the text that had not been as carefully copied as they were later, when professional scribes were used to perform the task.⁹

Lectionaries

The second category of manuscripts is the lectionaries. As the name implies, lectionaries are copies of the NT that were read as part of a liturgical worship service. Dating back as early as the fifth century, these manuscripts tend to be older than the minuscule manuscripts. Their value



Ending of Luke and Beginning of John in Codex Vaticanus

is also limited, however, by the fact that they do not contain continuous portions of the NT Scriptures. They merely contain a random selection of passages drawn together from various books within the NT. Today 2,460 lectionaries are extant—including sixteen not yet cataloged.

Majuscules

Majuscule manuscripts represent an older collection of Greek manuscripts that were copied in larger block letters. The majuscule script was the conventional way of writing in the earliest centuries of the common era up until around

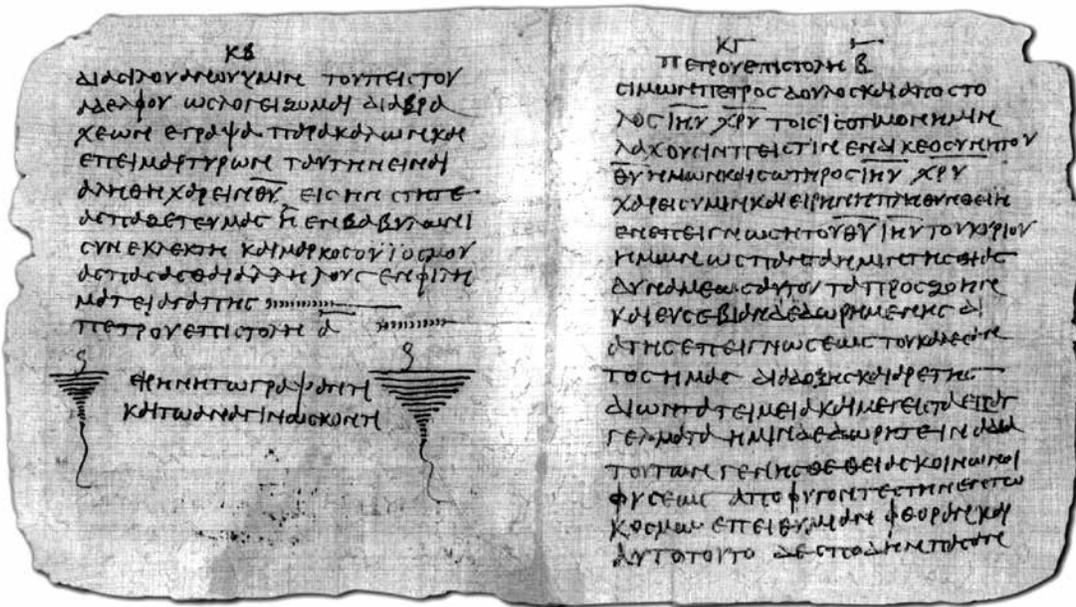
the tenth century. At the moment, there are only 323 of these NT manuscripts that are extant. The oldest and most celebrated of these manuscripts are known as Codex Vaticanus, since it was found in the archives of the Vatican library, and Codex Sinaiticus, which was discovered at the St. Katherin Monastery at the base of Mount Sinai in Egypt. These manuscripts appear to have been copied during the middle of the fourth century, and have led some to conclude they may have been part of—or at least like—the fifty copies of the scriptures Constantine commissioned to be produced for the new churches he proposed to construct in Constantinople around AD 331.¹⁰

Papyri

While the vast majority of the NT manuscripts are over a thousand years removed from the originals, the twentieth century witnessed the discovery in Egypt of a number of papyrus manuscripts that have narrowed the gap between the original autographs of the NT and their copies to only a couple hundred of years and, in some cases, even less than a hundred years.

The manuscript evidence for the NT radically changed in 1897 when two Oxford scholars,

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Papyrus 72, containing fragments of Jude, 1 Peter, and 2 Peter

Today there are a total of 133 papyrus manuscripts—though in many cases the fragments are no larger than the size of a credit card.



Majuscule 0177, Greek-Coptic manuscript containing text of Luke 1:59-73

Bernard Grenfeld and Arthur Hunt, stumbled upon a treasure trove of some forty thousand pieces of ancient documents written on papyrus at the site of an ancient Egyptian town called Oxyrhynchus.¹¹ Classical scholars by training, Grenfeld and Hunt had no real interest in finding ancient Biblical manuscripts. They had gone to Egypt in hopes of discovering copies of Greek classics that had disappeared over the centuries. Instead, they discovered all kinds of non-literary papyri (e.g., personal letters, tax receipts, bills of sale, divorce proceedings), as well as fragments of the oldest copy of the Gospel of Matthew, portions of the Gospel of Luke, John, the writings of Paul, and more. Today there are a total of 133 papyrus manuscripts—

though in many cases the fragments are no larger than the size of a credit card.

Before the discovery of these manuscripts, as noted earlier, the oldest evidence for the NT Scriptures dated to one or two manuscripts from the middle of the fourth century. Now we have sixty-two older manuscripts that scholars date to around the turn of the third/fourth centuries or earlier.¹² In fact, one of these manuscripts, referred to as Papyrus 52, contains five verses from John 18 and has been dated to about the year AD 125. Assuming John wrote his gospel around AD 85–90, the discovery of Papyrus 52 potentially narrows the gap between the original and the copies to less than fifty years! Discoveries of this nature are unheard of!

The discovery of these manuscripts has provided scholars with far more evidence for the text of the NT than Erasmus would have ever dreamed. As the number of ancient manuscripts continued to increase over the last several centuries and reached further and further back into the distant past, textual scholars could confidently boast that there was more evidence of the NT than any other ancient writing. They also became quite optimistic that the goal of reconstructing the definitive text of the original NT was easily within their grasp. As it turns out, however, they were too optimistic; the goal of reconstructing the original text of the NT ended up being more elusive than they imagined.

The problem is not that we do not have enough manuscripts. It is the inability to accurately number, evaluate, and classify the thousands of manuscripts that are available. There are simply too many documents to deal with and not enough information about their history. Complicating the situation even more is the simple fact that no two manuscripts of the NT agree with each other in their entirety. Every single manuscript needs to be evaluated individually and then compared to all the others—a project that is well beyond the scope of any one scholar's life and the accumulation of more data than any human could process.

The challenge of accessing the wealth of NT manuscripts and the differences between them has led some in the discipline to question not only whether the goal of recovering the original text of the NT is possible, but even to call into question the reliability of the NT itself. As Porter notes, "the impression sometimes given in discussions of the text of the New Testament is that the text itself is entirely fluid and unstable, and that it was subject to so much variation and change through especially the first two centuries that its very stability is threatened."¹³ This latter sentiment can be seen in the following statement in Bart Ehrman's popular work entitled, *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why*.

It is one thing to say that the originals were inspired, but the reality is that we don't have the originals... Moreover, the vast majority of Christians for the entire history of the church have not had access to the originals, making their inspiration something of a moot point. Not only do we not have the originals, we don't have the first copies of the originals. We don't even have copies of the copies of the originals, or copies of the copies of the copies of the originals. What we have are copies made later—much later. In most instances, they are copies made many *centuries* later. And these copies all differ from one another, in many thousands of places. ... these copies differ from one another in so many places that we don't even know how many differences there are... Most of these differences are completely immaterial and insignificant. A good portion of them simply show us that the scribes in antiquity could spell no better than most people can today... Even so, what is one to make of all these differences? If one wants to insist that God inspired the very words of scripture, what would be the point if we don't *have* the very words of scripture? In some places...we simply cannot be sure that we have reconstructed the original text accurately. It's a bit hard to know what the words of the Bible mean if we don't even know what the words are!¹⁴

While it is true that some manuscripts were copied more carefully than others, this does not mean that, due to scribal mistakes along the way, we are unable to have a reliable idea about the contents of a form of the text of the NT that is close to the original. A comparison of the established text of the two main text-types, the later Byzantine text and the earlier Alexandrian text, reveals that roughly 90 percent of the

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text points us in the same direction. We might be unsure about the inclusion of an article, conjunction, particle, tense of a verb, or even a word itself, but that does not undermine the message of the text itself—and in the end, that is what matters the most. The presence of these sorts of variants do not pose a major obstacle to claiming that the text of the NT is reliable.¹⁵

What about the remaining ten percent? There are a small number of passages in the NT where the manuscript evidence is divided between different readings and where some scholars are still divided on what should be the earliest form of the text. Some of these passages include the short or longer ending of the Gospel of Mark (Mark 16:8 or 9–20); the pericope of the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53–8:11); Jesus' bloody sweat (Luke 22:44); the angel who supposedly stirred the water in the pool of Bethesda (John 5:3b–4), to name a few of the more notable examples. While decisions about the best readings of these passages have already been incorporated into modern copies of the Bible, whether or not one agrees with those decisions, not a single one of them fundamentally undermines the cardinal teachings of the NT itself. As Porter notes,

Even when all of the possible passages [that] have been brought forward for discussion are taken into account...there remain many other passages that were not changed, corrupted, or otherwise altered. Rather than seeing major theological tendencies in the various textual changes to manuscripts, we should at best probably see theological fine tuning in a few noteworthy passages.¹⁶

Ellen White addressed this question over the possibility of the inclusion of mistakes or errors in the textual history of the Bible over a century ago. Her counsel then is just as relevant today:

I saw that God had especially guarded the Bible, yet when copies of it were

few, learned men had in some instances changed the words, thinking that they were making it more plain, when in reality they were mystifying that which was plain, by causing it to lean to their established views, which were governed by tradition. But I saw that the Word of God, as a whole, is a perfect chain, one portion linking into and explaining another. True seekers for truth need not err; for not only is the Word of God plain and simple in declaring the way of life, but the Holy Spirit is given as a guide in understanding the way to life therein revealed.¹⁷

Ellen White addressed the same issue a few years later in 1888, when she said,

Some look to us gravely and say, "Don't you think there might have been some mistake in the copyist or in the translators?" This is all probable, and the mind that is so narrow that it will hesitate and stumble over this possibility or probability would be just as ready to stumble over the mysteries of the Inspired Word, because their feeble minds cannot see through the purposes of God. Yes, they would just as easily stumble over plain facts that the common mind will accept, and discern the Divine, and to which God's utterance is plain and beautiful, full of marrow and fatness. All the mistakes will not cause trouble to one soul, or cause any feet to stumble, that would not manufacture difficulties from the plainest revealed truth.¹⁸

Conclusion

In comparison to the textual base upon which Erasmus based his Greek NT text, our knowledge of and access to extant NT manuscripts has improved significantly over the last 500 years. While we might wish that Erasmus had been more careful in the way he formulated his

NT, if he would have had access to all the texts available today, his work may never have been published. Yet in spite of all its limitations, on the whole his Greek NT provided a largely reliable witness to the sacred writings entrusted to the early church—a witness that gave birth to the Protestant Reformation and the rediscovery of the gospel. In this process, Erasmus may be likened to the numerous unnamed scribes who faithfully sought to transmit the NT Scriptures to the generations that would come after them, even though they themselves were not always as careful or accurate in the process as we would like. While mistakes were made in the process, those mistakes do not undermine the text itself. Although the work of NT Textual Criticism is far from over, we can be confident that the NT Scriptures are a faithful representation of the original authors. ■



Carl Cosaert is a professor of Biblical Studies at Walla Walla University. He has a passion for helping others understand the wonderful news of what God has done for the human race in Christ. A graduate from Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska, his desire to better understand Scripture has led him to complete two masters degrees and a doctorate in New Testament and Early Christianity at the University of North Carolina. He has been teaching in the School of Theology at Walla Walla University since 2005.

Footnotes:

1. For an informative account of the issues involved with Erasmus' Greek text of the New Testament, see Samuel P. Tregelles, *An Account of the Printed Text of the Greek New Testament* (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1854), 1–29.

2. F. H. A. Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, 4th ed., v. 2 (London, 1894), 185.

3. Bruce Metzger and Bart Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 145–48.

4. As quoted in Albert Rabil, *Erasmus and the New Testament: The Mind of a Christian Humanist* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1972), 91–92.

5. This addition included a further 118 changes from the second edition.

6. Daniel B. Wallace, "Majority Text Theory: History, Methods, and Critique," in Ehrman and Holmes, *Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis*, ed. Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes; SD 46 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 302, n28.

7. Cited in F. F. Bruce, *History of the Bible in English: From the Earliest*

Versions, 3rd ed. (Guildford: Lutterworth, 1979), 29.

8. A current list of NT manuscripts is accessible online at the Virtual New Testament Manuscript room operated by the Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung in Münster, Germany (<http://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/liste>) and at the Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts founded by Daniel Wallace (<http://www.csntm.org/Manuscript>).

9. See discussion in Stanley E. Porter, *How We Got the New Testament: Text, Transmission, Translation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 60–61.

10. See discussion in Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 15–16.

11. For an intriguing anecdotal guide to the life and letters of this ancient city, see Peter Parsons, *City of the Sharp-Nosed Fish: Greek Lives in Roman Egypt* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2007). For a more scholarly account of the discoveries made at Oxyrhynchus see, A. K. Bowman, et. al., *Oxyrhynchus: A City and Its Texts* (London, Egypt Exploration Society, 2007). A wealth of information concerning the discoveries made at Oxyrhynchus can also be found online at <http://www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk/POxy/> and <http://www.csad.ox.ac.uk/POxy/frame1.htm>.

12. Eldon Epp, "The Papyrus Manuscripts of the NT," 6. Epp, "NT Papyri and the Transmission of the NT," in *Oxyrhynchus: A City and Its Texts*, 315–331.

13. Porter, *How we Got the New Testament*, 24.

14. Bart D. Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005), 10–11.

15. See the helpful discussion in William Warren, "Who Changed the Text and Why? Probable, Possible, and Unlikely Explanations," in *The Reliability of the New Testament: Bart D. Ehrman and Daniel B. Wallace in Dialogue*, ed. Robert B. Stewart (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 105–123.

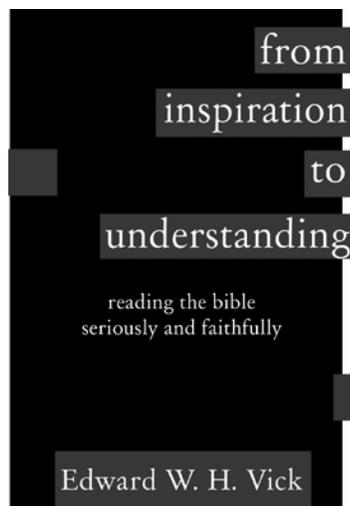
16. Porter, *How we Got the New Testament*, 25.

17. Ellen G. White, *Early Writings* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1882), 220–21.

18. Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1958), 16 [MS 16, 1888].

Integrity in Scriptural Interpretation:

An Interview with Edward W. H. Vick | BY CHARLES SCRIVEN



Within Adventism, no topic matters more than the one Edward W. H. Vick addressed in his 2011 book, From Inspiration to Understanding: Reading the Bible Seriously and Faithfully. Vick, who taught many years at Canadian Union College and now resides in Nottingham, England, earned degrees in philosophy and theology

from three British universities, including Oxford, and took his doctorate in systematic theology at Vanderbilt University in Tennessee. During the 1960s, he taught at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. He has written a dozen or so books on a wide range of theological topics. The following interview, conducted by Charles Scriven, chair of the Adventist Forum Board, addresses themes from the aforementioned reflection on the Christian doctrine of Scripture.

Scriven: The title of your book on Scripture reflects one of its main themes, namely, that the metaphor of “inspiration” is a misleading way to discuss the status and importance of the Bible. Why is that so?

Vick: Let me say, to begin, that I work from two guiding principles. I first ask what happens with the Bible in the Christian community. What does the church do with Scripture? What is its practice? This requires faithfully *reporting* on how, in worship, devotion, interpretation, and evaluation, the church actually approaches and treats Scripture. The second principle is that of *explaining* the church’s practice, or of putting the practice, so to speak, into theory. This means asking how the church itself has explained the status of Scripture, and seeing whether that

explanation is consistent with what it actually does.

We notice at once that a certain process of interpretation determines how the Bible is read. Certain principles of interpretation become standardized and form a tradition for understanding the Bible. That hermeneutic tradition declares that the Bible is to be taken as the guide for doctrine and for practice. One result is a manifest concern for the *authority* of Scripture.

Scriven: So now the question comes to mind: How did the Bible come to have the authority it has in the church?

Vick: Well, we must talk about the story of its composition, of its sources and how they were put together. How did what were at first oral traditions come to be put into writing, when, and why? How did some written documents, but not all that were available, become part of the sixty-six-book collection we think of as the biblical canon? Finally, why does the contemporary Christian accept the decision made long ago about which books should be left in or left out?

The traditional defense of the Bible’s authority brings me to the title of the book, *From Inspiration to Understanding*. Many have said, and still say, “The Bible has authority because it is inspired.” That is the basic issue the book examines.

Scriven: And this brings us back to my question: Why do you think the metaphor of “inspiration” is a misleading way to get at the status and importance of the Bible?

Vick: I said that we must first consider the practice of the church, then form a conclusion as to what it means. If the text of Scripture were lost or unread, it would have no authority. “Inspiration” is a relational term. Human agents are inspired. And if people say that a piece of writing is inspired, they mean that what someone wrote affects them in a certain way, and perhaps also that it had its origin in a

certain way. But that judgment is subjective. We cannot say that the document itself, apart from reader reaction to it, is “inspired.” The Bible has authority because it has influence, not just because someone pronounces it “inspired.”

Scriven: Again, how does the Bible come to have its authority, its influence in the life of the church?

Vick: To speak of *testimony* is to speak of evidence. The question then becomes, “What is it *evidence* for?” The testimony of the Scripture constitutes evidence for a series of events that happened in the past, long ago. Christian testimony bears witness to past events. Such may be established as historical. Scripture bears witness to *claims* to God’s revelation in the past, in the story of the Hebrews, in the story of Jesus and his *acceptance* as the Christ in the Christian experience of individual and community. These are religious claims. That such claims were made depends on the historical evidence.

Now there is a serious question to answer. This is about the *ancient context* and the framework of their thought and speaking. Scripture came into being within this framework that is very different from ours.

The Bible provides testimony to what God has done. Scripture bears witness to *claims* that God is revealed in the story of the Hebrews and of Jesus. Scripture documents the *acceptance*, by the first Christians, of Jesus as the Christ. Such testimony constitutes historical claims.

But Christians make another kind of claim beside the one that Scripture bears witness to the beliefs of ancient people. It is based on later and contemporary Christian experience. They recognize claims about the revelation of God in Jesus Christ as authentic because, in reading Scripture, they experience God’s revelation and find it a genuine reality just as the earliest Christians did. They *testify* to that present reality, knowing it is not amenable to proof.

Scriven: Yes! The revelation to which Scripture testifies cannot be demonstrated. So the Bible, the written text, in providing historical evidence for the claim, is *not identical*

with the divine revelation to which it bears witness.

Vick: But now there is a serious question to answer. This is about the *ancient context* and the framework of their thought and speaking. Scripture came into being within this framework, one that is very different from ours. We now move on the recognition that the *context* of all Scripture writing was an ancient understanding of the universe. The scriptural believers testified to their faith in a context very different from ours.

A theologian who was a chaplain in the army remarked that he constantly met soldiers who told him they could not have faith as they read Scripture. The reason they gave was that they could not identify with the ancient understanding of the universe that provided the context for the writings. His answer was that they did not have to. He proposed that they distinguish between the *framework*, or *worldview*, in which the message was placed, and the *essence* of the message itself. You can hold on to that essence without assuming the worldview, as the ancient writers did, that the earth is flat, is built on pillars, that Hades is beneath the flat earth, and that the sun moves across the arch of heaven.

Think of Joshua, who demanded that the sun stand still so he could continue battle. Astronomers today would have a lot to teach him. But again, what is the text of Scripture actually supposed to *do*? The point, Christians say, is that when the Bible is read it becomes the medium of a very particular event, or experience: the revelation of God through the influence of the risen Christ. And that is what matters. The words are inert and lifeless apart from the experience; they come alive when they mediate knowledge of a living reality.

Scriven: To exert influence, the Bible must be read. It must be interpreted. But the church and its members are human and prone to error, so what really assures the authenticity of the Christian message?

Vick: What are Christians doing when they read and interpret the text? We shall distinguish two approaches.

Readers can approach the Bible *devotionally*,

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Readers can approach the Bible devotionally, reading it for comfort, spiritual uplift, assurance, a relationship with Christ. They can also approach it with the purpose of establishing doctrine within a particular context, or church community.

reading it for comfort, spiritual uplift, assurance, a relationship with Christ. They can also approach it with the purpose of *establishing doctrine* within a particular context, or church community. As the community develops, new questions arise, new concepts emerge, and new decisions have to be made. The text itself is established by means of skillful scholarship. Once established it is “there,” the primary source. From such a text the church derives its doctrines. Then these doctrines come to be defined as orthodox, or what the church’s administration requires that you believe. And when questions arise, church leaders must defend their method of interpretation. They must explain how the doctrine was derived from the text.

To sum up:

1. The devotional approach to Scripture was made possible only when the text of Scripture was available for reading by ordinary believers. This was the heritage of the Reformation, the heritage of Luther and Tyndale, whose labors and sufferings, Tyndale’s to the death, produced readable translations in European languages and thus made possible the reading of Scripture by all, including the lowliest of people.
2. The study of the text with the purpose of establishing doctrine takes place within a particular context, a church community. As the history of the community develops, new questions arise, new concepts emerge, and new decisions have to be made. The doctrine that emerges defines the community to the extent that it continues to be affirmed and confessed. Here is an important point.

However, it came to be the text, as we now know it and interpret it, is a “fixed” text. We should continue to ask whether it is the best text. By saying this I mean that we have in front of us the translation of a much earlier text that has first been established, then given recognition, and later translated and is then “there” to be read, the

result of a very long and costly process.

Let us go back for a moment and make some historical comment. The prophetic hermeneutic was retained after the Disappointment. Some of the disappointed believers continued their firm belief in divine guidance, even if the result turned out to be unexpected and the crucial prediction in error. This raises a serious question. Does divine guidance lead into error? It is a question that may be raised about later developments. Does God guide you, when in his knowing, he leads you to a false conclusion? What sort question is this?

