

## DOING HISTORY



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Hiram Edson's Vision of the Heavenly Sanctuary

# *That Vision Thing:*

## THE SANCTUARY TEACHING, FORTY YEARS BEYOND GLACIER VIEW

BY TREVOR LLOYD

“I have spread my dreams under your feet,” confided William Butler Yeats. “Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.”<sup>1</sup> I take it as a reminder that the things we cherish most may be the most fragile and vulnerable to the careless, even calculated, strokes of others. In there, beside our delicate dreams, I would put something just as personally meaningful and open to threat—that is, my “vision.” And, for this occasion, I’m thinking of the term with a special meaning—and shall return to it several times in the course of the present paper.

British moral philosopher, Mary Midgley (1919–2018), put it memorably like this: we all live our lives against “an *imaginative vision* that serves as a background to all the rest of life” (emphasis supplied).<sup>2</sup> This *vision* is an amalgam of the facts, experiences, and beliefs we have put together, that gives security, meaning, and purpose to our daily lives, and without which we cannot function. Here are encapsulated our hopes, our goals, and our values, and its “imaginative patterns [and] networks of powerful symbols . . . suggest particular ways of interpreting the world.”<sup>3</sup>

Since this imaginative vision, forever in the background of our thinking, means so much to us, it is to be guarded constantly against suspected threat. Such inroads, Midgley points out, can happen with the emergence of a stubborn “brute” fact that will not fit into our present spectrum of selected facts and beliefs, even threatening its inner core. Under these conditions, such a person, faced with the loss of “a whole greater than oneself,” may come to believe that there is no ultimate meaning to life and nothing to live for.<sup>4</sup> Small wonder that such a prospect raises fear and anger! Similarly, it is readily conceivable that criticism of a person with whom we have closely identified may well disturb our raft of personal hopes, values, goals, and purposes—for, if these, our heroes, are vulnerable, then there may be vital planks of our under-girding imaginative vision also under threat.

I have no indication that Richard Hammill (1913–1997) had seen any of Midgley’s writings; however, in

1990, ten years beyond the historic Glacier View meeting, he showed an awareness of the spirit of the position she proposed. In this regard, he pointed out the need, in discussing the sanctuary teaching, for “tolerance, Christian love, and mutual respect,” noting that “[w]hen deeply-held and long-cherished religious beliefs are called in question, most Christians become emotional and grievously troubled.”<sup>5</sup> It is evident that, for many of us, the rationale for our religious beliefs lies at the core of our personal imaginative vision(s).

It has been suggested that, with the appearance of a “brute” fact, three possible responses are open to us. We can try to avoid facing the challenge it presents—for example, in our conversations with others and in our reading—and, should such threats arise, we might try to live as if they had not entered our consciousness: not an easy option, nor an intellectually honest one should it continue for long!<sup>6</sup> Or, we can give up on our former sense of personal identity, with its hopes, goals and values, and live without purpose and sense of direction—a shattering option indeed! Best of all, we can work, perhaps with the help of someone we trust, to adjust our present imaginative vision, even reconstructing it, commencing with the inner core, to allow the newly troublesome fact to find a suitable place.

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The foregoing Yeats/Midgley gambit has been outlined with the intention of throwing light on the process of doctrinal change within an hierarchical denominational system—in the present case, adjustment of the long-standing sanctuary doctrine within the confines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We are to inquire whether, quite apart from the involvement of doctrinal dissidents, adjustment/change has taken place at official church levels in the teachings supporting this central doctrinal pillar—and in what directions, with what results. We are to note particularly the maintenance of corporate and individual imaginative vision(s).

Before we look for attempts to bring about such



British moral philosopher, Mary Midgley, advised that we all live our lives against the backdrop of our chosen “imaginative vision” that encapsulates our hopes, our goals, and our values.

change or update in the Seventh-day Adventist sanctuary doctrine, we are to look back at four chapters in the book of Daniel (2, 7, 8, 9) which, from early in the nineteenth century, played a central part in the formation of this doctrinal pillar. This is to be followed by a review of the historic interpretation of the sanctuary doctrine, based largely on the content of these chapters. With this settled, an inquiry is to be conducted for updates in the sanctuary teaching as endorsed by Adventist leaders in the 1950s’ *Questions on Doctrine (QoD)* deliberations, and in the 1980 convocation of the Sanctuary Review Committee (SRC) at Glacier View Ranch, Colorado.<sup>7</sup>

The discussion commences, following, with a refresher of the above prophetic chapters of Daniel.