Even if questions were raised about the validity of the hermeneutic that produced conclusions and actions based on those conclusions, what became the “Advent Movement” decided that it must continue to employ the same method of interpretation that had produced the Great Disappointment. It had no desire and hence no incentive seriously to question the way they had been interpreting and using Scripture. Their belief was that God had been and was still guiding them in that use. Hence, it continued in its enthusiastic application. What was to be done with the 1844 date and with the notion associated with an immediate Advent?

Please note that I am describing church *practice*. From what the church does we can make firm propositions about the position and status of Scripture. And we don’t have to speak of “inspiration” in order to achieve this result.

Scriven: Yes, but there is the question of authenticity? How can we assure, or at least endorse, the integrity of effort toward the establishment of doctrine?

Vick: Doctrine is derived from particular passages of Scripture. First there is selection of texts considered relevant. Then, when one or more passages have been interpreted doctrinally, the astonishing claim is made that this is “what the Bible teaches.” Such claims are sometimes made even when different passages from other parts of Scripture present contrary positions.

Closed definitions of acceptable doctrine can restrict understanding by unduly confining the

message of Scripture. An example is when the primary interest confines attention to certain selected texts that Adventists have focused on in a few favorite apocalyptic passages.

Scriven: Say more about the Adventist tradition of prophetic interpretation.

Vick: Early Adventist hermeneutic retained certain key features of prophetic interpretation it inherited from the Millerite movement. Miller saw all Scripture as on a level. He drew “proof texts” from any part of it and placed them in his system. He saw himself as a man of the concordance. He even used the term “promiscuous” of his method.

Following the Great Disappointment, believers who had expected the end of the world and their translation into “heaven” had to come to terms with their situation. Could anything remain of their beliefs? One group seized upon a new speculation from Hiram Edson. According to him, the expected cleansing of the sanctuary was happening in heaven, not on earth as Miller had thought. That would take time. The destruction of the earth would come later, in its turn. The idea that Jesus was now a priest in a heavenly sanctuary meant that they had time to reassess and rebuild. Their hope in the Advent could be renewed. They were reassured.

These early Adventists had to admit either their dating error, or their hermeneutic error, or both. They admitted neither, but instead re-interpreted the reference of the key terms in their key text, Daniel 8:14. They thus decided to continue employing the same method of interpretation that had produced the Great Disappointment.

Scriven: Over time, how has all this affected the way Adventists deal with the Bible?

Vick: Here are some rules of interpretation that became accepted:

1. In developing doctrine from the text of Scripture, do not ask questions like the following: date of composition of the books, how the

final text was compiled into “books,” what the relation is between passages which are duplicated within the books, how different versions of events are found in the individual books, etc.

2. Treat all passages of Scripture as of equal value as sources of doctrine.
3. Accept the text as it stands, treating passages from any biblical book as equivalent in value to any other. Any chosen passage has an equal status with any other chosen passage, and all can be used as “proof texts.” There was no serious interest in the context.
4. Attempt, where appropriate, to co-ordinate the text of Scripture with future events and so make predictions about that future, even specifying dates or periods of time in relation to those future events. This became a dominating concern. Adventists have, uniquely, the God-given mission to foretell the future of the world and to characterize God’s coming judgment.

Questions are to be raised regarding each of these positions.

Interpretation That Produced This Result?

Here is a list of the dominating constituents that were elaborated in detail and at great length as Adventism developed, many of them accompanied with ingenious charts.

- Acceptance and retention of the primary significance of the date 1844.
- Year-for-a-day principle.
- The concept of sanctuary and replacement of its original designation. Sanctuary was the earth ripe for destruction. Now it is a literal place in the heavens, i.e. somewhere in space.
- Post-1844 “cleansing” (Daniel 8:14) = a process of mediation between Jesus, the Son, and God, the Father; judgment as “investigation.”
- The primary and preferential reference for understanding Christian salvation is made to feature detailed activities of the Hebrew tabernacle, and Temple rituals.

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The apocalyptic elements are important, but cannot be the single, or even the primary, model for understanding the divine revelation.

- Jesus, is both sacrifice and priest/mediator.
- God is Judge.
- Final destructive judgment, punishment of the wicked ending in their non-existence.
- Final salvation of the righteous to a heavenly existence.

The sanctuary idea occupied a great deal of interest and it became the central theme for extended development, becoming an elaborate as well as an essential doctrine. Inherited from William Miller, it was duly modified at the suggestion of Hiram Edson and has been modified again as time has passed. The context has changed quite radically and so has its meaning. For Miller it signified Advent, final judgment, and world destruction at a particular year, month, and day.

For the early Adventists, with the modified adjustment their situation demanded, the revised but retained idea of the sanctuary enabled them to make claims about atonement, mediation, judgment as inquiry, and judgment as execution. In the process of their interpretation Adventists insisted on:

1. Retaining the primary importance of the basic idea of sanctuary, while radically changing its significance.
2. Retaining the hermeneutic of prophetic interpretation.
3. Retaining the doctrine produced by that hermeneutic, even if the doctrine has been altered beyond the initial teaching. So now a quite different story is being told as the meaning of the text. It is obvious that they went to great lengths to maintain the rightness of the course their history was taking.

Scriven: In the course of all this, some themes, like that of the sanctuary, have taken on a shape quite different from what the original text suggests. What constructive suggestions would you make for us.

Vick:

1. Let's learn to show some humility in asserting our claims. That shows up in being willing to

discuss, and if need be, revise them.

2. Let's recognize the importance of considering talks and writing, by competent people, that develop ideas and methods that are new to us, or have even been overlooked or rejected. This will lead to honest and sincere discussion.
3. Let's realize that we cannot retain all the results of the conversations that took place during the immediate post-Disappointment period.
4. Let's allow that Scripture consists of very diverse contents. Each of these requires its appropriate understanding. The apocalyptic elements are important, but cannot be the single, or even the primary, model for understanding the divine revelation.
5. Where discernment is required (and when is it not?) let's be sure to appoint committee members who have some competence in their knowledge of Greek, in the history of the text, and, in the story of its acceptance as Scripture, some awareness of Hebrew and relevant historical contexts.
6. Give ample opportunity for sympathetic consideration of the suggestions forthcoming from dedicated, qualified, and competent writers and scholars, treating them not as subordinates to be dominated, but welcoming them as valued contributors to ongoing discussion. ■

Edward W. H. Vick was born in Sussex and grew up in Berkshire. He is a graduate of London (BD), Nottingham (BA Philosophy), Oxford (BLitt), and Vanderbilt (PhD) Universities. He is a teacher of wide experience, having taught for many years at Canadian Union College, Alberta (Canada) and at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Michigan (USA). Later he was Head of Religious Studies Department, Forest Fields College, Nottingham. He is now retired and teaches philosophy in local Adult Education programmes. He is married with a son and two daughters, and four grandchildren.

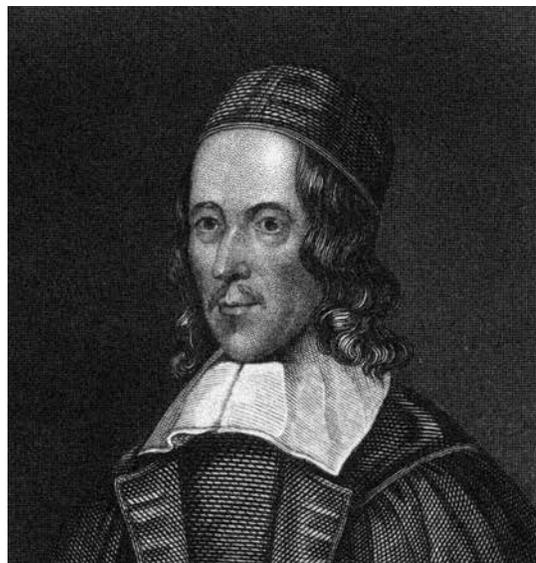
Charles Scriven chairs Adventist Forum.

“Thy Words Do Find Me Out”: George Herbert’s Devotional Reading of the Bible | BY BEVERLY BEEM

A previous version of this article was presented on October 22, 2011 at Walla Walla University for their day-long event, “Celebrating the King James Bible: The 400th Anniversary of the Translation That Changed the World (1611-2011).”

With the publication of the King James Version of the Bible in 1611, the possibility and even expectation that all believers could have access to a Bible, if not own one, and read it in their own language could not help but change the landscape of both literature and religious experience. It opened up a whole new world of literary allusions, forms, and themes that the reader could be expected to recognize and understand. And it opened up the reading of Scripture as a devotional practice available to all believers. Devotional reading of the Bible goes beyond furnishing the mind with information. It leads us to read the stories of the Bible as my story, its words as my words. It is a dialogue with God, an act of prayer, an act of faith, and an act of worship. Its purpose is not information, but transformation.

George Herbert’s collection of poetry, *The Temple*,¹ long recognized as a spiritual classic as well as a literary masterpiece, provides a case study in how devotional reading of the Bible can shape both a literary text and a devotional practice. Herbert, born in 1593, would have seen the King James Version published as the Authorized Version and widely used in corporate worship and private devotions. He was a younger son in a great and influential household, his mother a patron of the arts. His success as a scholar and orator at Cambridge gained him the attention of King James I and led him to serve in Parliament for a time, but, in 1630, when he was in his mid-thirties, he turned his back on public life, took Holy Orders in the Anglican Church, and spent the rest of his life as a country parson. He pastored a small church in Bemerton, near



George Herbert

Salisbury, until his death from consumption three years later. You might try to picture this aristocratic young man pastoring his small flock of farmers and laborers, helping to rebuild the church with his own funds, preaching, visiting his parishioners, walking the river path to Salisbury Cathedral to engage in the music, writing a classic book on pastoring called *The Country Parson*, setting a high standard indeed for the shepherds of God’s flocks—and writing poetry.

Shortly before his death, he entrusted a manuscript of his poems, which he described as “a picture of spiritual conflicts between God and my soul,” to his good friend, Nicholas Ferrar, with instructions to publish it if it might help “any dejected poor soul,” or else destroy it. The manuscript was a collection of 162 poems entitled *The Temple*. One can’t get beyond the title page without recognizing the importance of biblical allusion in this text. The primary meaning of “temple” in the Old Testament is the dwelling place of God, a holy place, a place of cleansing and atonement, but the meaning expands in later use to

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include the body of Christ as the new temple (John 2:19–21), the community of believers with Christ as the cornerstone; the individual believer as the temple of God (1 Cor 3:16–17); and the Christian church as a place of worship where one meets God. All of these meanings are operating in *The Temple*, and while his contemporaries were writing poetry distinguished by their wide-ranging allusions to classical literature and current events and discoveries in science and exploration, Herbert's poetry draws almost exclusively from the KJV of the Bible. His purpose for writing is devotional. His audience is God.²

The H. Scriptures, I and II

As readers move through *The Temple*, they will note poems on specific aspects of the Old Testament temple, such as the altar, the sacrifice, the priesthood, and Aaron. Or the imagery will move into the world of the Christian church with poems on the church porch, the entryway, the floor, the lock and key, the windows, and various aspects of the liturgy and the church calendar.

Of all the furnishings in the temple, the Holy Scriptures is key in the transformation of the soul that takes place there. In the paired poems on The Holy Scriptures he describes the Bible as a book of "infinite sweetness" and the reader a bee, sucking every letter for the honey; it is a balm that comforts grief, mollifies pain, and restores health; it is a mirror that mends the defects it reflects; it is a well that cleanses the one who drinks; it is heaven's ambassador defending the soul against the powers of death and hell; it is a forerunner or gift sent by heaven, a token of joys to come; heaven itself lies flat on the page, open to those who approach it on bended knee like a lover approaching his bride, or the soul approaching God.

With the Bible described in images of ultimate worth, power, and beauty, Herbert proceeds to explore how the mind of the reader can embrace this text. How does this book work that makes it different from all other books? Using the metaphor of a "book of star-

res" and the reader an astronomer finding the constellations, he says, "Oh that I knew how all thy lights combine, And the configurations of their glorie!" Each verse shines like a star in the night sky, alone and beautiful, but each star is part of a constellation of other stars that give it an even brighter light or richer meaning.

This verse marks that, and both do make
a motion

Unto a third, that ten leaves off doth lie.

"The H. Scriptures II," ll 6-7

Finding the stars of a constellation and seeing them in their new, more complex, context enriches the meaning that each single star can bear. He repeats the concept in a new metaphor of three herbs mixed together creating a new potion, more powerful than each alone. "Such are thy secrets," he says, but do they work? Is the constellation an accurate guide to the heavens? Is the potion a medicine for the soul? The proof is in the speaker's own life. "My life makes good" the text. My life proves the text, a living, speaking, acting commentary on the text. The purpose of the text is to guide the "Christians destinie" and the Christian's life "comments back on thee."

In the clearest description of what devotional reading of the Bible is all about, he says,

for in ev'ry thing

Thy words do finde me out, & parallels
bring,

And in another make me understood.

"The H. Scriptures II," ll. 9–11

Devotional readers see themselves in the text. This is God's word to them. God's word can find the reader out. And the reader finds healing and redemption. The proof is in the Christian life, as the believer participates in the gospel story. "Parallels bring," says Herbert. In understanding the stories of the Bible, readers understand their own story, and their place in the great story of redemption. In the devotional reading of the

Bible, readers come to understand themselves.

Herbert reflects the Reformation “insistence on the sufficiency and primacy of Scripture” and on the authority of believers to read and interpret Scripture with the help of the Holy Spirit. In the “living language” of the Bible, the reader meets God, as ancient Israel met him in the temple. The result of this encounter is transformation.³

In the 162 poems of *The Temple*, Herbert dramatizes this transformation. He creates a speaker, a Christian Everyman, and through him explores “the nature of divine and human intimacy.”⁴ The growth of love between God and the soul is essentially a narrative. Much like the psalmist, he laments and loves:

Bitter-sweet

Ah my deare angrie Lord,
Since thou dost love, yet strike;
Cast down, yet help afford;
Sure I will do the like.

I will complain, yet praise;
I will bewail, approve:
And all my sowre-sweet dayes
I will lament, and love.

Like Jacob, he wrestles with God. Like the Psalmist he complains to God and praises him at the same time, and, like the prophets, he reasons with him and calls for mercy and judgment. Aware both of his sinfulness and of Christ’s sacrifice, he catches fragmentary glimpses of Divine love and says longingly, “What wonders shall we feel, when we shall see Thy full-ey’d love” (“The Glance”).

Love III

The narrator in *The Temple* sees through a glass darkly but longs for that fuller glimpse that comes in the very last poem, “Love III,” where he comes face to face with “quick-ey’d Love”:

Love III

Love bade me welcome: yet my soul
drew back,

Guiltie of dust and sinne,
But quick-ey’d Love, observing me grow
slack

From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,
If I lack’d any thing.

A guest, I answer’d, worthy to be here:
Love said, You shall be he.
I the unkinde, ungratefull? Ah my deare,
I cannot look on thee.
Love took my hand, and smiling did re-
ply,
Who made the eyes but I?

Truth Lord, but I have marr’d them: let
my shame
Go where it doth deserve.
And know you not, says Love, who bore
the blame?
My deare, then I will serve.
You must sit down, says Love, and taste
my meat:
So I did sit and eat.

“Love III” is the climax of the dialogue between the soul and God. It dramatizes the relationship of divinity and humanity in the language familiar to readers of the Bible.⁵ The setting is a feast, prepared by Divine Love, Herbert’s characteristic name for God, clearly echoing the biblical identification of God as Love (1 John 4:8). The banquet setting grows from multiple connections with the Bible. “He brought me to the banqueting house,” says the Beloved in the Song of Solomon, “And his banner over me was love” (Song of Sol. 2:4). The Communion table, with Love as the Host, an unspoken pun, would have been a ready connection to Herbert’s readers, as well as the banquet parables of Jesus, and the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:6-9). The eschatological setting of Christ welcoming his people to the longest table is supported by the themes of the preceding four poems: “Death,” “Doomsday,” “Judgment,” and “Heaven,” though even now,

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through the Scriptures, the liturgy, and the sacraments, the soul can have intimations of this ultimate face-to-face encounter with Love. We have watched the dialogue, the back-and-forth play, between the speaker and God throughout the 162 poems of *The Temple*. This is the last one. How is it going to end? We watch the drama play out.

“Love bade me welcome.” Love initiates the conversation. And the dramatic situation is set. Love is the host who has spread out the banquet and now welcomes the guest. The narrative really should end right here. The host welcomes; the guest accepts. But, “yet,” the next line begins with an adversative, a contrary motion. Not for the first time, the speaker resists the divine movement on his soul. Here is where the drama begins. For some reason, after 161 poems, “my soul drew back, guiltie of dust and sinne.” A biblical allusion can be as simple as a single word, if that word rings in the memory and imagination, and “dust” is a frequent image in the King James Bible for the fallen human condition: “Shall the dust praise thee?” (Ps. 30:9); “He remembereth that we are dust” (Ps. 103:14); Abraham says in bargaining with God over Sodom, as if to excuse his audacity, “Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes” (Gen. 18:27). Can humanity sit at Love’s table in his mortal, fallen condition? Well, no. Something must happen, and we see, as the poem unfolds, that it already has.

“Quick-ey’d Love” pursues the reluctant guest. As the soul draws back, Love draws near, “sweetly questioning, / If I lack’d any thing.” “A guest, I answer’d, worthy to be here.” He doesn’t ask for much: just a whole new self. The King James Bible renders it as putting on the “new man” (Eph. 4:24) or “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature” (2 Cor. 5:17). “Love said, ‘You shall be he,’” the new man, the new creature you have asked to be.

That should finish the conversation, but the guest comes back with an objection. “I the unkinde, ungratefull? Ah my deare, / I cannot look on thee.” He addresses love with the intimacy of

someone who knows God well. He falls into a long line of prophets who respond to God’s call with a heart-felt, “But I can’t. Not me.” Moses argues extensively with God, “O my Lord, I am not eloquent,” but “I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue” (Ex. 4:10). Isaiah cries out “Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, . . . for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts” (Isa. 6:5). The speaker is in good company. And the dilemma is clear. God calls, but how can we look on the face of God. To look on God is death. “Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God” (Ex. 3:6). “Ah my deare, I cannot look on thee.” A lover longing to be loved speaks the language of dust and sin, aware that he dare not look on the face of Love.

But Love is up to the challenge. The face of Love he dare not see is smiling. God is holding his hand. “Love took my hand, and smiling did reply, / Who made the eyes but I?”

“Who hath made man’s mouth?” says God to Moses. “Have not I the Lord?” (Ex. 4:11). I made your eyes, says Love, they can look on me.

The guest comes back with more arguments. “Truth Lord, but I have marr’d them.” Going beyond the arguments of Moses and Isaiah, he now evokes the NT words of the Syro-Phoenician woman in a strange inversion of poetic images. The woman asks Jesus for healing for her daughter. Jesus refuses by saying it is not right to give the children’s bread to the dogs. The woman cannot be turned away and, matching Christ’s wit, she says in the language of the King James Bible, “Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table” (Matt. 15:27). The two stories are in direct opposition to each other. The woman will not be turned away by Christ who refuses to allow her a place at the table. Herbert’s speaker refuses to take his place at the table where Love freely invites him. These two strange stories are united by the words of opposition, “Truth Lord, but.” The woman’s argument earns her the praise of Jesus, who says, “O woman, great is thy faith.” The speaker shows no sign of faith.

**“Ah my
deare, I
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on thee.
Love took
my hand,
and smiling
did reply,
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but I?”**

Love, who has evoked his authority as the Creator, is rebuffed by the speaker's claim to the fall. Truth, Lord, you made the eyes, but "I have marred them." And then the despairing cry, "Let my shame go where it doth deserve." Where does guilt go when our sins are forgiven? Where does shame go when we are accepted and welcomed? The King James Version speaks of bottomless pits and the depths of the sea, but there is a bigger issue here. Now we are getting to the crux of the argument. We have been circling it, but we can't avoid it any longer.

"And know you not, says Love, who bore the blame?" "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" says Jesus to Nicodemus (John 3:10). Do you not know the most fundamental truth of Christianity: Love bore the blame. That is why God bears the name of Love. The guest of God is no longer the dust-covered sinner. He is a new creature. Because Love bore the blame, he is the guest, worthy to be here.

The guest has no argument against the mind-boggling reality of the cross. But he is not giving in yet. He will draw out his own trump card: "My deare, then I will serve." As the Father rushes the prodigal son to the banquet table, the son protests "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants" (Luke 15:18-19). The Father doesn't let him finish his speech. He isn't arguing the case. He is too busy calling the neighbors to the feast.

Love is through arguing, as well. Love's case is ultimately not based on reason. It is based on Love. Love's feast is not to be debated, or even understood. It is to be eaten. "O taste and see that the Lord is good," says the Psalmist (Ps. 34:8). "You must sit down, sayes Love, and taste my meat." Love speaks the invitation in words resonant with Isaiah's call to Israel, "Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem" (Isa. 52:2).⁶ Jesus depicts the heavenly feast God prepares for his servants, when "he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them"

(Luke 12:37).⁷ For the first time, the guest has no words. There is nothing more to be said. Love has the last word. In a grand understatement, typical of Herbert, the soul silently assents, "So, I did sit and eat."

This dialogue between God and the soul takes its imagery and themes from the Bible. Allusions, which tickle the memory and bring up a whiff of another story, another passage, bring us to a deeper understanding of the text. We can see how deeply present the language of the King James Version of the Bible was in the minds of the poet and his readers and how powerfully it can be used in a devotional reading where the words of Scripture are spoken as our words, where the stories of the Bible are retold as our story, my story. And in Herbert's new parable with old images, we, too, sit and eat. ■



Beverly Beem came to Walla Walla University in 1976 and declared it home. After graduating from Union College she received a MA from Andrews University and a PhD in Renaissance Literature from the University of Nebraska—Lincoln.

Footnotes:

1. F. E. Hutchinson, ed., *The Works of George Herbert* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941). This is the definitive edition of Herbert's works, though many others are available. All quotations from Herbert are from this edition.

2. Chana Bloch, *Spelling the Word: George Herbert and the Bible* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 116–127.

3. William G. Witt, "George Herbert's Approach to God: The Faith and Spirituality of a Country Priest," *Theology Today* 60, no. 2 (July 2003): accessed October 2, 2011, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/004057360306000206>.

4. Ibid.

5. Bloch, *Spelling the Word*, 98–112.

6. Chana Bloch, "George Herbert and the Bible: A Reading of 'Love (III),' " *English Literary Renaissance* 8, no. 3 (Autumn 1978): 336.

7. Ibid.

In a grand understatement, typical of Herbert, the soul silently assents, "So, I did sit and eat."

Art and Morals: *Two Aspects of the Same Struggle*

| BY LILLIAN ROSA CORREA



Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Christ Blessing the Children*, 1537

The title of my essay is borrowed from a line in Janet Soskice's book, *The Kindness of God: Metaphor, Gender, and Religious Language*.¹ Soskice is a feminist theologian and professor at the University of Cambridge. I first learned of her at a symposium I attended, entitled "Women and Religion," in which she presented a paper on the depiction of women in religious art from the Middle Ages to the present. In her book, Soskice quotes Iris Murdoch: "Virtue is *au fond* the same in the artist as in the good man in that it is a selfless attention to nature."² Hence, Love and Attention, according to Soskice, become the meeting place for the experience of art, or beauty, as with morality, assuming the ethical as central to that meeting. Soskice goes on to say that "to be fully human and moral is to respond to that which demands or compels our response—the other attended to with love."³ She again cites Murdoch in elaborating on this particular point of response: "I am look-

ing out of my window in an anxious and resentful state of mind ... suddenly I observe a hovering kestrel. In a moment everything is altered. The brooding self with its hurt vanity has disappeared. There is now nothing but kestrel."⁴

The above descriptions of the philosophical and emotional experiences obtained via the observance of beauty in art as with ethics, morality, and spirituality, came together for me in my recent encounter with a painting by Lucas Cranach the Elder, a fifteenth-century painter, and close friend of Martin Luther. The painting is entitled *Christ Blessing the Children*, and I was immediately drawn to this particular rendition. Cranach's version distinguishes itself from most others in that it is the women and children that dominate the painting, in both number and in deportment. It is not merely the presence of women, however, as other artists also include them. Rather, it is the peculiarities in the common features that make Cranach's version exceptional. He depicts a less-than-tidy



Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Christ Blessing the Children*, (alternate version)

IMAGE SOURCE: THE PAINTINGS OF LUCAS CRANACH, CORNELL UNIVERSITY PRESS

scenario of the women crowding around Jesus in such close proximity that they allow no room or easy access by anyone else. Even Jesus barely has any elbow room. You can almost envision the pushing and shoving that occurred as these mothers rush towards Jesus to ensure a blessing for their treasures. The woman to the right of Jesus appears to have shoved the baby in His face, and the ones to his left and behind are allowing their babies to grab hold of His tunic as if attempting to climb on His back. As for the woman on the lower right, she stops to breastfeed because, after all, her baby is hungry, and feeding time trumps all else. Meanwhile, the woman in red appears to be crouching to pick up her toddler and bring her to the face of Jesus while the window of opportunity is still wide open. What an image of eagerness and resolve is portrayed in these women, for whom their children's blessing is of utmost importance from the One in whose image they are made.

And then there are the men! Six of them painted together so tightly that one would be remiss to not feel the sudden and abrupt push that forces them out and behind

the inner circle. The one in green appears to barely have had the opportunity to turn around. Their expressions of disapproval at the audacity of these women is by no means understated. Their gazes are sharp, their brows frown, and their sights are fixed directly on the women.

The story of Jesus blessing the children is found in three of the four gospels, namely, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. One noteworthy detail in this thrice-identical retelling is the unidentified figures carrying the babies and accompanying the children. These are referred to in all three gospels simply as "they," "them," and "those," pronouns that preserve ambiguity as to who the individuals were. As is often the case with the androcentric focus so prevalent in the Bible, the wording of this story presupposes an absence of women via the nebulous use of pronouns. Luke recounts the disciples sternly ordering *them* not to do this, Mark recounts the disciples speaking sternly to *them*, and Matthew relays the disciples speaking sternly to *those* who brought them.⁵ It would be hard to overlook the striking similarities to the observations made today regarding the number of times women are interrupted by men in meetings!

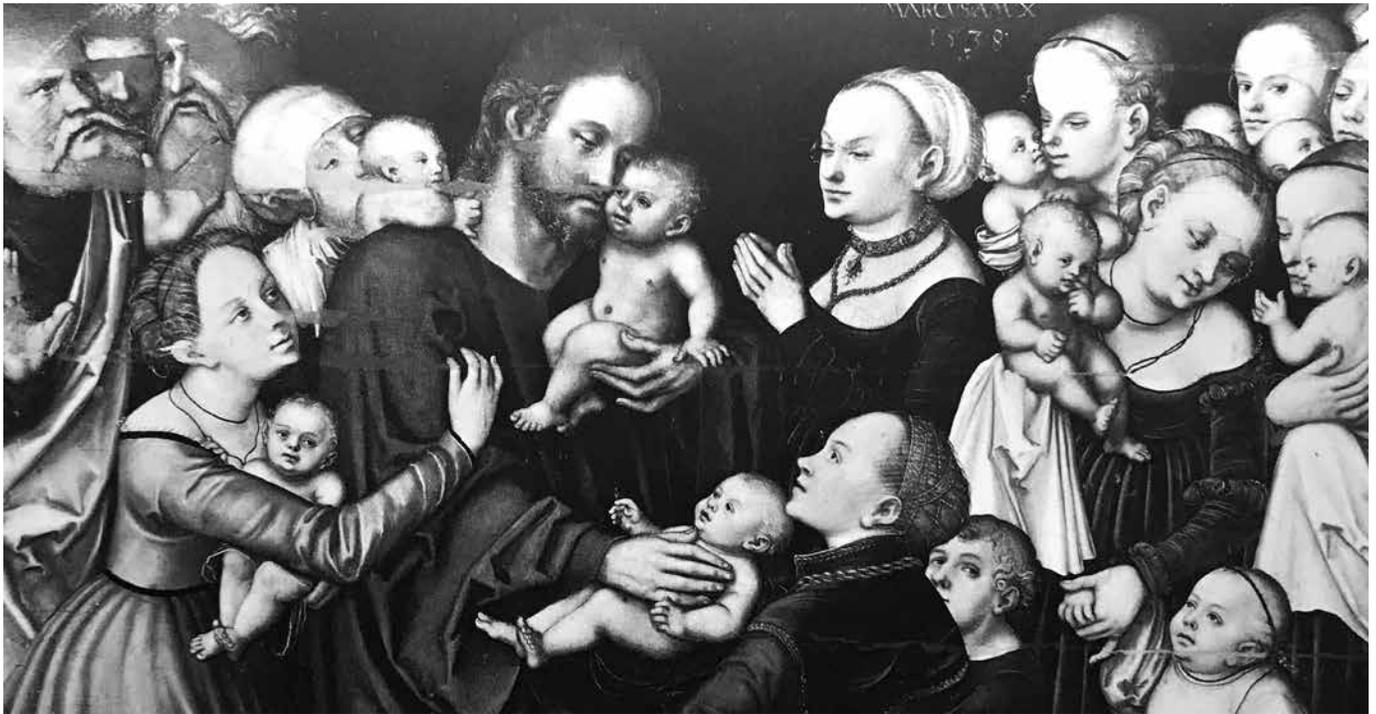


IMAGE SOURCE: THE PAINTINGS OF LUCAS CRANACH, CORNELL UNIVERSITY PRESS

Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Christ Blessing the Children*, (alternate version)

In stark contrast to the men, however, Jesus and the women share similar facial expressions: relaxed brows and mouths, and ever-so-gentle smiles emitted from the corners of their eyes that appear to reaffirm a kinship familiarity that needs no formal introductions, much less apologies. Interestingly, Cranach paints nothing else: no background scenery, no crowds, no rolling hills, no cottony clouds hanging in a heavenly blue sky, nothing! We are forced to gaze upon the characters, and we are forced to look into their eyes. By eliminating the distracting extras, our attention is turned towards an interaction more than an event.

As I gaze upon Cranach's rendition of Jesus blessing the children (attention), and as I gaze upon the exchange of love from the eyes of this particular Jesus and these particular mothers (love), I am compelled to respond to the most powerful reaffirmation of my womanhood in God's eyes, especially in these anxiety-ridden, #metoo times. Cranach's rendition of Jesus blessing the children serves as a powerful reminder of the tangible distortion of reality in excluding the presence (or power) of women in scripture, as in real life. If art and morals share the same struggle, as Soskice writes, and if love and attention are the necessary applications to that struggle, then Cranach's rendition compels us to address the disparities between a Jesus who deliberately directed His love and

attention to women by bringing them to the forefront of His mission and outreach, and the androcentric efforts that relegate them to the shadows. If one picture is worth a thousand words, this painting rewrites the gospel narrative. Whether Cranach intended to put forth this message or not is not documented, but the power of art can speak to the longings of our hearts in ways that render words impotent. ■

Lillian Rosa Correa is a native New Yorker living in Oslo, Norway, with her husband Tito and two grown sons. She is the co-founder and director of Comenius Education Services. She holds an MPhil in Religion, Society, and Global Issues, and is currently pursuing graduate studies in the field of Religion and Women. Her passions are her family, her Sabbath School class, religion, women's issues, and art.

Footnotes:

1. Janet Martin Soskice, *The Kindness of God: Metaphor, Gender, and Religious Language* (Oxford University Press: New York, NY, 2007), Chapter 1, "Love and Attention." (kindle version).
2. Iris Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, (London: Routledge Classics, 2001), 41, 55 (as cited in Soskice, *The Kindness of God*).
3. Soskice, *The Kindness of God*, Chapter 1.
4. Murdoch, *Sovereignty of Good*, 84.
5. Luke 18:15; Mark 10:13; Matthew 19:13, NRSV.

Named and Known, Known and Loved: Unintended Consequences, Human Accountability, and Being Loved | BY MICHAEL PEARSON

Sermon at ASRS meetings, Boston, 18 November 2017

This year, 2017, which is now slipping from our grasp, has been a year of anniversaries, celebrations, and simple commemorations of events which it would be inappropriate to celebrate.

In the UK, it is fifty years since abortion was first legalized (October 27, 1967), under certain particular circumstances. But the law was loosely worded, liberally interpreted, and the consequence has been that the numbers of abortions carried out are vastly greater than the architect of the legislation, a devout Christian, intended. There have been serious unintended moral consequences.

On November 2, 1917, the British Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour, made a public declaration promising mu-

tually exclusive outcomes to two populations. The Balfour Declaration effectively sowed the seeds of today's Israel-Palestine conflict. The unintended tragic consequences are still very much with us.

Martin Luther

More significantly perhaps for us at this time is the five-hundredth anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, specifically symbolized by Luther publishing his 95 Theses on October 31, 1517. In that year, Martin Luther thought, said, and did things in Wittenberg which had consequences he did not intend.

The Catholic dissident did not intend to cause a convulsion sufficient to destabilize Rome, or generate a so-called Protestantism, whose echoes ring loud down the centuries, even in our own lives.

He did not intend to create a church specifically named after him which today numbers 80 million adherents world-wide.

He did not intend to modernize and unify a language which hitherto had been a mosaic of dialects, and encourage mass literacy.

He did not intend to set in train a sequence of violent events which would leave hundreds of peasants dead, victims of civil conflict.

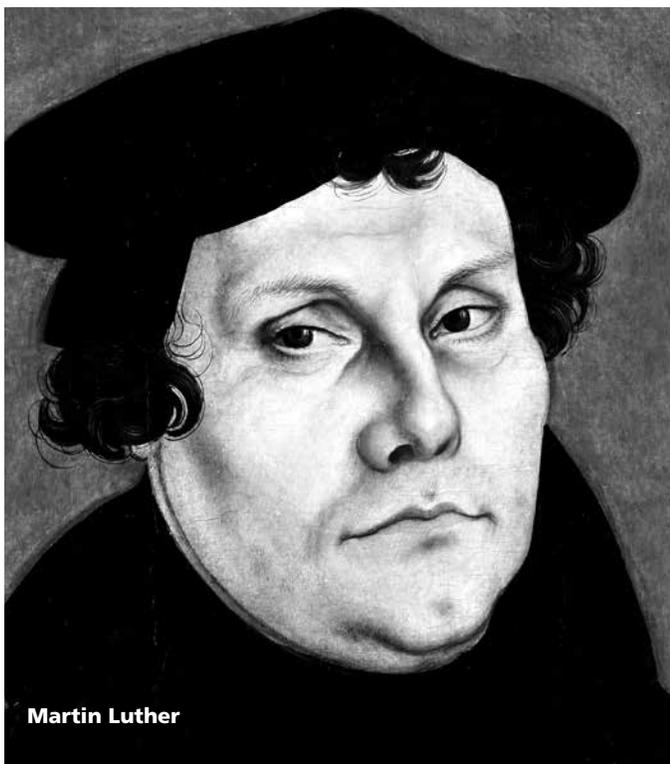
He did not intend to foster the idea that we are individuals before we are members of society.

He did not intend to act as midwife to modern Germany or to the idea of the nation state.

He did not intend to contribute to long conflict in Europe well beyond German borders.

He did not of course intend, could not possibly have anticipated, that his published views on the Jewish people should make him a poster-boy of latter-day fascism.

Luther's life offers spectacular examples of the law of unintended consequences.



Martin Luther

IMAGE SOURCE: PAINTING OF MARTIN LUTHER BY LUCAS CRANACH, 1528, [HTTPS://WWW.UCC.ORG/BEYOND-TODAY/BEYOND-TODAY/MAGAZINE/MARTIN-LUTHER-THE-UNFINISHED-REFORMATION](https://www.ucc.org/beyond-today/beyond-today/magazine/martin-luther-the-unfinished-reformation)



Devastation of WWI



Brexit protest

Many of the most important consequences of Brexit are likely to be quite unintended by those who voted and campaigned for it.

World War I

Along with Reformation celebrations, we also are commemorating, perhaps more in Europe, the various centenaries of World War I. The year 1917 was one of hellish carnage in Flanders, at Passchendaele, at Ypres, in which multitudes of men on both sides died in a very small geographical area, in a very short period of time, to very little effect.

Three years before, in Sarajevo, June 28, 1914, the driver of the car of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria did not intend to take a disastrous wrong turn which would present the assassin Gavrilo Princip with the perfect opportunity to do his murderous work, and so create for others a pretext for declaring war. The chauffeur did not intend to fracture Europe. He did not intend to unleash all manner of geo-political consequences in World War I, whose deep awfulness no-one could ever have imagined: consequences which continue to reverberate today.

It is the law of unintended consequences.

On April 6, 1917, President Woodrow Wilson signed a declaration of war by the United

States on Germany. His message was cheered by Congress: "The world must be made safe for democracy," he proclaimed, as so many have done. He went back to the White House and wept. He said, "My message was one of death for young men. How odd it seems to applaud that." It seems that he *did* understand, albeit only dimly, the awful possibilities of the law of unintended consequences.

The First World War brought important unplanned social change too. For example, many armies involved in the conflict issued condoms, prophylactics against the spread of sexually-transmitted diseases as soldiers had brief affairs with local girls. Disease was weakening the military machine. Theodore Roosevelt considered the issuing of condoms "race suicide." Many moralists also condemned it. But condoms were widely used in World War I, and returning soldiers were not easily going to surrender this newly-found enhancer of sexual freedom. World War I clearly hastened the use of condoms as the primary birth control method among respectable families, for good and ill. Many churches overcame their scruples within

a decade or two. And later came other contraceptives. Their availability changed our expectations, changed our lives completely.

How odd that the obscenities of war could facilitate the tenderness of intimacy. It is the law of unintended consequences.

Brexit

And so, to the present day...

April 2017 will be remembered as the time when the United Kingdom began the process of exiting the European Union. UK Prime Minister, Mrs Theresa May, pressed the “trigger” for Article 50 to signal the beginning of the two-year transition period.

Former Prime Minister David Cameron had not intended that the referendum should lead to this—quite the opposite. He had wanted to unify his party and cement links with the EU. He achieved precisely the opposite. Prime Minister Theresa May did not intend to lose the majority she needs for effective Brexit negotiations in a general election.

Most of those who voted for Brexit do not intend to break up the United Kingdom. They did not vote for economic decline in their country. Most did not intend to make EU nationals feel unwelcome on British streets. They did not intend to leave the public health service seriously understaffed. But many of the most important consequences of Brexit are likely to be quite unintended by those who voted and campaigned for it. It will be painful for us and will have consequences way beyond our own shores.

It is the law of unintended consequences.

Our Church

And so, to our own church...

When Adventists first formulated the doctrine of the millennium, 1,000 years *after* the return of Christ, when peace would reign, and all social injustices would be resolved, they surely did not intend that generations of Adventists following them would largely ignore the need to fight for the common good *now*. They simply wished not to dilute the evange-

listic imperative of the church. They did not intend that we should for so long show so little interest in social justice, human trafficking, unemployment, poverty, debt, housing, environment, prison reform—any issues which involve civic engagement.

It is the law of unintended consequences.

In the year 2017, in the Adventist Church, various official actions have been taken by leaders, no doubt sincere in their intentions, to promote “unity” in the church. Women’s ordination has been the presenting issue but, of course, underlying this are the foundational issues of power, identity, authority, hermeneutics, unity, belonging, and much more. Those who fear that the drive for unity is really a demand for uniformity and central control, respond, and will continue to respond, by writing, meeting, leaving, and the various other forms which weeping can take. At present, the outcomes are quite impossible to predict. But one thing is certain. Some of the most important consequences of this struggle for the Adventist church, our church, our home, will be quite unintended, and inevitably rather painful.

It is the law of unintended consequences.

Newbold College

I often meet former students from my institution, Newbold College. They like to reminisce, they enjoy their memories. But the things that they remember are not always the things I intended they should remember, according to the objectives listed in my course outlines. Our time together in the classroom produced consequences for their learning, even for their lives, which I had neither intended nor anticipated. Some good, some not so.

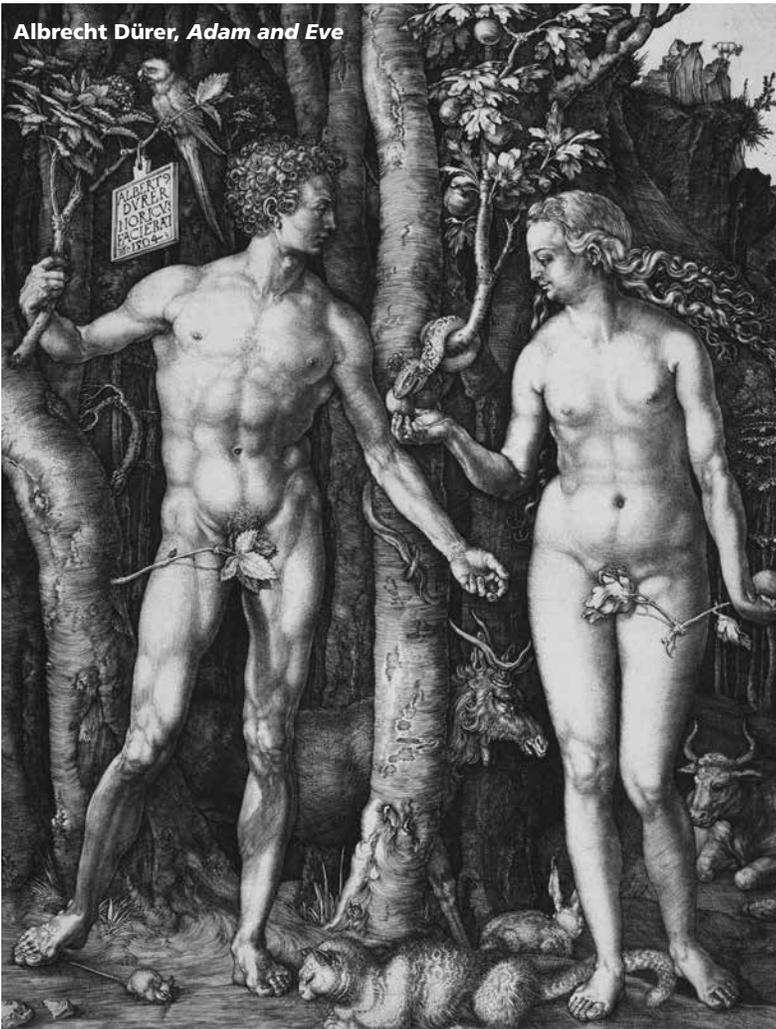
It is the law of unintended consequences.

Unintended Consequences

Unintended consequences are unanticipated outcomes of deliberate acts. The term “the law of unintended consequences” was popularized by American sociologist, Robert Merton, in the 1930s, though the idea can be traced back at

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Albrecht Dürer, *Adam and Eve*



**In Genesis 3,
God said to
Adam, “eat ...
and you will
surely die.” The
serpent said to
Eve, “eat and
you will have
opened eyes.”**

least to Enlightenment thinkers like John Locke.

Of “Intention,” Immanuel Kant said that moral value can only be established by reference to the intention of the person acting. And many philosophers have wrestled with the idea before and after Kant.

It is partly the legacy of Luther that we individuals have a newly-affirmed freedom to make choices and to shoulder responsibilities, to be accountable before God and our fellow human beings.

This freedom raises some impossibly difficult questions. Unintended consequences, it seems, are as old as humanity itself.

The Bible

To understand consequences and intention we can go all the way back to Eden itself. In Genesis 3, God said to Adam, “eat ...and you

will surely die.” The serpent said to Eve, “eat and you will have opened eyes.” Consequences, serious consequences. What did Adam intend? How should he be judged? How could he give any meaning to the word “die”? Was the fall an unintended consequence of creation? Was Adam’s use of the gift of choice an inevitable consequence of his condition? What did God intend? How can God not intend anything that comes about as a result of the gift of choice?

Religion Teachers

Those of us whose business is “Religious Studies” face all manner of unfathomable questions whose core is right here, about our own agency and responsibility for our acts, for ourselves, and about God’s agency—what kind of God is this whom we worship? I know of few more essential questions than these.

But I find so often that in response to such questions, in the end I have to say: “I don’t know.” If said on occasion, this may be a mark of humility in a teacher; if said too often, it may be seen as a mark of ignorance and incompetence. We are paid to know.

I sometimes feel at this point that I have hit a rational brick wall.

How to resolve questions about my intentions, God’s intentions, consequences both unforeseen and unintended, both in my own biography and in salvation history?