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### Where the Sanctuary Discussions Began

The book of Daniel is renowned amongst Adventists for anticipating both the first and second advents of Jesus. This appears first in Chapter 2, with a dream of a multi-metal image (gold, silver, brass, and iron) representing the successive kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Grecia, and Rome, followed by the fragmented nations of Europe. All of these are ultimately crushed by a stone prefiguring an everlasting kingdom to be set up on earth by the God of heaven.

A similar outcome is foreseen in Chapter 7, with these same four kingdoms represented, this time, in a vision of four fearsome beasts (a lion, a bear, a leopard, and a non-descript beast), the last of which has ten horns, of which

three are uprooted by a further horn. This was a little one with human-type eyes and mouth, which became “more stout” than any of the other horns, and went on to “speak great words against the most High” and to “wear out” God’s saints. This was followed immediately (in the vision) by the setting up of a court of judgment at which “the Ancient of days” presided, the record books were opened, and “one like the Son of man” arrived in glory to be given “an everlasting dominion.” At this time, “judgment was given to the saints of the Most High” who go on to “possess the kingdom forever.” Meanwhile, the heavenly judgment in session decrees that this former little, and now stout, horn will lose its dominion and be destroyed (7:26). We could try remembering this first “little horn” as the *boasting horn*—because of its “mouth speaking great things.” (We are due, following, to come across a further, equally evil, “little horn” that is quite physical in its attacks. I suggest we call that one the *trampling horn*.)

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So much for dreams/visions representing kingdoms as metals and as wild beasts. The vision of Chapter 8 brings in two sacrificial animals—a ram (for Medo-Persia) and a he-goat (for Grecia). In this vision, Daniel found himself by a river where he saw a formidable ram standing on the bank and then “pushing westward, and northward, and southward” so that none was able to resist him. That is, until a male goat with a horn between its eyes, came charging swiftly from the west. When they met, the ram was crushed and the goat “waxed very great” until, at the height of its powers, its “great horn” (representing its first king) was broken.

In the above setting, the breaking of the single horn was a cue for four other horns to spring up in its place, “toward the four winds of heaven.” Then, from one of those four horns<sup>8</sup> “came forth a little one” (the one I’m suggesting we call the trampling horn), which exerted an “exceeding great” influence to the south, to the east, and to the “pleasant land.” This little horn “magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily *sacrifice* was taken away, and the place of his [the prince’s] sanctuary was cast down.” Still further, this trampling horn “cast down the truth to the ground,” meanwhile practicing and prospering.

The Daniel 8 vision comes to its climax with a brief question-and-answer exchange between two “saints,” one

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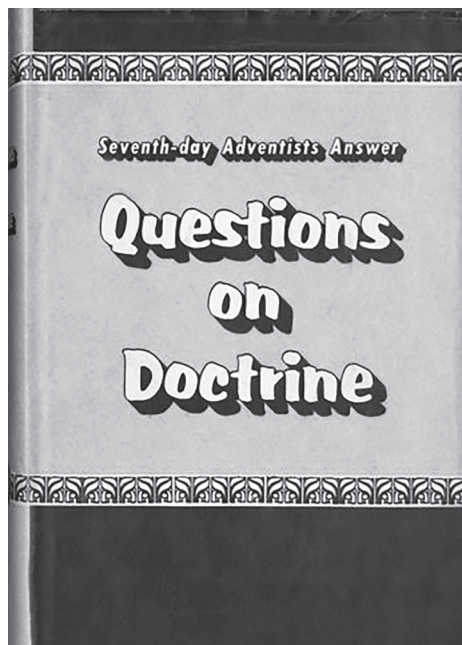
of whom asks how long all of this would be—specifically, the taking away of the “daily *sacrifice*” and the treading under foot, by the trampling horn, of “the sanctuary and the host” (8:13). Immediately, a reply comes back: “Unto two thousand and three hundred days: then shall the sanctuary be cleansed” (8:14).

The remainder of Chapter 8 is made up of a call to the angel Gabriel to give Daniel understanding of the vision he has just seen (8:16), followed by Gabriel’s going on with this assignment. In spite of such personal heavenly attention, in the last verse of the chapter, Daniel reports that he “was astonished at the vision” and that “none understood it” (8:27).

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The story continues in Daniel 9—with a difference. From Daniel 8:15 to the end of the book, there are no further figurative visions: the angel Gabriel, for example, speaks of literal events, though at times metaphorical expressions may be used.

In Chapter 9, we are told that the action is to take place in “the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, . . . of the seed of the Medes.” This means that the youthful, pulse-and-water Daniel of Chapter 1 is now approaching ninety years of age and aware that Jeremiah’s seventy-year prophecy regarding “the desolations of



Jerusalem” is about to be accomplished. Accordingly, more than half of the chapter is made up of his prayer for God to intervene, particularly on behalf of “thy sanctuary that is desolate” (9:17).

With this fairly long prayer still on his lips, Daniel feels the touch of a hand, and he turns to discover Gabriel is again by his side. In a reminder of the incomplete nature of his previous visit, the heavenly visitor bids Daniel “understand the matter, and consider the vision” (9:23). It then becomes clear that the marker for the close of the seventy years that

Daniel has had upon his heart and mind is to be the commencement of a further period—this time seventy *weeks* that are to be “determined upon [his] people.” Commencing from “the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem,” this time projection will see the inauguration of a series of events of cosmic proportions. First, the doom is pronounced of all forms of evil: high-handed transgression (*pasha*, in the original Hebrew), sinful “missing of the mark” (*chata*), and even the ingrained perverseness of iniquity (*awon*) in the human heart. At the same time, “everlasting righteousness” is to be ushered in, the prophetic vision is to be sealed up, and the “most Holy” is to be anointed (9:24).

These monumental provisions are to be accompanied by the arrival of none other than “Messiah the Prince”



who is to “be cut off, but not for himself,” and who “shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease.” This is to be followed by the destruction of “the city and the sanctuary” and “desolations” (9:25–27), whereupon we discover that Jerusalem was to be seen as returning to the state in which it was found at the commencement of the seventy years (and at the opening of the Book of Daniel). However, in between, Heaven is to show its hand in a new and special way. There is bright hope for the future, and Planet Earth can never be the same again.

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These four prophetic chapters held special interest for Millerite Adventists and, later, Seventh-day Adventists, and it turns out they have been variously interpreted over the past two hundred years. For the present, I want to look into the traditional Adventist way of going about this interpretation for Daniel 7, 8, and 9, especially. With this accomplished, we are to inquire whether church-sponsored efforts have been made to find any alternative interpretations of these three chapters, in particular. These two styles of interpretation are dubbed in the present paper as “Historic” and “Updated,” and we are to look for them in this order.

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### **The Historic Interpretation of Daniel 7, 8, and 9—As Seen by William Miller and His Predecessors**

Elements of the historic position on Daniel 7, 8, and 9 go back at least to the early nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup> With the Great Lisbon Earthquake (November 1, 1755) and the horrors of the French Revolutionary Terror (September/October 1793 to July 1794) well within living memory, there were ample reasons to take an interest in the fulfillment of prophecy. Then, upon the imprisonment and exile of Pope Pius VI by the French revolutionary General Berthier (February 1798), contemporary confirmation was accepted for the 1,260 day/year prophecy.<sup>10</sup>

Serious Bible students, from the eighteenth century, were intent on allotting specific years for the commence-

ment of the various time prophecies in the book of Daniel. Following the example of Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727) in settling on 457 BC for the commencement of the 70 weeks/490 years of Daniel 9:24–27, thirteen new historicist-type commentaries went so far as to offer interpretation for details as specific as the identity of the little horn of Daniel 8.<sup>11</sup> Some linked the seventy weeks with the 2,300 days/years of Daniel 8:14. Along similar lines, LeRoy Froom reports that a number of expositors in the earlier 1800s were predicting the 2,300 days/years of Daniel 8:14 would find fulfillment “somewhere between 1843 and 1847.”<sup>12</sup>

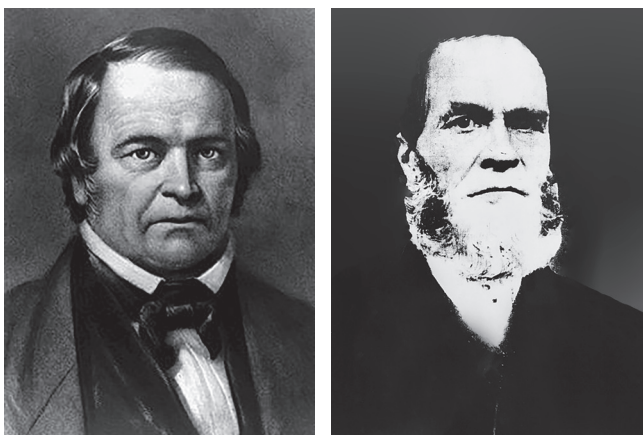
Enter former army captain *cum* farmer, William Miller (1782–1849), with a deep commitment to “arriv[ing] at truth through [his] own study of the Bible,” without dependence on a knowledge of the original languages in which the Scriptures were written. Such study led to his confirmation of the main historic pillars set up by his predecessors, together with what he saw as fifteen separate prophetic lines, all pointing to the return of Jesus in 1843.<sup>13</sup>