A clue comes from an unlikely source. On October 31, 2017, the editorial in the left-leaning British newspaper, *The Guardian*, said,

...one of the things which the Reformation makes clear is that progress does not proceed by rational means... [T]he actions of the reformers and their enemies were determined by their theological beliefs...about the ultimate purpose and goods of human life. They demand commitment... We may shrink from the dangers of such commitment, but we will accomplish very little without its power.

IMAGE SOURCE: [HTTPS://WWW.METMUSEUM.ORG/ART/COLLECTION/SEARCH/33622](https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/33622)

Caravaggio, *The Supper at Emmaus*

The Emmaus Road

So, I turn away from any theological manoeuvres at this point, to get God or ourselves off the hook. Instead, I go for help to a story—the story of the disappointed pair of followers of Jesus on the Emmaus road.

They also had hit a rational brick wall, the brick wall of Golgotha every bit as impenetrable as today's wall in Jerusalem. The place of the skull was not the intended destination of the disciples' Galilean and Judean travels.

The two disconsolate figures were frantically re-running the deadly scenarios in their heads. They were devastated. Trying to make some sense of it all. It was not supposed to end like this. They felt now that they knew precisely nothing. "We had hoped that he was the one... but..." And the question of the stranger Jesus, apparently trying to make sense of their sadness, was divinely absurd: "What things?" Their response: "are you the only one in Jerusalem who does not *know*...?" They did not intend to ask one of the most supremely absurd questions in human history. They certainly did not intend to offer the profoundest of insults.

So, he starts to teach them in such a way that the cold corpse of their faith begins to warm. Something stirs.

And then, bizarrely, when they reach Emmaus He makes as if to go on, just as He had once on the Sea of

Galilee. Absence had become presence and now presence threatens to become absence once again. What if they had allowed Him to walk away from Emmaus? What would the consequences of that have been? But no, they urge him to stay...stay... which is sometimes the only prayer that I can offer. "Please stay!" What an extraordinary moment of freedom conferred by the Christ!

And so, it is in the simplest everyday gesture of welcome—the offering of a crust of bread—that they know! Know that it is Him. They know that they are loved. Loved beyond any shadow of doubt. He cares enough to return, to eat.

The Italian master, Caravaggio, depicts the scene in his painting *The Supper at Emmaus*. As Jesus raises His hand in blessing, the bowl of fruit on the edge of the table threatens to fall...into the lap of the viewer. It is, for all concerned, the tipping point. There will be consequences.

And then bizarrely, Jesus disappears suddenly. Are they loved still as Presence becomes absence once again? But it does not matter now because, somehow, they know beyond fear of contradiction that they are loved. Now they will have to revisit their understanding of coherence, of logic, of consequences. They saw Him executed...but here He is. They will have to interrogate their reliance on conventional rationality. They will have to return to the

Joseph von Führich,
Road to Emmaus



**Suffice it
to say that
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questions of how they know things to be true and what things they know to be true.

Claiming to Know

So, what can we purveyors of knowledge and wisdom claim to know?

I speak for myself. You may identify with what I say or not. What can I know in my deepest heart? I repeat, I answer the question for myself only.

1. I believe that, yes, I can sometimes be held accountable for those choices whose consequences I did not anticipate or intend. The child's final appeal to a parent is often, "I did not mean to." It is not enough. My answer would feature the expressions "it depends on..." and "might reasonably have been expected to know..." This matter raises important and complex questions but this is not the right place to address them. Suffice it to say that yes, we are responsible for some outcomes of our deliberate action that we did not intend.
2. But I also know this: I cannot allow myself to be paralyzed by fear of unintended con-

sequences. I cannot live by fear. Jesus is very clear about that. I wish my Church was as clear. As the Irish political thinker, Edmund Burke, said, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." Doing nothing may also have unintended consequences and may be a worse option than acting. As William James, a famous former resident of this city, once said:

In all important transactions of life, we have to take a leap in the dark... We stand on a mountain pass in the midst of whirling snow... If we stand still we shall be frozen to death. If we take the wrong road we shall be dashed to pieces... What must we do? "Be strong and of good courage." Act for the best, and take what comes... if death ends all, we cannot meet death better.

3. I must seek to live always intending the good. I must live with spiritual resilience in a world where consequences seem increasingly difficult to predict both personally and in the wider world. Afterwards, I just have to live with the consequences of my choices, intended or otherwise. But I must intend the good.
4. I must acknowledge that I live in a world which shows a certain randomness, where it is often not easy to see God's hand on the levers of control. This randomness is another side of the mystery of God. I must live, and help my students learn to live, with a measure of uncertainty, and with that twin of faith which is called doubt.
5. I must pray that God will be *with* me. Emmanuel, God with us. I must pray for God's presence but sometimes have to face His apparent absence. Just like Cleopas in the Emmaus story. For Jesus sometimes appears when you least expect Him and disappears when you most need Him. Or so it seems.
6. I must live freely choosing among options and readily embracing responsibilities, even those

which are brought by consequences which I did not intend, and would not have wanted.

Knowing Ourselves Loved by God

7. Most importantly—and here we come to the heart of the matter—I, we, have to know deep inside ourselves that we are loved by God. As did Cleopas. We must *allow* ourselves to be loved by God. It sounds very simple. But there may be many barriers to this in our own biography. For example, there are damaging relationships, relationships which might have served as the anteroom of intimacy with God but did not. Some of these barriers may be painful. It may take a long time. We must be friends of time. It is one thing to affirm that “God so loved the world...” but it is quite another to say, “I know myself loved by God.”

Yes, I can say all the right words—I have produced the right verbal formulae myself many times. I have sung karaoke carols to a kitsch Christ and even maybe meant them in some measure. I can affirm the doctrines of salvation, justification, sanctification—Luther’s many concerns—but to know myself loved by God, that is a different matter.

As we grow slowly into that interior recognition that we are indeed loved by God, we will then slowly shed burdens of unnecessary guilt, of wearying obligation, of debilitating shame under which we are prone to suffer. So much use of the tyrannical phrase I should have...! Guilt, shame, exaggerated expectations of self and others produce many damaging unintended emotional and relational consequences.

We will manage, with love, the constant, daily felt need to justify, explain ourselves, to others, to God, to ourselves. We will avoid the need to compare ourselves in value with others. Less hounded by peer review! Then, maybe, the unintended harmful consequences will be fewer.

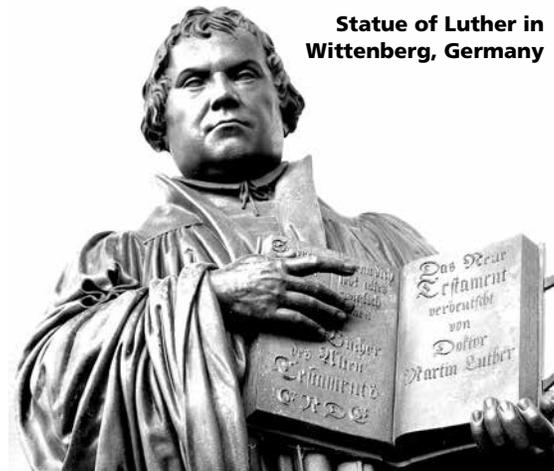
To know ourselves truly loved by God.

I find it is not easy. I suspect I am not alone even among teachers of “religious studies.” Maybe it is “the work of a lifetime,” to borrow a phrase.

Jeanette Winterson, a contemporary English writer, spoke these words over her father’s coffin: “The things I regret in my life are not errors of judgement but failures of feeling.”

Meister Eckhart, a forerunner of Luther, in a modern version says, “How can anyone be compassionate towards her neighbour who is not compassionate towards herself? This is why Jesus says: be compassionate! He wants our compassion to begin at home. He wants us to be compassionate towards our own body and soul.”

The invitation to us passed on by Luther is that we should know ourselves deeply loved by God, overwhelmed by grace. Not in some technical sense to satisfy a system of checks and balances. Loved “in the inward parts,” to use the psalmist’s phrase. Then, and then alone, will we be able to live with the consequences of choices, intended and unintended, of our lives. If we do not know ourselves loved by God, we shall always feel close to being overwhelmed.



Statue of Luther in Wittenberg, Germany

True Reformation

I wonder if Luther had any idea that his simple affirmation—that we are saved by grace, justified by faith—would be entombed by generations of church people who would try to make a thing, a system, a concept, a doctrine, out of the love of God in Christ Jesus? Any idea that Jesus would be entombed a second time by churchmen? Such distortion has sometimes been a death-dealing and unintended consequence of Luther’s new life-giving understanding of faith in God.

It is one thing to affirm that “God so loved the world...” but it is quite another to say, “I know myself loved by God.”

Reformation...“Revival and reformation” is a slogan much loved by some in our Church. But reformation begins not in the strategic planning committee of any large ecclesiastical organization but in a monk’s cell, in a small provincial town, far from the seat of power, on the margins.

**I believe
I need to
submit
myself to a
discipline,
yes, a
regular
discipline,
of knowing
myself
deeply loved
by God.**

Named and Known, Known and Loved

Scholars all, we need to know ourselves loved by God. That is our main qualification for teaching our students. To hear our own name spoken by God in the stillness.

Name me! Tell me who I am! Tell me why I was created! An old rabbinic prayer captures it well: “O Master of the universe, let me once before I die, hear my own true name on the lips of my brothers and sisters.”

Mary recognized Jesus after the resurrection when He spoke her name.

“I have called you by your name – you are mine” Isaiah 43:1.

We need to have access to ourselves. We must give God access to those parts of ourselves which we rarely visit.

The simple prayer of the Welsh poet-priest captures it precisely: “Eavesdrop my heart.”

I believe I need to submit myself to a discipline, yes, a regular discipline, of knowing myself deeply loved by God. Have I travelled across the Atlantic just to say that? Yes, I have. Partly because there are many voices—even in the Church—telling us that we barely make it into the suburbs of God’s affections.

“You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart” Psalm 51:6.

Or as the two Emmaus followers said: “Stay! For our hearts were warmed on the road...”

2017...it’s a year for celebrating, remembering. Perhaps the most important thing for us to remember is that we are, I am, loved by God. To know ourselves loved by God.

All the rest is footnote. (And how we love our footnotes!)

To know ourselves truly loved by God. I

wonder what the unintended consequences of knowing that would be?

So, I pray that you may recognize the pulse of God’s fierce love beating in your hearts...

Now, and in what little remains of 2017, and always. Amen. ■

NOTE: It is, in my view, not necessary to provide footnotes to a sermon as one would with an academic paper. However, some readers may wish to pursue some of the citations I have used. The words of Edmund Burke were slightly refashioned by Abraham Lincoln. The citation from William James is from a lecture he gave at Harvard and subsequently widely published as “The Will to Believe,” for example in J. Hick, ed., *Classical and Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Religion*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970), 214–231. The words are not actually his; he himself is quoting from Fitz-James Stephen. Ellen White famously said that “Sanctification is the work of a lifetime.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, (Washington DC: Review and Herald), 65. Jeanette Winterson’s words come from her memoir *Why Be Happy When You Can Be Normal?* (New York, NY: Grove Press, 2011), 210. The words cited from Meister Eckhart are from an unusual collection of his words: Simon Parke, *Conversations with Meister Eckhart*, (Guildford: White Crow Books, 2009). The rabbinic prayer is from Rabbi Yehuda of Prague in the sixteenth century. The brief prayer of R. S. Thomas is from “Requests,” in R. S. Thomas, *Selected Poems*, (London, UK: Penguin, 2003), 236.



Michael Pearson is Principal Lecturer Emeritus at Newbold College of Higher Education where he has spent a lifetime—some of it as Vice-Principal—but most of it teaching Ethics, Philosophy, and Spirituality. He is spending his retirement writing, teaching, and enjoying being with his family, free from the demands of endless committees.

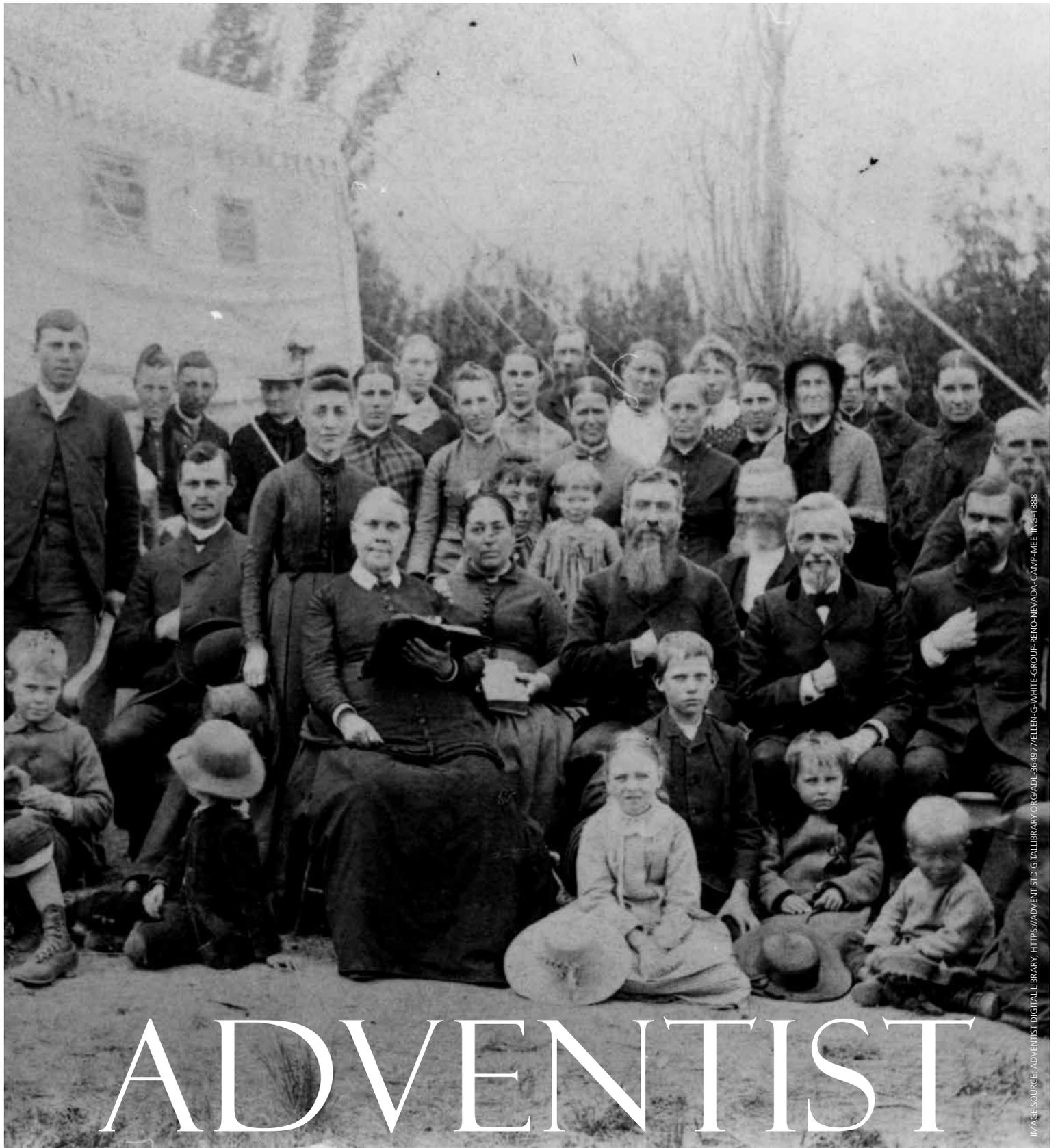
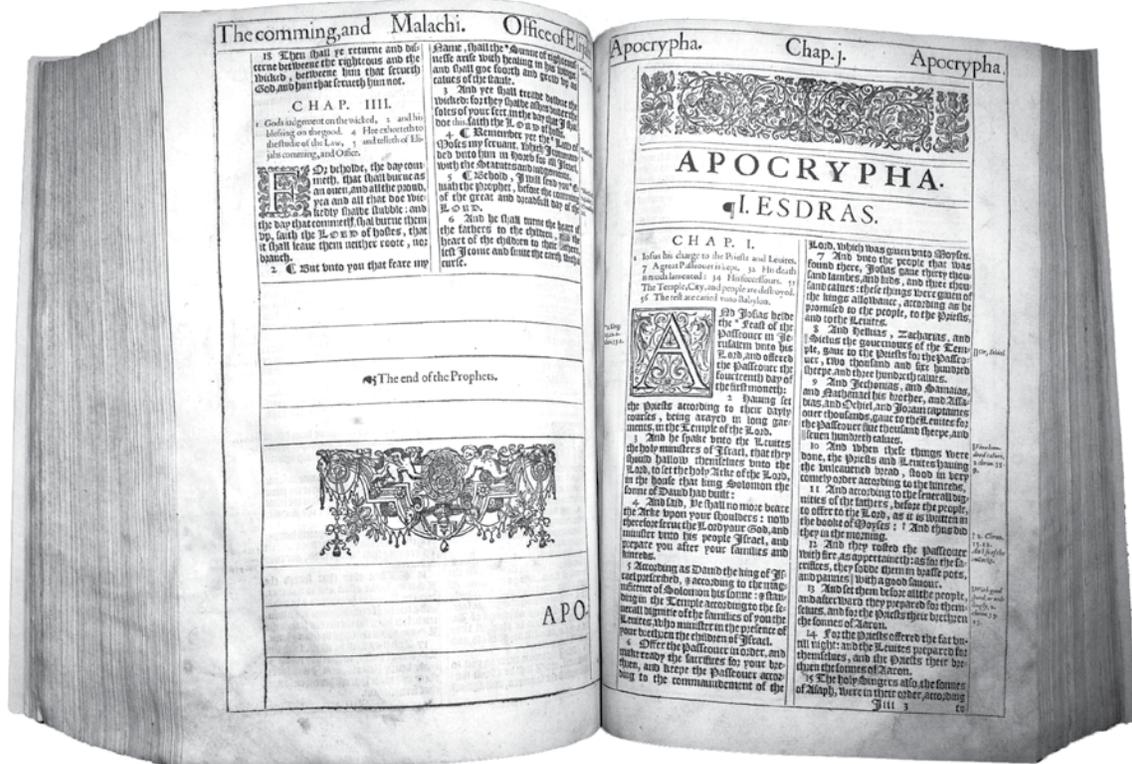


IMAGE SOURCE: ADVENTIST DIGITAL LIBRARY, [HTTPS://ADVENTISTDIGITALIBRARY.ORG/GADL-36497/ELLEN-G-WHITE-GROUP-RENO-NEVADA-CAMP-MEETING-1888](https://adventistdigitallibrary.org/gadl-36497/ellen-g-white-group-reno-nevada-camp-meeting-1888)

ADVENTIST HISTORY

Adventism's Hidden Book: A Brief History of the Apocrypha

BY MATTHEW J. KORPMAN



1611 printing of the King James Bible featuring the Apocrypha

IMAGE SOURCE: 1611 KING JAMES BIBLE, ONLINE SHOWROOM OF THE BIBLE MUSEUM, HTTP://GREATSITE.COM/

Many are undoubtedly aware of the fact that the early Christians, during periods of persecution, utilized code language and symbols to identify themselves to another. For example, one Christian might draw part of a fish with his foot and, if the other completed the symbol, the two knew they were of the same faith. Yet how many Seventh-day Adventists are aware that some early Adventists had their own similar secret codes? Moreover, how many realize that the way to identify who was Adventist in those days was to complete a quotation of scripture, one which is no longer included in Adventist Bibles today?

According to an account by J. N. Loughborough, in the

earliest days of Adventism when he was traveling with a certain Elder Cornell, his companion spotted a man and exclaimed, "I am going to ask that man the question that it says in the Apocrypha of the Old Testament shall be asked of the people."¹ The question spoken of was a quotation from the Apocryphal work of 2 Esdras (5:11) and, according to Loughborough, the stranger answered back with the answer that Esdras says the people should give back, confirming that the two were Advent believers. This odd story illustrates how well studied and important the books of the Apocrypha, a collection of seven works and additional material included in the middle of the King James Bible, were for early Adventist believers.

On no less than thirty occasions, Adventists (including some such as James White and J. N. Andrews), between the years 1845 and 1912, espoused the explicit belief or, at the very least, the implication, that the Apocryphal book of 2 Esdras was inspired scripture (to say nothing of the other works included in that collection). Adventist missionaries such as D. T. Bordeau, who traveled through Italy, saw the outbreaks of diseases overseas as fulfillments of Esdras prophesies and saw those prophesies in Esdras as being linked with Ellen White's own testimonies for the Adventist faith.² Study Bibles that contained the Apocrypha were given to Adventists at camp meetings. Adventist pioneers such as J. H. Waggoner would expound on the prophetic interpretation of the visions contained within 2 Esdras in the pages of early Adventist periodicals.

However, by the beginning of the 1920s, almost all memory of this issue had disappeared from Adventist recollection and a new alliance with the rising forms of Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism buried whatever might have risen again. One might think that exploring what constitutes canonical scripture for Adventism would have received more attention, but it has been written about by only two Adventist scholars. In the 1980s, Ronald Graybill was the first scholar to publish a historical review of Adventism and its relation to the Apocryphal writings.³ In 2002, Dennis Fortin wrote about Ellen White's use of the Apocrypha for the *Adventist Review*.⁴

With the recent digitization of the denomination's periodicals,⁵ national newspapers, and popular nineteenth-century publications, one can now more easily explore the development and disappearance of the Apocrypha within the Millerite and Adventist movements. This article will expand on the work done by Graybill.