One of these additional prophecies, based on Leviticus 26:18–28, Miller titled the “prophecy of Moses.” There he found a warning to Israel that, should they disobey, God would “bring seven times more plagues upon [them].” His Cruden’s Concordance led him to believe that the word *time/times* is well interpreted as a year so that, for this passage in Leviticus, seven times (7x360) would come out as 2,520 years which, commencing with the arrest of King Manasseh by the Babylonians in 677 BC (indicated by the Ussher chronology in Miller’s copy of the KJV), reached to the year 1843.

Contemporary academic, Professor George Bush, was ready to accept Miller’s use of the year-day principle; however, he pointed out that the word for “time” is not found in the Hebrew text from which the KJV translation of Leviticus 26:18–28 is made. There, Bush pointed out, the word means no more than “sevenfold,” that is, *seven*

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William Miller (left) and Hiram Edson (right)

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In addition to his seemingly unbounded confidence in the KJV translation, Miller laid down as one of his rules for scriptural interpretation that the One who “takes notice of the sparrow, and numbers the hairs of our head, will guard the translation of his own word, and throw a barrier around it, and prevent those who sincerely trust in God, and put implicit confidence in his word, from erring far from the truth, though they may not understand Hebrew or Greek.”<sup>15</sup>

Quite apart from the niceties of translation from the Hebrew, there was a major difference between Miller and most of his contemporaries with regard to the event(s) to be anticipated at the end of the 2,300 days of Daniel 8:14. He saw the Second Advent and the cleansing of the earth by fire as coming at that time, to be followed by the millennium. In contrast, the popular attitude was that life on earth was improving and that they could look forward to a thousand years of peace and plenty, to be followed by the Second Advent. So, then, while other religious groups were bent on hastening social reform, Miller and his associates were committed to proclaiming the date of Jesus’s return and to calling for personal preparedness for that event.<sup>16</sup>

When Jesus did not return in the spring of 1844, several of Miller’s contemporaries made further calculations related to the ancient Jewish Day of Atonement and settled on October 22, 1844, as the true terminus of the 2,300 day-year prophecy.<sup>17</sup> Miller withheld his support until shortly before the predicted date.

## Sabbatarian Adventists Add Their Part to the Historic Interpretation of the Sanctuary

At the stroke of midnight on October 22, 1844, The Great Second Advent Movement proclaimed by William Miller and his associates was replaced by The Great Disappointment. Precisely how many, in fact, had their hopes dashed, we cannot tell for sure. Whatever the number, it is evident that, after the proclaimed date, they dispersed in several directions. Some, with their *imaginative visions* shattered, lost faith altogether; some set further dates; and some (the spiritualizers) claimed that Jesus had come, but not visibly.

Of special interest in the present inquiry is the small group that grew into the Seventh-day Adventist Church—a group that came to believe that the already-advocated terminus for the 2,300 days/years of the Daniel 8:14 prophecy and the cleansing of the sanctuary (corrected to October 22, 1844) was beyond question, but that the event proposed by William Miller was incorrect. For them, a fresh interpretation was initiated by a prosperous farmer, Hiram Edson, who lived near the Erie Canal, south of the township of Port Gibson, New York. For some months prior to October 22, he had led an earnest group that included a medical doctor, Franklin Hahn, and a talented young schoolteacher, Owen Crosier.

After a sorrowful night and the breaking of the day, several of them went to Edson’s barn for prayer. There they remained “until the witness of the Spirit was given that [their] prayers were accepted, and that light would be given.”<sup>18</sup> Following breakfast, several of them decided to call on their neighbors to pass on the encouragement they had received, and set off across a corn field. It was an auspicious moment. Midway, Edson felt arrested in his walk. He told later how, looking up, he seemed to catch a view through into the heavens and was convicted that Jesus was not to come to this earth at the close of the 2,300 days. Rather, Edson reported, “He, for the first time, entered on that day into the second apartment of [the heavenly] sanctuary, and that he had a work to perform in the most holy before coming to this earth.”

With no understanding, at that time, of what such a work might be, Hahn and Crosier joined Edson, equipped with “Bibles and concordance and little else, [as] they pioneered their way into the mazes of the sanctuary question.”<sup>19</sup> From a study of Leviticus, Daniel 7–9, Hebrews,

and Revelation, especially, they became convinced that Edson's insight of October 23 was correct, that the sanctuary to be cleansed in Daniel 8:14 was the sanctuary in heaven, and that the cleansing required was the "blotting out" of the confessed sins of believers accumulated there through the ages. This work they saw as the anti-type of the yearly Day of Atonement service of the wilderness sanctuary detailed in Leviticus 16, and itself involving the cleansing of the tabernacle from the sins accumulated there as a result of the daily sacrificial offerings during the preceding year.

As Edson, Hahn, and Crosier had hoped, their findings were a source of renewed hope and encouragement both for themselves and for the "little flock" that was emerging around them. This "new understanding of the cleansing of the sanctuary became," as Seventh-day Adventist historian, George Knight, puts it, "a primary building block in the development of Sabbatarian Adventist theology." Clearly, James White saw things that way, describing the newly understood sanctuary teaching as "the key to the great Advent movement, making all plain. Without it the movement is inexplicable." It came to be regarded as "the great center."<sup>20</sup> In terms of our present discussion, here was a powerful, newly minted *imaginative vision*.

Related doctrines came to be clustered around the acceptance of the cleansing of the sanctuary. For example, by the close of 1846, the seventh-day Sabbath had become well accepted by the earliest pioneers of the church, with former ship's captain, Joseph Bates, prompt to point out that, at the sounding of the seventh trumpet (Revelation 15:15–19) and the giving way of the "kingdoms of this world" to the "kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ," "the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament." All were aware that within the ark was to be found the law of God enshrining the Sabbath commandment.<sup>21</sup>

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That same law was seen as the basis for an "investigative judgment," commencing in 1844, of all who have claimed to be God's children—the dead first, and going on to the judgment of the living, who could not tell whether on any given day their names might come up and their lives be examined for unconfessed sin.

In unmistakable terms, this work of judgment of the lives of God's people was seen as prefigured in the judgment scene in Daniel 7:9–14, with the heavenly court set up and its books opened to determine the eternal destinies of God's people. The process was celebrated in a hymn with words and music

composed by the gifted Adventist writer, Franklin Belden (1858–1945).<sup>22</sup> Written in 1886, the hymn was published that same year in *The Seventh-Day [sic] Adventist Hymn and Tune Book* and in a succession of hymnals down to the one published in 1985 and officially in use in Adventist churches well into the new century. With the opening words taken directly from the Daniel 7 scene, the hymn placed the worshippers personally in the judgment setting:

The judgment has set, the books have been opened;  
 How shall we stand in that great day  
 When every thought, and word, and action,  
 God, the righteous Judge, shall weigh?

The work is begun with those who are sleeping,  
 Soon will the living here be tried.

Twice president of the Australasian Division, W. G. Turner urged, in a 1938 Week of Prayer reading, the solemnity of going about our daily lives in the shadow of the judgment. "We are living," he advised his readers,

in the antitypical day of atonement. . . . living  
 in this time today. The cleansing of the [wil-

derness] sanctuary and the putting away of sin, demanded that each afflict his soul, and with deep repentance and sincere confession see that everything was right between himself and his neighbor, and right with his God.

Further into the article, Turner quoted 1 John 2:1, (“If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous”) and later still advised: “The work of judgment is almost completed. Our names may soon be considered.”<sup>23</sup>

Returning to the two types of services in the wilderness tabernacle ritual, we may note a further critical feature maintained specifically in the historic Adventist interpretation of the sanctuary service into the post-1844 era. In the daily service, following the confession of sin by the repentant sinner over the sacrificial victim, the animal was slain, and some of its blood was placed by the officiating priest on the horns of the altar of burnt offering in the courtyard. The blood of animals slain for corporate sins of the people could be carried into the holy place and sprinkled before the curtain adjacent to the most holy place. In view of the conviction that “[s]ins were conveyed into the sanctuary during the year by the blood of the personal sin-offerings offered daily at the door of the tabernacle,” this procedure was seen as adding to the year’s accumulation of sins in the sanctuary.<sup>24</sup>