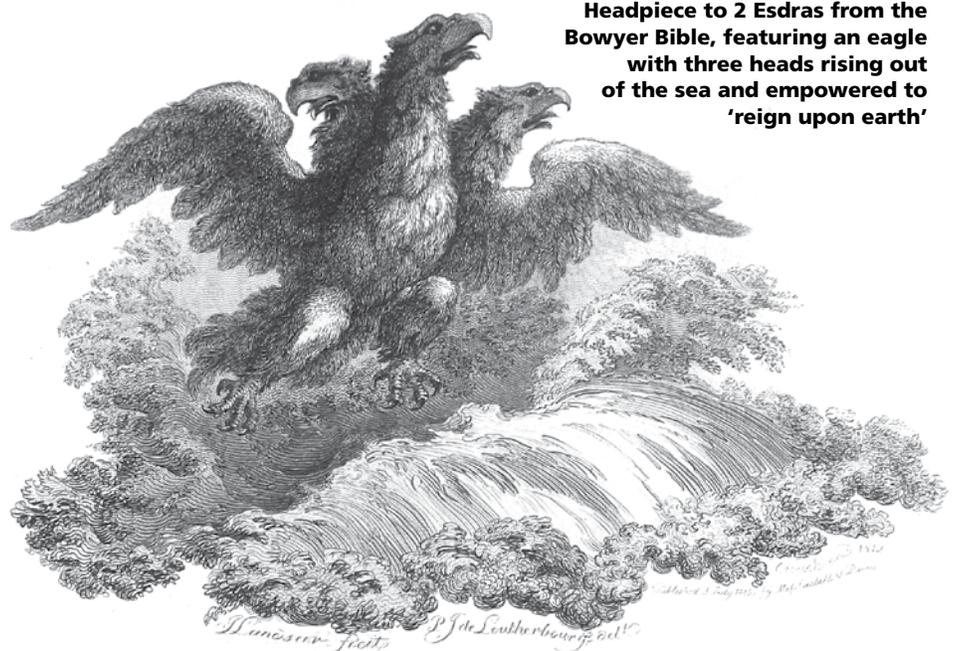
1842–1849: The Millerite Push

The history of Adventism's relationship with the Apocryphal writings began long before any denomination formed with that name, beginning in its early Millerite roots. The first promul-

gation of the Apocrypha appears to have begun in 1842 when Thomas F. Barry, a Millerite lecturer in New Hampshire, promoted the idea that the work of 2 Esdras⁶ contained a prophecy in its eleventh and twelfth chapters which confirmed William Miller's arguments for the soon return of Christ in the coming year. In that ancient Jewish prophecy, alleged to have been written by the biblical Ezra,⁷ Barry argued that America's final presidents were predicted in the imagery of the vision's giant eagle rising out of the sea.

He shared his views with other Millerites, garnering attention from certain newspapers which took to mocking the strange idea. "The force of folly can no further go," wrote one, noting with disdain that "the Millerites are every day finding out some new mystery."⁸ Barry is known to have continued to spread his ideas well into 1843.⁹ Yet, while Barry's interpretation did not immediately galvanize all of the Millerites, some ministers took note. One newspaper, previously unknown to Adventist historians, reports that some Millerite preachers began to spread Barry's basic premise alongside William Miller's arguments and charts, proposing that although "the books of Esdras were called *apocryphal*... they were just as good as any other book in the whole Bible."¹⁰

Two of these ministers, E. R. Pinney and O. R. Fassett, saw the work as authentically inspired scripture and presented on the subject in the faith-defining year of 1844, in New York, to a good reception from their fellow



Headpiece to 2 Esdras from the Bowyer Bible, featuring an eagle with three heads rising out of the sea and empowered to 'reign upon earth'



Tailpiece to 2 Esdras from the Bowyer Bible. A dove is represented as descending in glory above a sheep bound for sacrifice.

Millerites. One of those most impressed was Joseph Marsh, the editor of the local Millerite paper, *The Voice of Truth*, which published their views for a larger audience. The response to the articles revealed that many Millerites were open to accepting more books as inspired scripture, even if not everyone agreed upon the interpretation proposed by Barry and the others.

Most notably, Millerite prophets, such as William Foy, arose around this time, claiming visions from God. It is remarkable that so much of the content of Foy's first two visions, as recorded in his published pamphlet, seems to be derived from the Apocryphal work of 2 Esdras (though not with credit). Foy not only utilized 2 Esdras as a resource but described the same vision that the pseudepigraphic work had. In so doing, he implicitly confirmed its inspiration.¹¹

After the Great Disappointment passed and Pinney and Fassett's interpretation failed to come true in April of 1845, rather than giving up on the inspiration of the work, other

Millerites proposed new interpretations, such as D. B. Gibbs, who proposed that the prophecy spoke of America's founding, not its final end. It is important to note that throughout this chaotic time period (and before), a young Ellen Harmon was aware of all of these developments. Not only had she been personally exposed to Foy's depictions of 2 Esdras' visions (and later cherished his written volume of them), but she too would come to have a similar vision, echoing the same chapter in Esdras. Published in *The Day-Star*, her first vision, like Foy's, though not explicitly mentioning the Apocryphal work, nevertheless provided it with validity by seemingly confirming its authenticity through vision.

When re-published in a pamphlet by James White, titled *A Word to the Little Flock*, "scriptural" footnotes were provided for her vision in which six of the eight or so references to 2 Esdras were noted, along with a quotation she had used from a different Apocryphal work, the *Wisdom of Solomon*. By this time, the Millerite remnant seems to have become increasingly more open to the idea of a larger understanding of the canon. For example, in the same pamphlet that reprints the visions, articles by James White and Joseph Bates each utilize the Apocryphal works as equal to other canonical scripture. Bates, like others, had been an avid reader of the *Voice of Truth* publication and had most certainly read Pinney and Fassett's argument for the validity of 2 Esdras. He was a vocal proponent of its inspiration. In 1849, for example, he specifically affirmed that 2 Esdras has "very important truths for those that keep God's laws and commandments." He remarked that the work would "probably benefit no others."¹²

By the end of 1849, early Adventists were

coming closer to embracing a new and enlarged canon that accepted *all* of the works within the binding of their Bibles. A report by several believers in Maine recorded that the newly married Ellen White had supernaturally perceived that their family Bible was missing the Apocrypha, prompting the visionary young woman to launch into an extended discussion about the subject (the details of which were unfortunately not recorded). Similarly, a previously unreleased vision of Mrs. White's was finally made public in 2014, unsurprisingly without much publicity.¹³ In the transcript recorded by eye-witnesses and friends, Mrs. White was described as carrying a Bible in her hand, declaring that *all* of the Apocryphal writings, and not merely one or a select few, were "thy word" or "the Word of God." She likewise states that recent attempts in her day to remove from the Bible the "hidden book," which she called a "remnant," were by people "led captive by Satan."¹⁴ She implored the early Adventists around her, with regard to the Apocrypha, to "bind it to the heart" and "let not its pages be closed," begging them to "read it carefully."

1850–1879: Growing Popularity

At the beginning of 1850, Mrs. White made the effort to write down her views from the previous vision, noting that, "I saw that the Apocrypha was the hidden book, and that the wise of these last days should understand it."¹⁵ As the first Sabbatarian Adventist publications began to be disseminated, scriptural citations of Apocryphal works began to occur within their pages.¹⁶ Yet, after such an auspicious start, much of the decade saw little further public discussion until a fascinating editorial was published in the pages of the *Review and Herald* in 1858. In that paper, the editors, including James White and

Bowyer Bible headpiece to 1 Esdras



Uriah Smith, publicly endorsed the Apocrypha as "containing much light and instruction." It promoted, in order, the works of 2 Esdras, Wisdom of Solomon, and 1 Maccabees as being the three most valuable works for Adventists to study. Though noting which church councils had canonized the works, the editors noted that "the question of the inspiration of these books [as a whole] ... we have never made a subject of particular study, and are not therefore prepared to discuss."¹⁷

The 1860s saw a significant growth in the popularity of the Apocryphal writings. The *Review*, in the wake of the Civil War, published an article in which it was noted that "many interpret a passage" from 2 Esdras as having the weight of inspiration for a Bible study of the end times.¹⁸ In November of 1863, Joseph Clarke admonished Adventists, telling them "let us go back to the testimony of Esdras, who wrote centuries previous to the Christian era..."¹⁹ Other articles likewise affirmed the authenticity of differing Apocryphal works.²⁰

Most noteworthy among these was an article published by J. H. Waggoner, in which he

“Ten thousand dollars are wanted to publish a new hymn book, the second edition of [Ellen White’s] *Spiritual Gifts*, [and] an edition of the *Apocrypha*.”

argued at length regarding the interpretation of the famous vision in 2 Esdras 11.²¹ Some apparently had come to understand the Eagle as a symbol of the United States, and its two heads the North and the South. Waggoner instead argued that the Eagle was Rome, “especially Papal Rome.” He concluded that “a correct understanding of this matter is most important at this time, as the view above referred to serves to sustain another error, namely, that the dissolution of the

Union will be the development of the horns of the two-horned beast.” For Waggoner, the inspiration of the book was not in question; his only concern was whether Adventists interpreted it correctly.

In 1869, Adventism’s relationship with the Apocrypha reached a new level when James White wrote in the February edition of the *Review* that “The Association will probably issue an edition of the Apocrypha with references soon, which, well bound, can be sold for about seventy-five cents a copy.”²² Nearly twenty years after Ellen White’s vision about the Apocrypha, her husband announced to the newly founded Seventh-day Adventist Church that there would be an official publication of the Apocryphal books by Adventists for Adventists. The motivation behind this decision was no doubt the fact that the new Bibles being printed since 1826 were increasingly lacking the inclusion of the Apocrypha, making it harder for Adventist families to procure a copy. The Apocrypha, as James envisioned, would become a new Adventist colporteur specialty.

James White’s dreams would soon meet sig-

Bowyer Bible tailpiece to 1 Esdras



nificant obstacles. The next month, in March of that same year, he wrote a sharp rebuke to certain subscribers of the *Review* whom he called “Delinquents,” because they had not been paying their subscription “in advance” and were sometimes up to two to three years behind. He warned these readers that God would call them “to answer respecting it.” As to why the money was so needed, White clarified that it was not only for the upkeep of the paper itself, but that “ten thousand dollars are wanted to publish a new hymn book, the second edition of [Ellen White’s] *Spiritual Gifts*, [and] an edition of the Apocrypha...” If there was any question as to how much James White valued the project of the Adventist edition of the Apocrypha, one need only notice that he ranked it right beside one of his wife’s prophetic writings as a publishing project. He noted with a warning that if the “delinquents” did not pay up, “this work [the project] must be crippled.” It is unclear currently whether the publication was ever published and as such, may well have been crippled as James feared.²³

Finally, near the close of the decade, D. M. Canright wrote an article in which he implied

that “although the books of the Apocrypha are not commonly regarded as being inspired,” some thought they were.²⁴ Canright himself appears to have struggled over the issue of the Apocrypha, apparently accepting the possibility that 2 Esdras was inspired, but later writing articles urging Adventists to reject the rest. Such views however do not appear to have been widely shared amongst Adventists at this time. Evidence of this can be seen in May of 1871, when J. N. Andrews wrote a short homily on Tobit 4:8–9, extolling its positive messages about charity.²⁵

As noted earlier, in August of that same year, D. M. Canright wrote an article for the *Review* in which he drew attention to 2 Esdras, specifically its second chapter, writing that “it seems to me to give good evidence of its inspiration.”²⁶ Again and again, one finds early Seventh-day Adventists keeping an open mind about the Apocrypha, if not affirming outright that parts of it such as 2 Esdras were inspired. This spirit of open-mindedness also coincides with Ellen White’s public announcement that she was reading the Apocryphal works of the New Testament, including, but apparently not limited to, the Infancy Gospel of Thomas.²⁷

1880–1899: Growing Dissension

The decade of the 1880s saw continued popularity, but likewise growing public dissension on the subject of the inspiration of these Apocryphal books. Illustrating the continuing interest, individuals such as J. N. Loughborough reported that “many persons asked me to obtain for them a pocket edition of the Apocrypha” and he proudly reports that he found “a fine one from London” which he offered for \$1.00 each to whatever Adventist wanted one.²⁸ Likewise, in September of 1881, the *Signs of the Times* announced a series of new family Bibles to be supplied at that upcoming Adventist camp meeting, which, it advertised, would include the Apocryphal books and “other helps, specially selected by W. C. White.”²⁹ One finds that at the highest levels of Seventh-day Adventist leadership there is no sense of hesitation in the purposeful promotion of the Apocrypha amongst fellow Adventists.

Many Adventists continued to espouse its inspiration. D. T. Bordeau, for example, who, while serving as a missionary in Italy, remarked in the *Review* that the prophecies of 2 Esdras were coming to pass. Another writer observed that the Wisdom of Solomon was “evidence that the... testimony of the Apocrypha is true.”³⁰ Other Adventists, likewise, argued that the additional chapters of Daniel included in the collection of the Apocrypha were “also quite in harmony” with the rest of the canonical work.³¹

Yet, not all Adventists were as certain in this regard. An article in the *Review* appeared in 1881, entitled “Why We Reject the Apocrypha,”³² and likewise, later in 1887, G. W. Morse answered the question of the Apocrypha’s inspiration with a terse “No.”³³ That November, the *Bible*

Again and again, one finds early Seventh-day Adventists keeping an open mind about the Apocrypha, if not affirming outright that parts of it such as 2 Esdras were inspired.

Bowyer Bible headpiece to Apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus



IMAGE SOURCE: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/philipmedhurst/14428682616/>

The 1890s saw a steady onslaught of hostility from a new wave of Adventists who wanted a divorce from their old Apocryphal heritage.

Echo and Signs of the Times republished an article from the *London Spectator* in which the author remarks (with exuberance): "... we cannot but admit that for ordinary readers, amidst the hurry and pressure of the modern conditions of life, the Bible placed in their hands for familiar use is well rid of the encumbering element of the Apocrypha."³⁴ Though this dissension was clearly small, it was vocal and growing.

The 1890s saw a steady onslaught of hostility from a new wave of Adventists who wanted a divorce from their old Apocryphal heritage. Articles began appearing that picked up and repeated the common Protestant attacks against these works, such as an article that ridiculed books like 2 Maccabees for potentially teaching anti-Protestant ideas. Another writer, R. S. Weber, wrote a concentrated attack on the books, noting that "it is often asked if these books are inspired" and replying that "I answer, No; they are no part of the word of God." He later went on to relate their teachings as similar to the "papists."³⁵

1900–1909: The Return of the Apocrypha

When Ronald Graybill originally wrote his groundbreaking article on this subject, he proposed that due to the evidence of the proceeding two decades, the Apocrypha had breathed its last by about 1888. While it is easy to see how that may have seemed correct, the truth is that Adventist opinion shifted like a wave. No sooner did it appear that these books were gone, than some Adventists began to promote them once more. A notable example of this phenomenon is the presence of a "Word Square" game which required knowledge of 1 Esdras to successfully complete.³⁶ One can find in the pages of *The Youth Instructor*, published in October of 1901, a quotation from the book of 2 Esdras in a discussion of the creation week. This however, unlike many other similar instances, is followed by the brief statement: "As to the inspiration of the foregoing we of course cannot say."³⁷ Other Adventists however were less roundabout in their belief in its inspiration.

In the December 1904 edition of the *Bible Training School*, following a quotation from John Calvin, the writers state that, "The testimony of the Biblical writers is equally conclusive." This is immediately followed by quotations from 2 Maccabees, 2 Esdras, Psalms, and Hebrews. The word Apocrypha is not once mentioned, and no distinction is made between the books.³⁸ Likewise, in 1904, the editors of the *Signs of the Times* replied to a reader's question regarding where he could buy an edition of the Apocrypha by informing him that they themselves would be pleased to supply him with one.³⁹

This renewed revival of the Apocrypha persisted further. In 1906, in the "Question Corner" of the April 18 edition of the *Signs of the Times*, in response to a question regarding the books, the anonymous writer notes that "2 Esdras by some is considered to be an inspired book."⁴⁰ Another Adventist, a certain J. M. P., wrote the *Signs of the Times* asking if they could "tell me why the Books of Esdras were rejected from the Canon?" He notes that "there seems to be a remarkable prophecy concerning the latter days in Second Esdras." Rather than dismiss the books as spurious or fictitious, the anonymous editor replies that "some scholars have counted them both canonical" and further adds that "there are those who believe it (2 Esdras) to be predictions of the last days."⁴¹ This same thinking appeared the next year in another edition of the *Signs*, when the editors again respond to a question by a reader, in part replying: "some of them contain most excellent moral reading," and adding that "one or two of them may be inspired books, but are not so considered generally."⁴² This attitude toward the Apocrypha can also be evidenced by its general use as if it were scripture.

1910–1919: The Final Death of the Apocrypha

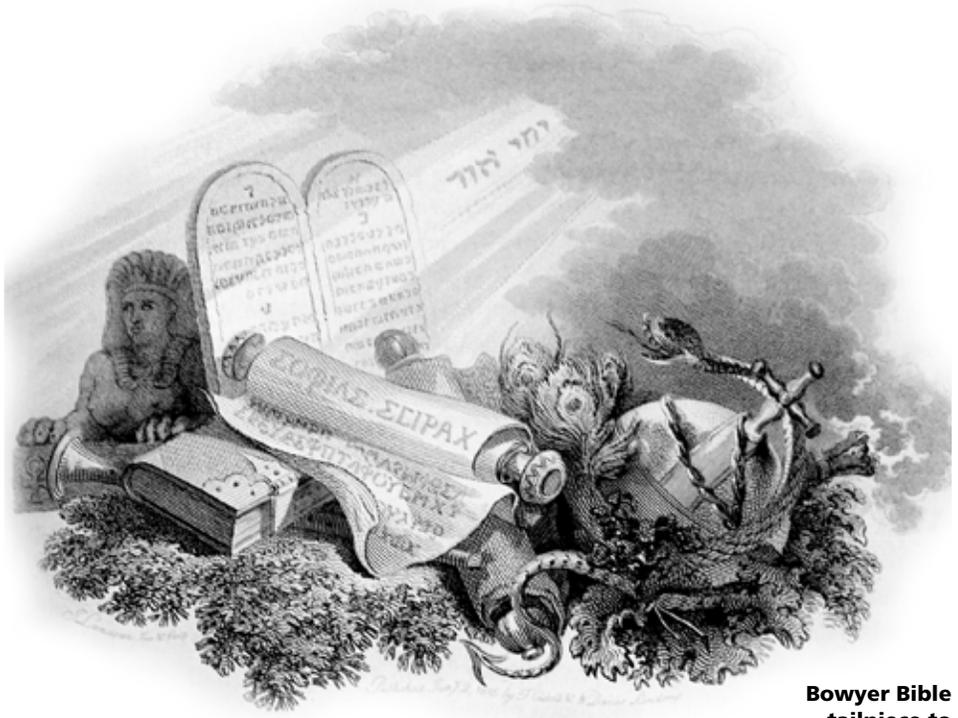
In June of 1910, the editors of the *Signs of the Times* answered a question regarding the inspiration of the Apocrypha, stating that

“it is possible, of course, that some parts of The Apocrypha may be true Scripture, but The Apocrypha as a whole is not considered and does not seem to be written as inspired Scripture, but as useful exhortations to God’s children.”⁴³ In direct contrast to the previous statement however, only another month later, the editors of the same publication once again answered a similar question, writing that “there is good reason to reject them.”⁴⁴ This same negative sentiment was repeated by the same publication in the following year, but with a notable difference.

In the September 1911 issue of the *Signs*, the editors received a question from an Adventist who complained that he couldn’t find “the book of Esdras” in his Bible.

It appears that he was referencing an Adventist pamphlet that had quoted 2 Esdras. The editors replied that “all Protestants have held them as books which are uncanonical, altho some [Adventists] have believed that 2 Esdras was of greater authority than the First...”⁴⁵ He admits, in essence, that Adventists have and continue to accept 2 Esdras in spite of his personal contempt of the works. Later, in 1913, the editors of the *Signs* would respond to a similar question, this time answering that “Some have thought that 2 Esdras was inspired.”⁴⁶

Various writers at this time continued to quote passages from the Apocrypha as if they were either scripture or authoritative. It is of great interest that at the close of 1914, a revival of sorts was attempted for 2 Esdras. A new Adventist interpretation (the sixth known to exist) saw the famous vision of the eagle as depicting England and Germany’s conflict as the beginning of World War I commenced.⁴⁷ There does not seem, however, to be any evidence that this “revival” of the prophecy suc-



Bowyer Bible tailpiece to Apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus

ceeded in gaining traction.

After the death of Ellen White in 1915, reference to 2 Esdras within Adventist publications seem to have died as well. The Apocrypha was consistently viewed with contempt and any questions sent to publications asking about it were almost always met with a range of disparaging views. It is worth noting, however, that there were anomalies amongst Adventist literature even during this time. Perhaps the most curious of these was printed in September of 1918 in the *Christian Educator*. While outlining her suggestions for Bible classes, one teacher recommended that Adventist instructors of a sixth-grade classroom “secure a copy of the Apocrypha and read part of it to the class.”⁴⁸ Aside from this, though, it would mark the last suggestion of its kind before the word Apocrypha and all that it meant was mostly swept into obscurity for new generations.

Conclusion

While more could be said about this transition

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(especially during the 1920s) and the tendency of official church spokesmen later to deny any historical connection between the Apocrypha and Adventism, this article illustrates the following point: early Adventism cannot truly be properly understood or assessed unless the Apocrypha is given its proper due as a source of thought and scriptural authority for some within it. The recent release of Ellen White's previously unknown visionary endorsement of the Apocryphal works underscores their importance both for historical research, as well as current theological thought. This article has not explored *how* the Apocrypha shaped early Adventist theology (though there is certainly evidence that it did), but it has simply sought to demonstrate that the Apocryphal books most certainly were in a position to do so in a significant way, rivaled perhaps only by Ellen White herself. More study is clearly needed with regard to this area of Adventist history and it is my hope that our church's scholars, and others, will neglect it no longer. ■



Matthew J. Korpman is a minister-in-training, writer, and published researcher in Biblical Studies (specializing in Second Temple Judaism). A graduating student at the H.M.S. Richards Divinity School, he is completing four undergraduate degrees in Religious Studies, Archaeology, and Philosophy. His summative project at the school is a broad thesis on Early Adventism and its relationship to the Apocrypha. He writes online at Patheos.com for the new blog "Biblical Literacy", the first Seventh-day Adventist writer on the faith-based website.

Footnotes:

1. J. N. Loughborough, "The Church: Sketches of the Past – No. 88," *Pacific Union Recorder* 9:24 (1909): 1.
2. D.T. Bordeau, "Switzerland: Notes by the Way," *Review and Herald* 61, no. 40 (1884): 635. "French papers say that this kind of cholera was unknown in France until thirty years ago. Is it not one of the "retributive judgments" with which God is visiting the earth? We believe it is. (See 2 Esdras 16:19, 20; also recent testimonies)."
3. Ron Graybill, "Under the Triple Eagle: Early Adventist

Use of the Apocrypha," *Adventist Heritage* 12 (Winter 1987): 25–32.

4. Denis Fortin, "Sixty-six Books or Eighty-one? Did Ellen White Recommend the Apocrypha?" *Adventist Review* (2002) 8-13.

5. Much thanks is due to Bert Haloviak for his efforts to make this reality possible for all Adventist historians. He has helped to open up a new world of possibility for Adventist research.

6. The work of 2 Esdras is also known in academic circles as 4 Ezra. In the King James Bible, it appears as the former title and since this is what it was known as in early Adventist history, that older designation is retained for the purposes of this article.

7. The work of 2 Esdras / 4 Ezra is also classified as pseudepigrapha (falsely attributed writings) due to the fact that although it claims an authorship from Ezra, it was in fact actually written by an anonymous Jew living after the Romans burned Jerusalem. Early Millerites and Adventists were aware of this "scholastic" conclusion, but dismissed such arguments in the same way modern Adventists reject currently scholarly opinions about the authorship of other books in the Bible. When someone wishes to believe something, they typically do so regardless of scholarship.

8. New York Plebeian, *The North Carolina Standard* 9:449 (June 7, 1843): 2.

9. Ibid.

10. Crazy Sam, "From the Asylum Journal," *Vermont Phoenix* 9, no. 12 (November 18, 1842): 3.

11. William Foy's visions as printed in his *Christian Experience*, show direct literary and factual dependence on 2 Esdras 2:42–48 (KJV). A more in-depth analysis of this correlation is provided in a thesis I am currently writing as part of my university studies.

12. Joseph Bates, *A Seal of the Living God* (New Bedford, Massachusetts: Benjamin Lindsey, 1849), 66.

13. Ellen White, "Remarks in Vision," Manuscript 5, 1849. In the published release, Karlman noted that "since... Ellen White never wrote out an account of this vision, our understanding of it remains partial." Perhaps with a good dose of dry humor, he wrote that, with regard to this otherwise previously hidden and unacknowledged material, "there has been little published comment on [it]." Roland Karlman, *Ellen G. White, Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 1 (Maryland: Review and Herald, 2014), 181, 183.

14. The references by Mrs. White are likely directed to the

decision of the British and Foreign Bible Society who in 1826, decided to stop funding the creation of Bibles with the Apocrypha included, a decision that ultimately meant that new Bibles would largely lack the non-canonical section and ultimately led to their disappearance from most Bibles by the late 1870s.

15. Ellen White, "A Copy of E. G. White's Vision, Which She Had at Oswego, N. Y., January 26, 1850," Manuscript 4, 1850.

16. See Joseph Bates, "Dreams," *Review and Herald* 1, no. 9 (1851): 70–71. There, on two occasions, is an example of Sirach being quoted beside Jeremiah as equally authoritative. See also Editors, *Review and Herald* 11 no. 15 (1858): 121.

17. Editors, "To Correspondents: Old Style and New," *Review and Herald* 12, no. 12 (1858): 96. The comment is odd, considering Ellen White's earlier admonition about their inspiration. I would venture to guess that the *Review's* hesitancy with regard to this issue reflects their tendency early in the movement not to utilize Mrs. White to derive doctrinal positions.

18. Editors, "The Tree of Life," *Review and Herald* 15, no. 18 (1860): 140.

19. [Joseph] Clarke, "Self," *Review and Herald* 22, no. 24 (1863): 187. This Adventist, much like James White and Joseph Bates, affirms that the testimony of Esdras is trustworthy (and authentic). He would later in 1878 write an article for the *Review* in which he would quote the work authoritatively as "Esdras says." "Overcoming," *Review and Herald* 51, no. 22 (1878): 170.

20. See reprinted article in the *Review* taken from the book *American Antiquities* in which it is asserted that the Wisdom of Solomon was actually written by King Solomon. Wm. C. Gage, "Gleanings," *Review and Herald* 26, no. 25 (1865): 197.

21. J. H. Waggoner, "The Eagle of 2 Esdras XI," *Review and Herald* 18, no. 23 (1861): 183.

22. James White, *Review and Herald* 33, no. 6 (1869): 48.

23. It seems to me that it would be a great idea if James White's vision could eventually be realized and an Adventist edition of this literature (with commentary) might eventually be published by some of our church's eminent scholars, of which a number are experts in these works. As recently as last year, attempts were made to start such a project, but they were ultimately rejected.

24. D. M. Canright, "Nature of Man and Punishment of the Wicked, As Taught in the Apocrypha," *Review and Herald* 34, no. 5 (1869): 33.

25. J. N. Andrews, "Excellent Advice Concerning Giving," *Review and Herald* 37, no. 20 (1871): 156.

26. D. M. Canright, "2 Esdras 2," *Review and Herald* 38 no. 8 (1871): 58.

27. Ellen White, "Life of Christ – No. 2," *Youth Instructor* 20, no. 4 (1872): 29.

28. J. N. Loughborough, "Note for Review," *Review and Herald* 57, no. 10 (1881): 160.

29. [M. C. Israel], "Family Bibles," *Signs of the Times* 7, no. 36 (1881): 432.

30. R. F. C., "Nature and Destiny of Man. – No. 2," *Review and Herald* 56, no. 23 (1880): 361.

31. J. M. Buckley and D.D., "Daniel Adown the Centuries," *Signs of the Times* 12, no. 16 (1886): 245.

32. H. A. St. John, "Synopsis – No. 10: Why We Reject the Apocrypha," *Review and Herald* 58, no. 3 (1881): 41.

33. G. W. Morse, "Scripture Questions," *Review and Herald* 64, no. 25 (1887): 394. In 1888, the same author, when faced with a similar question, responded by quoting another book which in part read: "... a child may perceive the difference between them and the holy scriptures." "Scripture Questions," *Review and Herald* 65, no. 7 (1888): 105.

34. Editors, "The Apocrypha," *Bible Echo and Signs of the Times* 3, no. 11 (1888): 171, reprinted from *London Spectator*.

35. R. S. Webber, "The Apocryphal Books," *Review and Herald* 71, no. 30 (1894): 466.

36. Anon., "Word Square," *Signs of the Times* 32, no. 23 (1906): 351.

37. O. C. Godsmark, "Easy Lessons in Bible Astronomy. Chapter 5: Our Earth Before the Flood," *The Youth Instructor* 49, no. 39 (October 3, 1901): 306.

38. Anon., "The First Verse in the Bible," *Bible Training School* 3, no. 7 (1904): 107–08.

39. Editors, "Question Corner," *Signs of the Times* 30, no. 22 (1904): 343

40. Editors, "Question Corner," *Signs of the Times* 32, no. 16 (1906): 245

41. Editors, "Question Corner," *Signs of the Times* 32, no. 39 (1906): 589

42. Editors, "With Our Inquirers," *Signs of the Times* 33, no. 38 (1907): 594

43. Editors, "Question Corner," *Signs of the Times* 37, no. 23 (1910): 354

44. Editors, "Question Corner," *Signs of the Times* 37, no. 29 (1910): 450

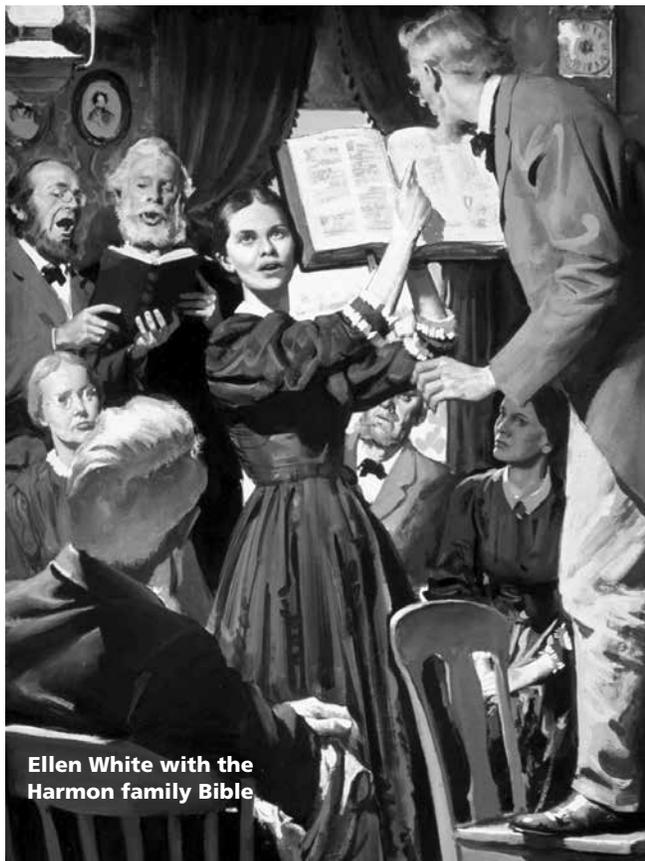
45. Editors, "Question Corner," *Signs of the Times* (1911): 450.

46. Editors, "Question Corner," *Signs of the Times* 40, no. 26 (1913): 402

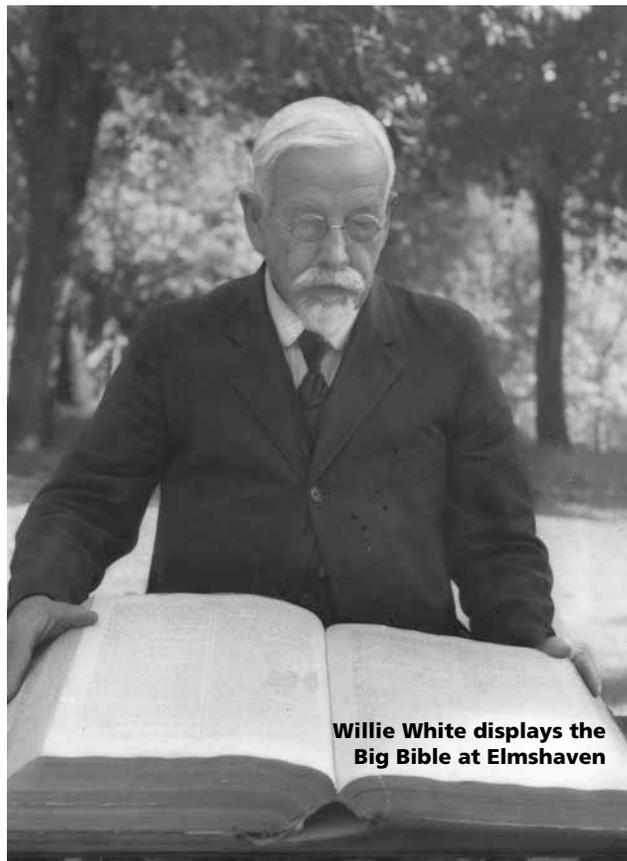
47. See references to Manasseh's Apocryphal prayer, S. N. Haskell, "Josiah and His Times No 1," *The Bible Instructor* 12, no. 4 (1913): 3–4. After quoting 2 Chronicles where it mentions that Manasseh wrote a prayer, Haskell quotes the Apocryphal Prayer of Manasseh as the authentic words of the king. Other than his reference to it coming from "The Apocrypha," nothing would lead an Adventist to believe that Haskell thought any less of the prayer than he did of 2 Chronicles. Also, for Baruch, see Editors, "Notes & Comments: Peculiar Superstition," *Australian Signs of the Times* 31, no. 13 (1916): 193. Baruch 6:18 is used as proof of ancient Babylonian practices.

48. Sarah Rudolph, "Teaching Notes – Grade by Grade," *Christian Educator* 10, no. 1 (1918): 26.

“It Was Not Taught Me by Man” | BY DONALD E. CASEBOLT



Ellen White with the Harmon family Bible



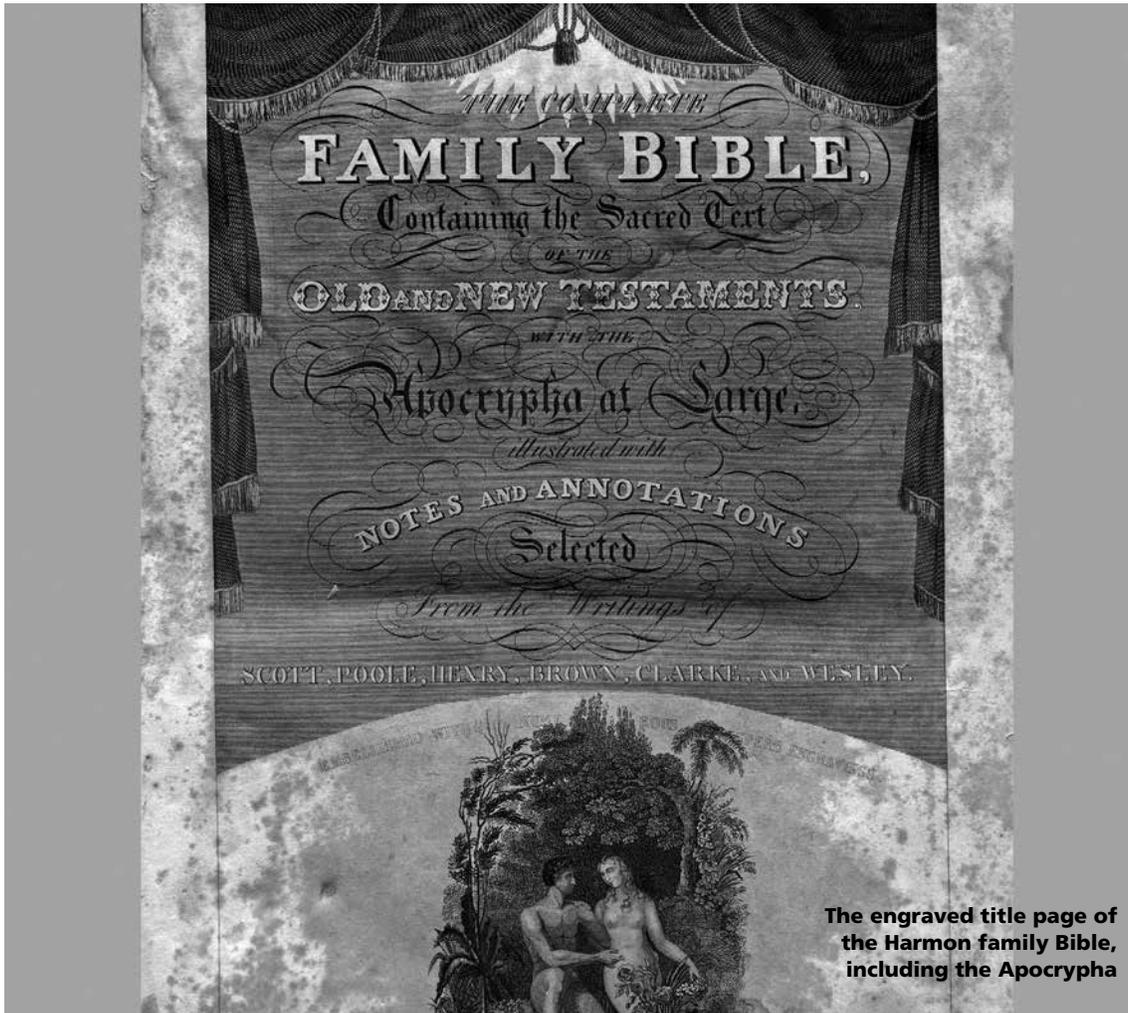
Willie White displays the Big Bible at Elmshaven

IMAGE SOURCE: WHITE ESTATE

In the Harmon family’s 1822 version of the King James Bible, teenage Ellen Harmon read the pseudepigraphal¹ book of 2 Esdras. It was a book of special significance to the early Millerites, because it contained prophecies about the end of the world. It was suffused with the question of Daniel 8:14—“How Long” is the “little horn” going to be allowed to desecrate the Sanctuary and host? When is the hour of judgment? For example, in vision three, (2 Esdras 8:63), one reads, “Question nine: Despite signs already given, what will be the *time of judgment*?”²

Multiple verses from 2 Esdras color Ellen Harmon’s descriptions of heaven in her first vision in 1844, and her Sabbath vision. In 1847, the newly married James White,

having read the same pseudepigraphal and Apocryphal books, and familiar with Ellen Harmon’s reading and writing habits, annotated seventy-seven “scripture” references when he republished these two visions.³ From this we learn that Ellen Harmon’s incorporation of outside historical and theological material did not begin late in her career with Protestant historians, as one might gather from reading revisionist Seventh-day Adventist historians such as Donald McAdams,⁴ William Peterson, and Walter Rae.⁵ Ellen Harmon’s incorporation of material she claimed was “not taught me by man” began with her first vision in December 1844, continued throughout her career,⁶ and exploded in her expansive use of Protestant historians and theologians in her *Desire of Ages* and *Great*



The engraved title page of the Harmon family Bible, including the Apocrypha

Controversy works.⁷ Why and how could this be?

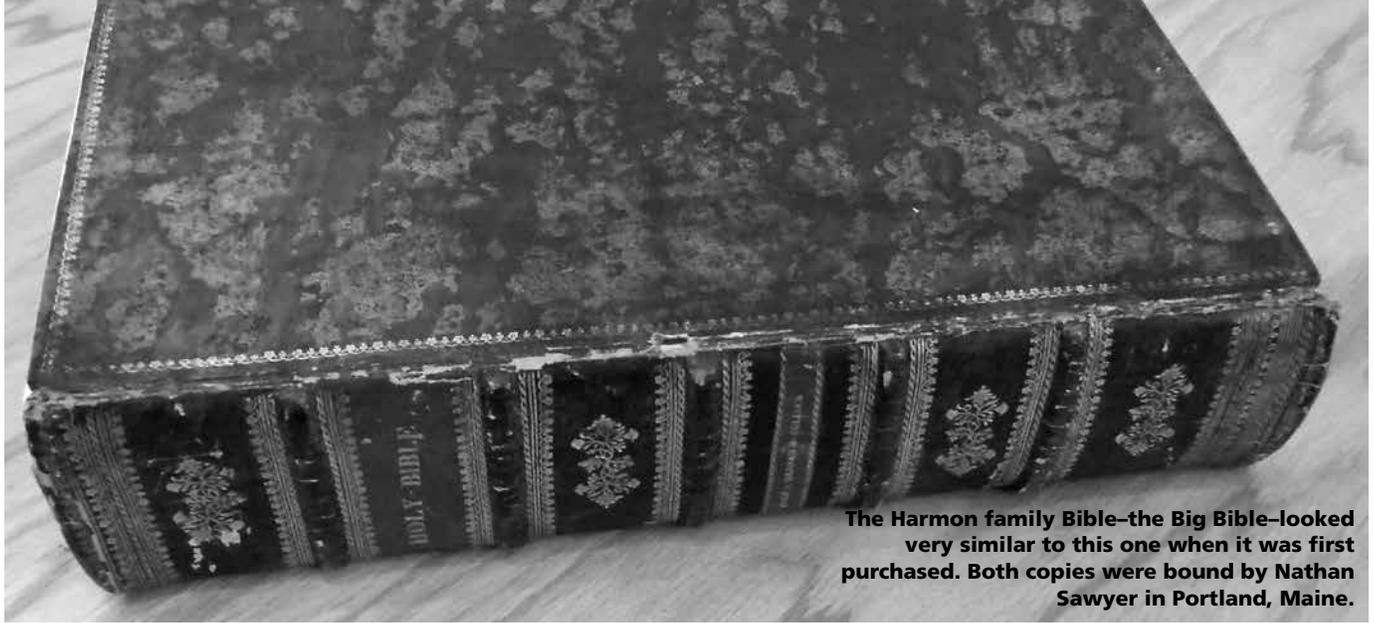
Not long after the publication of her visions by James in May of 1847, Ellen wrote to Joseph Bates, and concluded her explanations about her Midnight Cry vision of December 1844 and the Bridegroom vision of February 1845, saying, “I know the light I received came from God, it was not taught me by man. I knew not how to write so that others could read it till God gave me my visions.”⁸

James White, in his May 30, 1847, *A Word to the “Little Flock,”* like Ellen White, had been adamant that the information from Ellen White’s visions was not via “previous teaching or study,” i.e., merely mortal; it came without human mediation directly from God. He felt certain that she did not “obtain the sentiments’ of her visions ‘from previous teaching or study.’”⁹ Yet Joseph Bates, even after seeing Ellen Harmon in a visionary trance several times, in which supernatural,

miraculous phenomena were displayed, remained convinced that the factual content of her visions was determined by “themes in which she is most deeply interested,” from which she obtained “sentiments [which], in the main, are obtained from previous teaching, or study.” Here James is quoting from Joseph Bates’ original evaluation of Ellen Harmon:

I cannot endorse sister Ellen’s visions as being of divine inspiration, as you [James White] and she think them to be; yet I do not suspect the least shade of dishonesty in either of you in this matter. . . . I admit the possibility of my being mistaken. I think that what she and you regard as visions from the Lord, are only religious reveries, in which her imagination runs without control upon themes in which she is most deeply interested. While so absorbed in these reveries, she is lost

“I know
the light I
received
came from
God, it was
not taught
me by man.
I knew not
how to write
so that
others could
read it till
God gave me
my visions.”



The Harmon family Bible—the Big Bible—looked very similar to this one when it was first purchased. Both copies were bound by Nathan Sawyer in Portland, Maine.

Second Esdras had been in the Vulgate Bible, the Latin translation of the Bible by Saint Jerome, for hundreds of years, when the translators of the King James Bible translated it.

*to every thing around her. . . . Religion is her theme, and her reveries are religious. In either case, the sentiments, in the main, are obtained from previous teaching, or study. I do not by any means think her visions are like some from the devil.*¹⁰

Despite Ellen Harmon's self-perception, Joseph Bates' contrary view of her was correct. In her first vision, she paraphrased from 2 Esdras, to describe the heavenly geography that she "saw." Second Esdras had been in the Vulgate Bible, the Latin translation of the Bible by Saint Jerome, for hundreds of years, when the translators of the King James Bible translated it. An English version of 2 Esdras (sometimes entitled 4 Esdras in the Vulgate) was included in the 1611 KJV. This practice lasted for over two hundred years, including its inclusion in the 1822 version of Ellen Harmon's family Bible.