Later, on the yearly Day of Atonement, the “Lord’s goat” was sacrificed by the high priest and its blood was carried beyond the inner curtain into the most holy place, where it was sprinkled on the mercy seat.<sup>25</sup> In the tracing of his steps back to the sanctuary courtyard, the high priest was regarded as carrying the year’s aggregated sins on his own person.<sup>26</sup> There he “confessed” those sins over

the head of the goat for “Azazel,” which was then taken by a “fit man” out into the wilderness, never to return to the camp. So was the sanctuary and the camp cleansed for another year.<sup>27</sup>

It was the discovery, via the ever-trusty concordance, of the word “cleansed” in Leviticus 16, where the Day of Atonement is described in detail, that gave the key to the meaning of Daniel 8:14 (KJV) and, later, an understanding of what is presently taking place in the most holy place of the sanctuary in heaven. There a “cleansing,” or “blotting out of sins” was said to have commenced on October 22, 1844.

Ever at the ground of these historic interpretations of the sanctuary, was Edson’s momentous insight of October 23, 1844—that, on the previous day, Jesus had moved from a first-apartment ministry in the heavenly *holy place* to a second-apartment ministry in the heavenly most holy place. If this were to stand, an important question remained to be answered. Within several years of the ascension of Jesus, did not Stephen, while being stoned, see “the Son of man standing on the right hand of God”?<sup>28</sup> And, at the writing of the Epistle to the Hebrews, during the first century, had not Jesus “when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high”?<sup>29</sup> With that type of proximity to his Father given in Scripture, how could Jesus be confined to the holy place in the heavenly sanctuary for the better part of two thousand years? Under the historic interpretation, there was a ready answer, as follows.

Future General Conference president, William H. Branson (1887–1961), responded in practical terms.<sup>30</sup> Taking the judgment scene in Daniel 7:9, 10 as a description of an investigative judgment of God’s people, Branson noted that God’s throne “was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire” (7:9). He turned his attention, as well, to the description in Ezekiel 1:5–21 of the lightning-like movement of the four living creatures, taken to comprise God’s “living throne.” He saw these as indicating that “the throne of God is movable, and that its location is changed from time to time.” By Branson’s reckoning, there had been no change of location for God’s throne for the better part of two thousand years: “It had been situated in the first room of the sanctuary from the beginning of [Christ’s] priestly ministry down to the time of the judgment, and at that time is shifted into the second

Photo courtesy of South Pacific Division Heritage Centre.



Adventist Archives



William Gordon Turner, c. 1920 (left) and William H. Branson (right)



Aware their answers would be minutely examined for logical grounding in Scripture, for demonstrable understanding of the original languages, and for awareness of historical precedent, the Adventist conferees approached their assignment with meticulous attention to detail.

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room, or most holy place.” By this means, “the ministry of Christ as high priest was performed in the presence of the Father in the first apartment of the sanctuary in heaven until [the close of the 2,300 days].”<sup>31</sup>

Further, in support of Jesus’s first apartment ministry at the ascension, Branson referred to other Scripture passages. He took the reference in Revelation 1:13 to “one like unto the Son of man” standing “in the midst of the seven candlesticks” as an indication that Jesus, when John the Revelator saw him at that post-ascension moment, was represented as standing within the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary—and this, in view of the candlesticks in the earthly type, being in the first apartment.<sup>32</sup> As well, does not Hebrews 6:19, 20 refer to our high priest as having entered as our Forerunner “within the veil,” and this without qualification; whereas “[w]hen Paul refers to the dividing veil, he calls it ‘the second veil’”?<sup>33</sup>

### **Summary of the Historic Interpretation of the Sanctuary**

The foregoing gives an overview of what has been seen as the historic view of the sanctuary doctrine as held by Seventh-day Adventists for the better part of two hundred years. This became a vital component of the corporate “imaginative vision” for the church as a whole, and the essence of an individual “imaginative vision” for thousands of believers. Its propositions are summarized following:

- On the basis of the long-held, year-day principle, the 2,300-day period given in Daniel 8:14 is to be interpreted as 2,300 years, is to commence in 457 BC as

for the starting point of the seventy-week prophecy of Daniel 9:24, 25, and is to end on October 22, 1844.