Neither James White, Ellen Harmon, nor many other ex-Millerites made a rigorous distinction between canonical books, pseudepigraphal books, and Apocryphal books. In fact, just as they concluded that Daniel and Revelation contained predictions concerning 508; 538; 1798; August 11, 1840;¹¹ 1843; October 22, 1844; the Papacy; and the USA, Adventist enthusiasts of 2 Esdras used it to predict specific American political events, with much the same success.¹² Over the years there has been some confusion in the nomenclature of these three genres of books. Thus, for purposes of

this essay, Old Testament canonical books are defined as those currently accepted in the Old Testament (OT) Protestant Bible; the Apocryphal books are defined as deutero-canonical books accepted in the OT Catholic Bible (in addition to those in the Protestant OT); the pseudepigraphal books are defined as those which are in the canons of other Christian churches but not in either the Protestant or Catholic canons. The main pseudepigraphal book that we will be referring to is 2 Esdras, which had been in many Vulgate manuscripts of the Bible, but was ruled non-biblical after the Council of Trent by Pope Clement VIII in the sixteenth century.

Ellen Harmon was a voracious reader of her family's KJV and eager to prove that her 1844 vision was biblically supported. Her audience requested evidence that what she "saw" was consistent with the Bible. Originally, she preached about her vision orally. But she was keen for the wider dissemination and publicity that publication would provide. Thus, shortly after their marriage in August of 1846, when Ellen White tasked James White with re-issuing her visions, he explained, "By the request of friends, it [her first vision] is republished in this little work, with *scripture* references, for the benefit of the little flock."¹³ His operational definition of "scripture" included both Apocryphal and pseudepigraphal writings. James merely observed and documented Ellen Harmon's pseudepigraphal and Apocryphal

sources. Thus, he provided seventy-seven cross-references, approximately ten percent of which were from pseudepigraphal or apocryphal writings.¹⁴ Ronald Graybill located a seventy-eighth instance that James White missed.¹⁵ James White's guileless inclusion of these writings might have been unsophisticated, but it simply did not occur to him [or Ellen] to differentiate. They shared this common definition of "scripture" in dialogue with her readers. Her reading of the "scripture" included 2 Esdras, Wisdom of Solomon, and multiple other uninspired, non-canonical books printed in the Harmon family Bible.¹⁶ Just as Ellen Harmon had studied and been suffused with the "sentiments" of Matthew, Ezekiel, John, Isaiah, Luke, and Revelation, she had studied and been submersed in the apocalyptic "sentiments" of 2 Esdras. One only needs to compare Ellen White's "scripture"-jammed first vision with the writings of S.S. Snow, Joshua Himes, and Eli Jacobs,¹⁷ to see how much it had become normative practice to make a Second Coming argument largely consisting of uninterrupted column-inches of scriptural quotations and citations.

In 2002, Denis Fortin wrote a scholarly analysis of Ellen White's use of 2 Esdras and the Wisdom of Solomon for the *Adventist Review*.¹⁸ He analyzed the seven "scripture" references documented by James White and concluded that there are "clear similarities in wording in three cases; the other four references are more elusive."¹⁹

Let us examine one case of the four which Fortin characterized as demonstrating "clear similarities in wording."²⁰

Ellen Harmon's First Vision	2 Esdras 2:19
<p>About the Temple were "seven other mountains; on which grew roses and lilies, and I saw the little ones climb, or if they chose, use their little wings and fly to the top of the mountains, and pluck the never fading flowers."</p>	<p>"Fountains flowing with milk and honey, and seven mighty mountains, whereupon there grow roses and lilies, whereby I will fill thy children with joy.</p>

Thus, Ellen is seeing in her vision a unique combination of three items she'd previously read in 2 Esdras: (seven mountains; roses and lilies; and little ones/children). She combines these three themes in a tender evocation of little children plucking the roses and lilies. In addition, she adds elements from William Foy's vision to 2 Esdras. Foy saw "an innumerable multitude," of little beings, the "size of children ten years of age";²¹ while Ellen Harmon as well saw "an innumerable company of little ones" who may "use their little wings and fly to the top of the mountains, and pluck the never fading flowers."²²

The seven mountains that Esdras and Ellen Harmon saw occurred in other apocalyptic literature. Enoch²³ was the pseudepigraphal author whom Ellen Harmon reported seeing on another planet. Ostensibly, Enoch also saw seven mountains in his visions of the heavens. In 1 Enoch 18:6–10, Enoch sees seven mountains made of specific precious stones: "But the middle one [of which] reached up to heaven, like the throne of God, of alabaster, and the summit of the throne of sapphire." Another element that Ellen Harmon's first vision, 2 Esdras, and 1 Enoch all have in common is that, in the immediate context of these seven mountains, all three seers describe various types of lovely trees near the seven mountains, as well as the Tree of Life. Second Esdras 2:18–19 states, "I have sanctified and prepared for you twelve trees loaded with different fruits."²⁴ In 1 Enoch 24:1–2²⁵ (below) there is another example of the significance of the "midst" with reference to the seven mountains. The throne of God or the Temple of God, the Shekinah presence, is in Enoch and in Harmon located in "the midst of seven mountains."

1. I went from thence to another place, and saw a mountain of fire flashing both by day and night. I proceeded towards it; and perceived seven splendid mountains, which were all different from each other.
2. Their stones were brilliant and beautiful; all were brilliant and splendid to behold; and beautiful was their surface. Three mountains were towards the east, and strengthened by being placed one upon another; and three were towards the south, strengthened in a similar manner. There were likewise deep valleys, which did not approach each other. And the seventh mountain was in the midst of them. In length they all

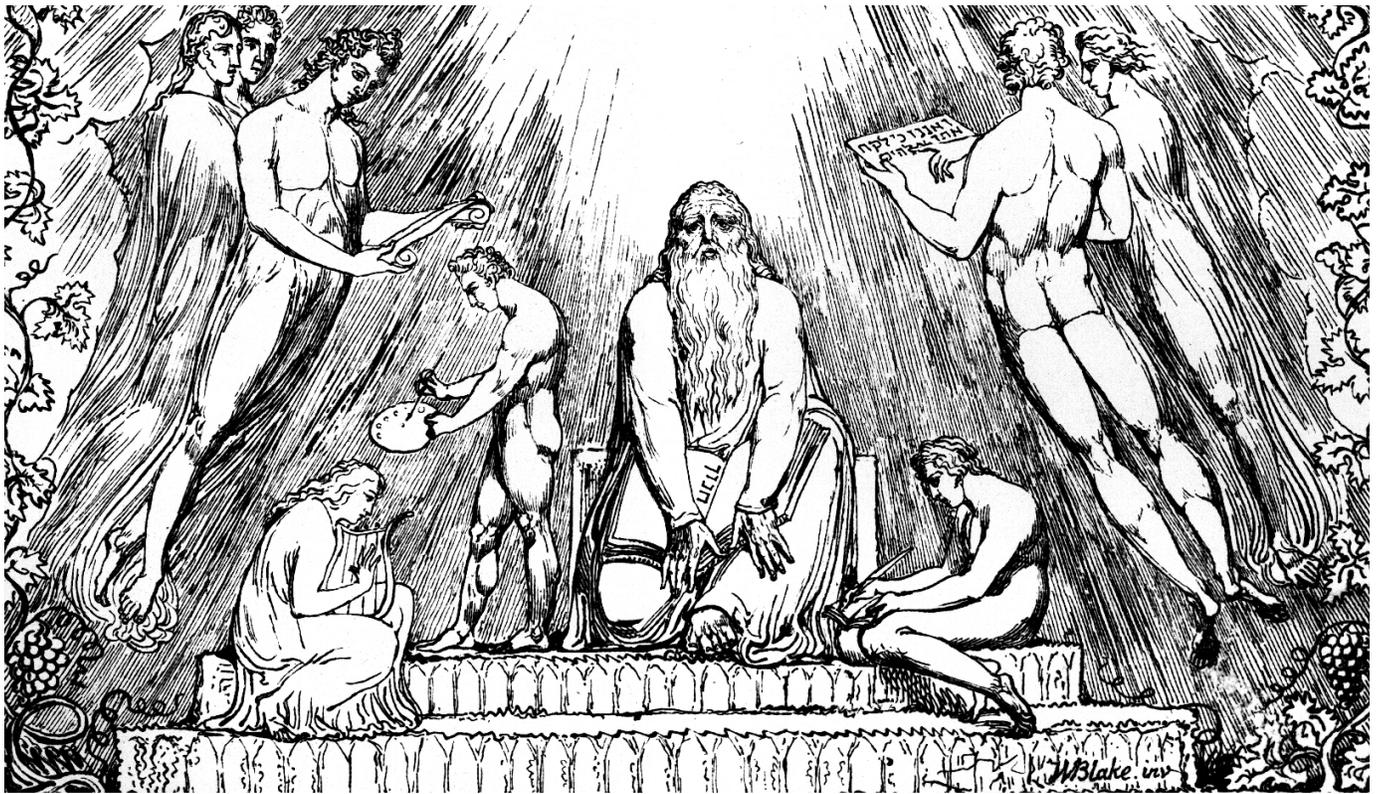


IMAGE SOURCE: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:William_Blake_Enoch_Lithograph_1807.jpg

William Blake's depiction of Enoch

resembled the seat of a throne, and *odoriferous trees* surrounded them [emphasis added].

The fact that Ellen Harmon first immersed herself in pseudepigraphal writings, and then incorporated them into a description of what she saw in heaven, is illustrative of the naïve conception which most people have of “the Bible.” When people hear the expression, “the Bible says,” they naturally have their own Bible in mind. Therefore, it comes as a surprise that there presently exist at least ten contradictory definitions of “the Bible.” And this does not count numerous other historical definitions in multiple geographic areas of the world. For the Old Testament (OT) alone, the accessible and convenient Wikipedia article on the Canon has a spread-sheet comparison of ten different versions of the OT.²⁶ Given this welter of witnesses, how does one determine which is the “real” or “genuine” version of the Bible?

In practice, as just illustrated by the case of Ellen Harmon, an individual’s determination as to which of these ten contradictory versions of the OT is genuine is mainly an accident of geography, birth, tradition, and what one’s parents believed. In short, the individual virtually never makes a conscious, informed determination as to what he

believes is authentic, divinely inspired, canonical scripture. He absorbs it unconsciously from his sociological community. This was why Ellen Harmon, James White, and many other shut-door Adventists presumed that certain pseudepigraphal and Apocryphal books contained authoritative, divine revelation.

As Fortin states, James White had “a high view of the reliability of this book” [2 Esdras]; indeed, he equated its author with Ezekiel and John the Revelator.²⁷ White says, for example, speaking of God’s apocalyptic wrath, that “Ezekiel *saw it* in the men with ‘slaughter-weapons,’ . . . John *saw it* in the ‘seven last plagues’; while Esdras *saw it* in the famine, pestilence, and the sword.” Thus, James White believed equally in the *inspiration and historicity* of Ezekiel, John, and Esdras. “*The Bible* [James’ term, emphasis added] contains many descriptions of this soon expected day of wrath.”²⁸ Exactly. Like James White believed that Ellen Harmon saw heavenly visions, he believed Esdras saw events of the last days as did Ellen! And “the wise” should pay heed.

Both Ellen Harmon, Joseph Bates, and many other proto-Adventists shared James White’s evaluation of 2 Esdras. Joseph Bates, the “real Founder” of the Seventh-day Adventist Church,²⁹ was merely the most influential. He

This demonstrates that Ellen Harmon's assimilation of ancient pseudepigraphal and Apocryphal material into her "I saw" visions is not unique. Foy's vision shares with 2 Esdras and the Wisdom of Solomon a special status in a peculiar genre of material from which Ellen White derived her views and information. Ellen White conferred upon 2 Esdras, the Apocrypha in general, and William Foy in particular, genuine prophetic status. The White Estate has recently rehabilitated Foy and elevated him to the status of a genuine, "unknown" prophet who never forsook his prophetic calling, as had been asserted for over a century.³⁶ Given that he predated Ellen Harmon, that she states she frequently went in a sleigh to hear him, that she had in her possession his published vision and believed that he had been given a divine message which she inherited, the most likely explanation for the parallel below is that Ellen Harmon was dependent on Foy, in addition to 2 Esdras and Wisdom of Solomon.

as the 1,260 day/year persecution of the "pure" church; the historical account of how the Papacy transformed Sabbath to Sunday; and the Papacy's persecution of Sabbath keepers who had purportedly always existed. It is understandable why Joseph Bates described the visions as reveries. But she was insistent that what she wrote came from God. The visions were so dramatic to her. She was seeing heaven and all these things. But she struggled with how to write it. Could they both be right? ■



In the late 1970's, while he was a doctoral student at the University of Chicago,

Donald E. Casebolt wrote two articles for *Spectrum* on Ellen White. Then he

changed career paths, becoming a Nurse Practitioner with an MSN degree as family NP. Since retirement he has examined the Millerite journals of the 1840's to study the relationship between Ellen White and contemporary sources.

Footnotes:

1. The ascription of fictional names of authors to works. The actual author of a "falsely attributed" pseudepigraphal book impersonated some famous figure like Ezra, Enoch, or Moses and used this assumed identity to "author" a document hundreds of years after said figure died.

2. Jacob M. Myers, *I & II Esdras: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1974), 126, 108–111. Emphasis added.

3. James S. White, *A Word to the "Little Flock"* (Brunswick, Maine: James White, 1847).

4. Donald R. McAdams, "Shifting Views of Inspiration: Ellen G. White Studies in the 1970s," *Spectrum* 10:4 (1980): 27–41.

5. Walter T. Rea, *The White Lie* (Turlock, California: M&R Publications, 1982).

6. E. G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 1858.

7. Fred Veltman, "The Desire of Ages Project: The Conclusions." *Ministry Magazine* (1990): 11–15; "The Desire of Ages Project: The Data" *Ministry Magazine* (1990): 4–7.

8. Ellen G. White, "Manuscript Releases," *Letter to Joseph Bates*, Vol. 5. (Hagerstown, Maryland: EG White Estate, July 13, 1847), 95–98.

9. J. White, *Little Flock*, 28.

William Foy's Vision	Ellen Harmon's Vision
<p>With a lovely voice, the guide then spoke to me and said: "Those that eat of the fruit of this tree, return to earth no more."</p> <p>[Foy's guide is also Jesus in the form of a "mighty angel" at whose feet a countless multitude of saints and angels worship.]</p>	<p>I asked Jesus to let me eat of the fruit. He said not now: "Those who eat of the fruit of this land, go back to earth no more." [These words in both Foy & Harmon are at the end of their visions; Foy then finds himself "in this lonely vale of tears," Ellen returns to "things of earth look so dreary."]</p>

Ellen White also incorporated other material that she had been taught in her *first visions*: multiple and distinctive Millerite doctrines, such

10. Ibid., Emphasis added.
11. Eric Anderson, "The Millerite Use of Prophecy: A Case Study of a 'Striking Fulfillment,'" in Ronald L. Numbers and Jonathan M. Butler, *The Disappointed: Millerism and Millenarianism in the Nineteenth Century* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1987), 78–91.
12. Ronald D. Graybill, "Under the Triple Eagle: Early Adventist Use of the Apocrypha," *Adventist Heritage* 2:1 (1987): 27–31.
13. White, *Little Flock*, 13. Emphasis added.
14. Ibid., 19–26.
15. Graybill, "Under the Triple Eagle," 31
16. Denis Fortin, "Sixty-six Books or Eighty-one? Did Ellen White Recommend the Apocrypha?" *Adventist Review* (2002): 8–13.
17. S. S. Snow, "Behold, The Bridegroom Cometh; Go Ye Out to Meet Him," *The True Midnight Cry* (August 22, 1844); Joshua V. Himes, "The Advent Herald," *Advent Herald and Signs of the Times Reporter* (October 30, 1844): 8; Eli Jacobs, "The Advent Believers," *Western Midnight Cry!!!* (November 29, 1844): 1–2.
18. See <http://archives.adventistreview.org/2002-1513/story2.html> for a readily accessible version. Readers are strongly encouraged to scrutinize this prior to continuing.
19. Fortin, "Sixty-six Books"
20. Ibid.
21. William E. Foy, *The Christian Experience of William E. Foy: Together with the two visions he received Jan. and Feb. 1842*, with Introduction by J. N. Loughborough, (Portland, Maine: John and Charles Pearson, 2011), 21.
22. J. White, *Little Flock*, 23.
23. Some might even make an argument that Jude's use of Enoch legitimated it as authentic revelation. The footnote below is the source of the following explanation: "The Book of Enoch is considered to have been written by Enoch, the seventh from Adam. It is considered an apocryphal book as well as a part of the pseudepigrapha (literally means "falsely ascribed" is a collection of works supposedly written by a biblical character), although it is not a part of the canonical Apocrypha. Ten fragments of the Book of Enoch have been found at Qumran in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The book was believed to have been composed by Enoch, the great-grandfather of Noah. It is generally believed that the Apostles and the writers of the New Testament were fully aware of the Book of Enoch, also called 1 Enoch. In fact, it is directly quoted in the Bible: Jude 1:14–15 "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, {15} To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."
24. Myers, *I & II Esdras*, 145.
25. <http://book-ofenoch.com/chapter-24/>.
26. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_canon.
27. Fortin, "Sixty-six Books"
28. White, *Little Flock*, 4. Emphasis added.
29. George Knight, *Joseph Bates: The Real Founder of Seventh-day Adventism* (Hagerstown, Maryland: Review & Herald Publishing, 2004).
30. Joseph Bates, *A Seal of the Living God* (New Bedford, Massachusetts: Benjamin Lindsey, 1849), 65. Emphasis added.
31. See Fortin, "Sixty-six Books" for original citation.
32. Graham Maxwell, "Can The Bible Be Trusted " *Signs of the Times* (1978): 18–19.
33. Lee Martin McDonald and James A. Sanders, Eds., *The Canon Debate* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002); Lee Martin McDonald, *The Biblical Canon: Its Origin, Transmission* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007).
34. Tim Poirier, "Black Forerunner to Ellen White: William E. Foy," *Spectrum* 17:5 (1987).
35. Delbert W. Baker, *The Unknown Prophet: Before Ellen White, God used William Ellis Foy* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1987).
36. Ibid.; Benjamin Baker, "'They lived near the bridge where we went over,'" *Spectrum* 42:2 (2014): 45–51.



“To Be Depended Upon”: *Ellen White and Blacks, Part III*

| BY BENJAMIN BAKER

Ellen White and race was the subject of Benjamin Baker's 2011 Howard University dissertation. This is the third article in an occasional series on the topic for Spectrum.

During the Sabbatarian Adventist era (c. 1845–1860), Ellen White did not visit and speak at black schools and churches as she did in the first years of the twentieth century, because such black Adventist institutions did not exist at the time. But she and her husband James did have meaningful relationships with individual African Americans in this foundational decade and a half, intriguing connections forged before the onset of the Civil War—a war which, quite simply, changed everything. These relationships are a type of synecdoche of the rapport that Sabbatarian Adventists, all Northerners, had with blacks before Adventism collided with the South.

After the Disappointment

The seventeen-year-old Ellen Harmon received her first vision sometime in December 1844, her second following a week later. The dashed Millerite believers in Portland, Maine, regularly met for religious meetings in December 1844 and early 1845 in the Harmon's house on Spruce Street. Ellen shared her visions at this venue, and there is a possibility that William Foy visited one of these gatherings at the Harmon home, and there “had an interview” with her (as she recalled in 1906), later interrupting her in a talk she was giving about her visions, jumping up and down and shouting praises to the Lord for revealing the same thing to him.¹ Adventism's first historian, John Loughborough, records that “after the close of the prophetic period, in the year 1845, he [Foy] heard another [Ellen Harmon] relate the same vision...”² Arthur White, Ellen White's grandson and most prolific biographer, contends that the Harmon house was too small to

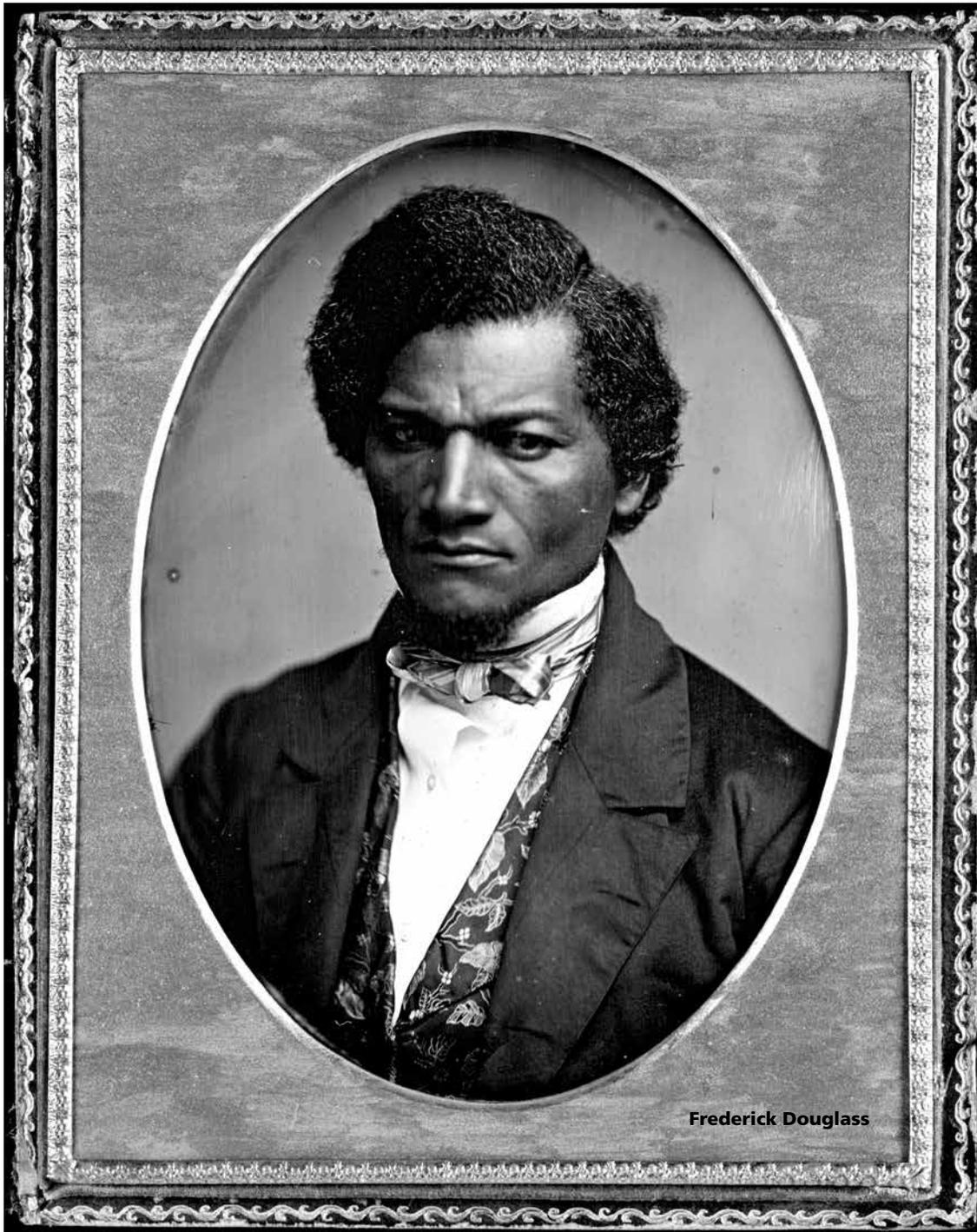
accommodate the crowd that was present during Foy's outburst.³ Whatever the case, it should be underscored that, as with Millerite crowds, African Americans were also present and integral in post-Disappointment gatherings, and, as we shall see, among Sabbatarian Adventists; and Ellen White had substantive encounters with blacks in this religious milieu.