- In parallel with the daily service in the earthly tabernacle, Jesus’s ministry in heaven to October 22, 1844, took place in the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary and has to do with the forgiveness of sins.
- The cleansing mentioned in Daniel 8:14 refers to the sanctuary in heaven where the confessed/forgiven sins of God’s people have been accumulating over the centuries in the books of record.
- From October 22, 1844, in parallel with the yearly Day of Atonement service of the earthly tabernacle, Jesus’s ministry moved to the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary and has to do with the cleansing/blotting out of the record of confessed/forgiven sins.
- The above process of the blotting out of sins, first for the dead and then for the living, involves a work of judgment and is foretold in Daniel 7:9, 10 and Revelation 14:6–12.
- Unaware of when our names may come up for judgment, we are to examine our hearts for unconfessed and unforsaken sin.
- The Father’s throne is movable and, after being in the holy place from Jesus’s ascension to the close of the 2,300 days, it transferred to the most holy place. By this means, Jesus’s ministry in both heavenly apartments may be seen as in the Father’s presence.

It may be noted that the historic interpretation of Daniel 8:14, as surveyed above, remained generally stable for over one hundred years. Like any deeply heart-felt imaginative vision, its terms came to be seen as in-

violate and essential to the identity and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It was considered that, without it, this church could be regarded as a deception. Any suggestion of tampering with it was to be met with indignation, even anger. Adventist pastors who persisted in this direction were eventually defrocked.<sup>34</sup>

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At this point, as foreshadowed earlier, our inquiry is due to turn in a different direction, asking if there have been significant moves at official church levels toward adjustment of the above historic interpretation of the sanctuary doctrine. Our inquiry focuses on two periods, in particular: one in the 1950s and the other in the 1980s. Interestingly, both of these were at times of doctrinal inquiry. In their own way, both occasions involved challenges to corporate and individual *imaginative vision*.<sup>35</sup>

### **Has the Historic Interpretation of Key Passages in Daniel 7–9 Been Further Examined?**

It is evident that times of challenge can be a benefit in the gaining of further understanding of doctrinal positions, at times prompting change at deep levels. The challenges were thoroughly real in the early 1950s, as indicated following.

#### **1. The evangelical inquiries of the 1950s and the “seventy weeks” of Daniel 9:24 (KJV)—are they actually “weeks” after all?**

Fresh inquiry into the significance of Daniel 9:24 came about in a memorable setting. In the mid-1950s, Protestant evangelical writer, Walter Ralston Martin (1928–1984), approached the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Washington, DC, seeking access to printed material to allow for a re-examination of his earlier view that Adventism is a cult (along with Jehovah’s Witnesses, Christian Scientists, Mormons, and others).<sup>36</sup> Key doctrinal areas due for investigation included the inspiration of the Bible as God’s Word and as sole basis of doctrine; the eternal deity of Jesus and his sinless earthly life; Jesus’s all-sufficient atonement on the cross; and Adventist understanding of human conditional immortality and of the sanctuary. Martin’s inquiries were summed up in forty-eight questions, the answers to which he planned to use in the preparation of a book exclusively on Adventists.<sup>37</sup> A close collaborator in the original and subsequent

approaches was Donald Grey Barnhouse (1895–1960), editor of a widely circulated and influential evangelical journal, *Eternity*. The verdict reached by these two men was set to be broadcast throughout the evangelical religious world.

The set of questions was willingly accepted by a group of Adventist conferees at church headquarters in Washington, DC. This was made up of historian/apologist, LeRoy Edwin Froom (1890–1974); evangelist and secretary of the General Conference Ministerial Association, Roy Allan Anderson (1895–1985); Hebrew scholar, Walter Edwin Read (1883–1976); and local conference president, Tobias Edgar Unruh (1894–1982), whose initial contact with Barnhouse had opened up the whole inquiry.<sup>38</sup>

Aware their answers would be minutely examined for logical grounding in Scripture, for demonstrable understanding of the original languages, and for awareness of historical precedent, the Adventist conferees approached their assignment with meticulous attention to detail. This sort of scholarly precision applied alike to the key areas referred to above and to areas their invigilators might regard as optional.

In the above context, their answers concerning the topic raised in Question 25 (“Relation of Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9 to the 2,300 days of Daniel 8”) are of special interest. At the outset, they were fully aware that, following the Daniel 8 vision, there are no additional prophetic symbols in the whole of the book of Daniel—no further wild beasts, no domestic animals, no evil little horns—all in literal style from immediately after the crucial declaration of 8:14, when the angel Gabriel is called on to explain what the prophet has seen in “the vision.” This, as we have noted, Gabriel launches into, but is cut short when Daniel is emotionally and physically overcome (8:27).

On the above basis, the literal approach continues into Chapter 9, where Gabriel returns and bids the prophet to “understand the matter, and consider *the vision*” (9:23, emphasis supplied). At this point, Daniel’s heavenly visitor introduces the prophecy of “seventy weeks” (9:24).