There is a further connection between White and Foy. Aged believer John H. Pearson, Sr., had a positive impact on the teenaged visionary's spiritual walk, and was an early supporter of her prophetic gift. James White went on a year-long preaching tour with Pearson's son, John Pearson, Jr., from the summer of 1843 to the summer of 1844.⁴ It was during this time that John and his brother Charles met Foy, resulting in the Pearson brothers publishing *The Christian Experience of William E. Foy* in early 1845. James most likely met fellow Millerite minister Foy via these mutual contacts in these small circles. It is commonly held that John, Sr., introduced James and Ellen, who married on August 30, 1846.

The Douglass Family

Rochester, New York, a bustling port city of roughly 40,000 residents in the early 1850s, was one of the centers of Sabbatarian Adventism. In order to expand the fledgling publishing enterprise, on March 12, 1852, Sabbatarian Adventist leaders unanimously voted that a press and type be purchased post-haste and established in Rochester.⁵ James and Ellen White moved there the next month, and the Advent Review office began operating from their house at 124 Mt. Hope Avenue. The press staff, a who's who of early Adventism, produced the bimonthly *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, as well as a string of pamphlets, tracts, and books. The operations were later transferred to a house at 109 Monroe Street.

Rochester was renowned as an abolitionist stronghold



Adventist publications have tirelessly quoted Douglass' faith-filled reaction to the Leonid meteor shower of November 12, 1833, and news of his exploits were frequently related in the *Review and Herald* until his death in 1895.

and a depot vital to the Underground Railroad. During the Whites' time in Rochester, Frederick Douglass, famed orator and abolitionist, resided in the city on South Avenue, where he published the *North Star/Frederick Douglass' Paper*. In fact, just a couple of months after the Whites moved there, Douglass delivered what is considered to be among the greatest speeches in American History on Independence Day, 1852:

"What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" Adventist publications have tirelessly quoted Douglass' faith-filled reaction to the Leonid meteor shower of November 12, 1833,⁶ and news of his exploits were frequently related in the *Review and Herald* until his death in 1895. Merritt Kellogg eulogized Douglass in 540 words in the *Review* of March 5, 1895, concluding: "He will ever stand out in bold relief as a great and

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unique specimen of American manhood and greatness, and besides being honored by fitting monuments in marble and bronze, a grateful people will hold him in loving remembrance.”⁷ Douglass is buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery, just blocks away from the Whites’ one-time home.

It is not known if the Whites ever met Frederick Douglass during their time in Rochester. We do know, however, that Rosetta (born June 24, 1839), Douglass’ eldest child, was a teenager attending seminary and assisting her father with editing in the Rochester office during the three and a half years the Whites lived on Mt. Hope Avenue. Marrying a former slave named Nathan Sprague the year of the Emancipation Proclamation, Rosetta again worked as an assistant to her father when he was appointed US Marshal of the District of Columbia in 1877. In the nation’s capital, Rosetta met the prominent black Adventist physician James H. Howard (1861–1936) and his wife Isabel (née Cook), who introduced her to the Adventist message around 1889. Sometime after—the precise year is unsure—she became a member of the First Seventh-day Adventist Church in Washington. As Douglas Morgan, an authority on twentieth-century black Adventism in Washington, DC, has explored in recent monographs, the

sophisticated African American membership of First Church posed earnest and compelling objections to denominational leaders’ attempts to segregate congregations on the basis of race in the nation’s capital.⁸ Specifically, Rosetta Sprague—outspoken on issues of race as her father had been—is reported as loudly denouncing Ellen White’s firm dissuasion to an interracial couple endeavoring upon marriage, characterizing White’s stance as “a wicked catering to race prejudice.”⁹ Rosetta Douglass-Sprague died a respected Adventist and civil rights activist in Washington, DC, on November 25, 1906.

Eri L. Barr

“We humbly trust that the day is not far distant when the mountains and valleys of Vt. [Vermont] shall echo with the loud cry of the Third Angel’s Message, the last servant of our God be sealed, and his saints go forever free.”¹⁰ So wrote Eri L. Barr in the *Review and Herald* in late 1857. Now believed to be the earliest African American Adventist minister, Barr was an important and beloved itinerant leader-minister in 1850s Sabbatarian Adventism.

Born in Reading, Vermont, on May 23, 1814, Eri was the son of one William Barr, who is listed in census records as “free colored.”¹¹ Scant

is known of Barr's early life, other than that he studied English at Wesleyan Academy in Massachusetts in 1836, and, from a letter of his published in a Millerite paper, that he embraced the soon coming of Christ, steadfast years after the Great Disappointment.¹² Barr married Lori Z. Harvey, on December 7, 1842, in Reading, Vermont, and the couple had one child, Emma, the year of the Disappointment. Barr put bread on the table for his family as a mechanic, until he accepted the seventh-day Sabbath in the first years of the 1850s, and, shortly after, began itinerating as a Sabbatarian Adventist minister in New England.

Early Sabbatarian ministers most often traveled and worked in pairs. Barr is recorded as partnering with at least three other men: Frederick Wheeler in 1853; John Nevins Andrews in 1855; and Joseph Bates in 1855–1856. Barr and Bates worked particularly well together, as numerous reports cosigned by them in the *Review* attest, conducting at least a dozen meetings in tandem in 1856 alone.¹³ Bates is considered a cofounder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church along with James and Ellen White, and it is especially significant that in pre-Civil War America a man of color partnered with him in his founding efforts. An Adventist black minister would not speak so freely and frequently to white people again until Lewis C. Sheafe did so in Washington, DC, in the first decade of the twentieth century.¹⁴

In the tiny world of Sabbatarian Adventists, Eri Barr and James and Ellen White would meet on several occasions. The Whites first met Barr in “the mountains of Vermont,” Barr’s home region, on September 3, 1852, in Wolcott, at a meeting in a 400-seat tent that adjoined the house of Seth Hubbell Peck. James White writes that here he and Ellen “met Brn. Barr and [Alfred S.] Hutchins for the first time, and heard them speak of their present faith, hopes and joys. May the Lord give them success in winning souls to Christ, and the present truth.”¹⁵ James would mention the meeting again in a retrospective titled “A Sketch of the

Rise and Progress of Present Truth,” remarking that he and Ellen first met “our much beloved Brn. Byington, Hutchins, and Barr, who continue firm friends of the cause and devoted laborers,” while at meetings “generally attended with great success.”¹⁶ Later that month, on the morning of September 30, Ellen White had a vision in Dorchester, Massachusetts, the contents of which James White adumbrated to Leonard Hastings in a letter. One of the takeaways of the vision was “that brethren Baker, Ingraham, Barr and Wheeler were men to be depended upon.”¹⁷ In June of the next year, Barr reports meeting Robert and Eunice Harmon, Ellen’s parents, in Topsham, Maine, during an evangelistic tour of the state.¹⁸ In May 1857, the Whites attended a tent meeting that Barr was holding in Lancaster, Massachusetts. Although there is no extant correspondence of Ellen White to Barr, she did single him out in two letters addressed to others, to be remarked upon shortly.

In almost a decade as a Sabbatarian minister in the lean years between the Great Disappointment and the official selection of the name “Seventh-day Adventist” in 1860, Barr mainly labored in the New England states of Vermont, Maine, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, as well as New York. Barr was a versatile worker, visiting scattered believers in far-flung locales; correcting errors in doctrine; holding prayer sessions; conducting evangelistic meetings in town halls, tents, and believers’ homes; giving Bible studies; passing out tracts; delivering sermons on Sabbaths and other days of the week; and raising up churches. Barr’s effectiveness as a minister is evinced by his reports of conversions,¹⁹ requests from believers for him to labor in their areas, the featuring of his progress reports in the *Review*, and his leadership role in “general Conferences”—calling for and chairing—and other Sabbatarian Adventist decision-making bodies.²⁰ Staggeringly, it would not be until more than a century later that blacks took a leadership role in general Adventist conferences (i.e., mixed race) tasked with directing the movement at large.

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As it did with several other Sabbatarian leaders, Barr's frenetic pace had a deleterious effect on his domestic life. On December 10, 1858, Lori Barr obtained a divorce from Eri for the cause of "willing absence." The marriage had lasted for just over sixteen years.²¹ In this same period, Barr lent his voice with others in encouraging a Sabbatarian group in Connecticut to burn daguerreotypes and cases, with the rationale that the considerable monies spent on the pictures should have been used to fund the spread of the gospel. Both James and Ellen White chastised Barr especially for this, given his stature in the movement. James wrote that "We have been surprised and grieved to learn how some have run from place to place on the cars, encouraging a fanatical spirit in burning daguerreotypes, &c., worse than wasting their Lord's money, and leaving the brethren in distraction."²² Ellen White, meanwhile, altered her earlier commendation of Barr, upbraiding him for the daguerreotype furor, as well as for what she deemed to be his extreme application of the message to Laodicea in Revelation.

I saw that Brother Barr has not been standing in the counsel of God. He has had a wrong spirit, has followed impressions and feeling. It has led him astray. I saw that he was more to be blamed in Connecticut than the church there. He, a servant of Jesus Christ, should be ready to correct these wrong influences in the church, but he gave support to them instead of correcting them, and I saw that he had better have been working with his hands than exerting this wrong influence in the church.²³

Barr apologized for his actions on the ground level, and then issued a lengthy mea culpa in the *Review and Herald* in the summer of 1862.²⁴ Indicating that he had no ill-will toward the Whites, Barr was one of the vouchers for the integrity of James White in a pamphlet titled *Vindication of the Business Career of Elder James White*.²⁵

In the spring of 1861, Barr reported from Niles, New York, to *Review* readers that he was in "feeble health," to the point that it was difficult for him to write. For the next three years Barr would battle with tuberculosis under the care of Daniel Oviatt (with whom he had established a church in Niles), until he died a week before his fiftieth birthday on May 16, 1864, in Oviatt's home in Alma, New York. Nathan Fuller, a delegate to the first General Conference and a leading voice in the formation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, stated that at Barr's last moment "his mind was calm, and he felt that death would be a sweet rest."²⁶

Ellen White's few interactions with Eri Barr are intriguing in light of statements she would make half a century later. The young prophet's several affirmations of Barr's ministry show that she supported a black man ministering to whites, and indeed, didn't even view this dynamic through a racial lens at all. When the conditions changed, however—and the changed conditions are key here—Ellen White would repeatedly write lines like this from 1901: "Colored men are inclined to think that they are fitted to labor for white people, when they should devote themselves to doing missionary work among the colored people. There is plenty of room for intelligent colored men to labor for their own people..."²⁷ In a strange way, even White's suggestion that Barr quit the ministry and return to his mechanic trade shows that she viewed him as any other of the one-to-two-dozen Sabbatarian ministers, some to whom she made similar cease and desist advisement. And so, early in her ministry, a leitmotif in Ellen White's life emerges: her object in life would be the spread of the Adventist gospel through her movement—race, with its maddening attendant complications, would only be a deterrent to that object that had to be surmounted somehow.

The Hardys

Ellen White recorded in her diary on January 25, 1859:

It looks like a storm....We [Ellen, John and Anna Loughborough] rode fourteen miles to Brother Hardy's. Brother Cramer did not give us the right directions, and we went four miles out of our way. Did not arrive at Brother Hardy's until dinner time. It was snowing fast. We were heartily welcomed by the family. A good dinner was soon in readiness for us of which we thankfully partook. This is a colored family but although the house is poor and old, everything is arranged with neatness and exact order. The children are well behaved, intelligent, and interesting. May I yet have a better acquaintance with this dear family.²⁸

This African American family may have been inauspicious at the time, but they would exceed even the normal forerunner status of many Sabbatharians by accomplishing firsts statewide, as opposed to just in the movement. The patriarch of the clan, William J. Hardy, was born in Seneca County, New York—a critical zone in Whitney Cross' *Burned-over District*—on January 9, 1823.²⁹ Although New York was a slave state at the time of his birth, it is unknown whether Hardy was ever enslaved; a clue, however, may be found in the fact that the year New York outlawed slavery his parents moved to Washtenaw County, Michigan. Hardy married Eliza Watts in 1844, purchased a sizable farm in Gaines Township, Michigan, and the couple had their first of six children a year later. In the summer of 1857, Eliza Hardy accepted the Sabbatarian Adventist message upon hearing Joseph B. Frisbie preach in Caledonia, a town six miles from Gaines Township; her husband joined her shortly after.

Ellen White and the Loughboroughs probably first heard of the Hardy family from John Byington, later the inaugural General Conference president, who overnighted with the Hardys in early October 1857, scrawling in his diary, "a Mulatto family, but very good and kind."³⁰ Byington's lodging with the Hardys, as well as

White and Loughborough's visit in 1859, and speaking appointments at the Hardys' Caledonia church by notables such as Joseph Bates and John Andrews, show the Hardys' value to early Adventist pioneers. While he was leader of the Caledonia church, Hardy and his congregation put up \$1,050 (around \$21,300 in 2018) to have conscientious Adventists' drafts commuted during the Civil War, and, in the 1870s, contributed funds for the Adventist work in California and other frontiers.

During the 1860s and '70s, William Hardy's influence expanded simultaneously in the wider community. In 1872, he was elected the county supervisor for Gaines Township and served as a delegate to Republican county conventions, distinguished as Michigan's first African American to occupy public office, and the first Adventist elected politician. Eugene, William and Eliza's son, is purported to be the first African American high school graduate in the state of Michigan. Eugene went on to study law, while one of his other brothers, William, attended Battle Creek College.³¹

There is evidence that Ellen White's journaled desire—"May I yet have a better acquaintance with this dear family"—was satisfied. In an extremely vulnerable time for the sickly James White, and almost eight years after Ellen's previous visit to the Hardy home, the bitterly freezing morning of December 19, 1866, found the Whites plowing through inclement weather on the Michigan peninsula. James relates that the couple and their son Willie lodged in a "noisy rum tavern" the night previously, and after driving fifteen miles against a "keen" north wind at five in the morning to reach the Hardy residence, they "thank[ed] God for an Advent home, and simple, healthful fare."³²

William J. Hardy died on June 8, 1888, a local paper eulogizing him in words consistent with Ellen White's decades earlier: "He was a man of honor, honesty and integrity, and was appreciated by the community in which he lived."³³ Eliza Hardy followed her husband on December 3, 1890. Both are buried in Blaine Cemetery in

"He was a man of honor, honesty and integrity, and was appreciated by the community in which he lived."

Gaines Township, Michigan.

The Hardys, with their impeccable (Sabbatarian and Seventh-day) Adventist heritage, held a capacity in early Adventism the precise opposite of African Americans after the Civil War: as succorers of white Adventists, not needy, white-terrorized and impoverished former black captives in, say, *fin de siècle* Mississippi, whom Ellen White's son Edson encountered. The Hardys' succor went beyond just providing lodging and leadership; by the late 1860s the family was wealthy and were most likely the main source behind the draft deferment money and the financing of frontier missions. Like Eri Barr, they were among those who helped found—yes, who made—the Seventh-day Adventist Church. ■

Benjamin Baker is the creator of blacksdahistory.org. He writes from Maryland.

Footnotes:

1. See "Interview with Mrs. E. G. White, re Early Experiences," August 13, 1906, Manuscript 131, 1906, 3, White Estate.
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3. Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Early Years*, Volume 1, 1827–1862 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association), 63, asterisk note.
4. James White, *Life Incidents* (Battle Creek: Steam Press, 1868), 108–112.
5. "The Conference," *Adventist Review* (March 23, 1852): 4.
6. See for instance "I Left Baltimore..." *Review and Herald* (January 5, 1860): 51; "Seen as Sign of Second Advent," *Review and Herald* (November 20, 1919): 13.
7. M. E. Kellogg, "Frederick Douglass," *Review and Herald* (March 5, 1895): 151.
8. See Douglas Morgan's recent work, *Miracles of Courage, Color, and Christ* (Washington, D.C.: Helping Hands Press, 2014).
9. J. S. Washburn to W. C. White, February 18, 1903, 3, White Estate.
10. E. L. Barr, "Conference at Eden, Vt.," *Review and Herald* (November 26, 1857): 24.
11. E. L. Barr, Vermont, vital records, 1720–1908, ancestry.com. These insights into E. L. Barr are indebted to the late Stanley D. Hickerson's groundbreaking piece, "Was Eri L. Barr the First Black Adventist Minister?" *Adventist Review* (online), April 26, 2015; William Barr as "Free Colored:" 1840 US Federal Census: Reading, Windsor, Vermont, roll 548, page 279, Image 569, film 0027442.
12. E. L. Barr, "Letters, Bro. E. L. Barr," *The Voice of Truth, and Glad Tidings of the Kingdom at Hand* (March 11, 1846): 88.
13. Joseph Bates, "Tent Meetings," *Review and Herald* (October 2, 1855): 24.
14. See Douglas Morgan, *Lewis C. Sheafe: Apostle to Black America* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2010), 177–289.
15. James White, "Eastern Tour," *Review and Herald* (September 16, 1852): 80.
16. James White, "A Sketch of the Rise and Progress of the Present Truth," *Review and Herald* (January 14, 1858): 77.
17. James White to Leonard Hastings, September 30, 1852, White Estate.
18. E. L. Barr, "Dear Bro. White," *Review and Herald* (July 7, 1853): 31.
19. See for instance Barr's report of twelve converted in a month: E. L. Barr, "Dear Bro. White," *Review and Herald* (March 20, 1855): 199. Some of Barr's evangelistic meetings had hundreds in attendance. Joseph Bates and E. L. Barr, "Tent Meetings," *Review and Herald* (August 7, 1855): 21.
20. Barr chaired or reported in conferences for Sabbatarian Adventists in Maine, *Review and Herald* (June 19, 1856): 64; New England States, *Review and Herald* (December 25, 1856): 64; New Hampshire, *Review and Herald* (January 1, 1857): 72; Connecticut, *Review and Herald* (June 11, 1857): 48; and New York, *Review and Herald* (June 30, 1859): 48.
21. Record of Divorce, Eri L. Barr and Lori Z. Barr, December 7, 1842, New Hampshire Bureau of Vital Records, Ancestry.com.
22. James White, "New Fields," *Review and Herald* (October 6, 1859): 156.
23. E. G. White to William Bruce, and Andrew Graham, September 24, 1859, Letter 7, 1859.
24. Eri L. Barr, "From Bro. Barr," *Review and Herald* (June 24, 1862): 80.
25. *Vindication of the Business Career of Elder James White* (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press, 1863), 38.
26. Nathan Fuller, E. L. Barr obituary, *Review and Herald* (June 14, 1864): 23.
27. E. G. White to "Brethren in Denver," July 16, 1901, Letter 84, 1901, White Estate.
28. Ellen G. White, "Diary," January 25, 1859, Manuscript 5, 1859, White Estate.
29. "Obituary," *Review and Herald* (June 19, 1888): 398. The best source on the Hardy family is Lawrence W. Onsager and James R. Nix, "Adventism's First Black Family," *Adventist Review* (online), February 24, 2011. This section largely draws from their work.
30. John Byington, Diary, October 5, 1852, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University.
31. Franklin Everett, "Memorials of the Grand River Valley" (Chicago: The Chicago Legal News Company, 1878), 29 (590).
32. James White, "Report from Bro. White," *Review and Herald* (January 15, 1867): 66.
33. *Grand Rapids Eagle*, June 9, 1888, 4.

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The H. Scriptures

BY GEORGE HERBERT

Oh Book! infinite sweetness! let my heart
Suck ev'ry letter, and a hony gain,
Precious for any grief in any part;
To cleare the breast, to mollifie all pain.
Thou art all health, health thriving till it make
A full eternitie: thou art a masse
Of strange delights, where we may wish & take.
Ladies, look here; this is the thankfull glasse,
That mends the lookers eyes: this is the well
That washes what it shows. Who can indeare
Thy praise too much? thou art heav'ns Lidger here,
Working against the states of death and hell.
Thou art joyes handsell: heav'n lies flat in thee,
Subject to ev'ry mounters bended knee.

II

Oh that I knew how all thy lights combine,
And the configurations of their glorie!
Seeing not onely how each verse doth shine,
But all the constellations of the storie.
This verse marks that, and both do make a motion
Unto a third, that ten leaves off doth lie:
Then as dispersed herbs do watch a potion,
These three make up some Christians destinie:
Such are thy secrets, which my life makes good,
And comments on thee: for in ev'ry thing
Thy words do finde me out, & parallels bring,
And in another make me understood.
Starres are poore books, & oftentimes do misse:
This book of starres lights to eternall blisse.



George Herbert (1593–1633) was a metaphysical poet, orator, and priest of the Church of England. Herbert is today recognized as one of the foremost devotional lyricists in English literature. Walla Walla

University professor, Dr. Beverly Beem, notes that, "Herbert's poetry draws almost exclusively from the King James Version of the Bible. His purpose for writing is devotional. His audience is God." For more on Herbert's devotional poetry, see Beem's full article on page 39 of this issue.