A question faced by the 1950s Adventist conferees is whether this period of seventy weeks is to be taken as symbolic (and relevant to the year-day principle) or is to be seen as literal. Aware that they were to be transparently consistent, the foursome made it clear where they stood: “inasmuch as Daniel 9:24–27 is a portion of the *literal ex-*

planation of the symbolic vision, we would logically expect the time elements likewise to be given in literal terms.”<sup>39</sup> This, they were aware, would mean that, with a literal seventy weeks in Daniel 9:24 (that is 490 days), we have lost the 490 years extending to “Messiah the Prince.”

There was still light ahead, however, and, as the Adventist conferees understood it, this was based on the most appropriate translation of a key Hebrew noun in Daniel 9:24. There, Gabriel let it be known that “seventy *shabu'im* (singular *shabua'*) are determined upon thy people,” and they gave their understanding of *shabu'im* as “sevens” or “lots of seven” with the following noun, in this case unspecified, left to be interpreted from the context. For example, with *shabua'* “simply denot[ing] a unit of seven,” this could be seventy lots of *seven days* or seventy lots of *seven years*. The Adventist conferees in their presentation of this part of their answers to Martin and Barnhouse gave detailed support for interpreting the Hebrew *shabu'im* in Daniel 9:24 as *seven literal years* and, by this means, saved the day for arguing for 490 (70 x 7) years stretching down to the appearing of “Messiah the Prince” and beyond.

For example, they were able to point out that, in Daniel 10:2, 3, where the Hebrew *shabua'* is associated with actual days, it is followed by *yamin* (“of days”), while in Daniel 9:24 there is no such association.<sup>40</sup> As well, they gave instances from post-Biblical Hebrew literature (*Midrash* and *Talmud*) where the writers effectively defined *shabua'* as referring to a “week of years”—for example, *Midrash Rabbah* was quoted as pointing out: “‘Week’ [in Daniel 9:27] represents a period of seven years.”<sup>41</sup> Interestingly, more recent Hebrew lexicons may also be seen as allowing for such a definition.<sup>42</sup>

Still further support for *QoD*’s reading of *shabua'* in Daniel 9:24 as *years* is offered by Ross Cole in a 2014 paper on the basis of “the distinctive use [there] of the masculine plural form” in parallel with “Sabbath years” as, for example, in Leviticus 26:34, 35.<sup>43</sup>

Such accomplishments in translation were not to be expected in the 1840s of Edson, Hahn, and Crosier, none of whom had training in the Hebrew language. By way

of contrast, Read’s language skills in the 1950s and the knowledge and insight of a goodly number of Adventist linguists with whom the *QoD* answers were shared at the time, had made possible the refining and updating of the historic interpretation, including distinguishing between the figurative language of Daniel 8 and the literal language of Daniel 9.<sup>44</sup>

A further monumental occasion for updating the church’s understanding of the sanctuary teaching remains to be examined.

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## 2. The 1980 Sanctuary Review Committee holds promise of a new interpretational outlook.

The year 1980 witnessed the most concerted re-examination to date of a Seventh-day Adventist doctrinal position. One hundred and fourteen scholars and administrators were called in from around the world field to meet at Glacier View Ranch, an Adventist conference center in Colorado, to re-examine the Adventist position on the sanctuary teaching.<sup>45</sup> Never before had such a large, widely representative, and scholarly body been assembled to deliberate in a cardinal doctrinal area. This Sanctuary Review Committee (SRC) met from August 10 to 15 and, after careful inter-relating of small group and plenary sessions, it produced and approved (close to unanimously) a Consensus Document (CD)

titled “Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary,” comprising 4,000+ words. Early in the document it was stated that,



Neal Wilson served as the president of the General Conference from 1979 to 1990.

The committee sought to make a serious and frank appraisal of our historic positions, evaluating them in the light of criticisms and alternative interpretations that have been suggested. Such suggestions are beneficial in that they drive us to study, force us to clarify our understanding, and thereby lead us to sharper insights and a deeper appreciation of the truths that have shaped the Advent Movement.<sup>46</sup>

So, then, the SRC expressed a willingness to look

# The year 1980 witnessed the most concerted re-examination to date of a Seventh-day Adventist doctrinal position.

again at the time-honored historic positions regarding the sanctuary doctrine. Considering the pivotal nature of personal and corporate imaginative visions, they had a delicate task on their hands. In the end, they presented their consensus findings with the proviso that “while we believe that our historic interpretation of Daniel 8:14 is valid, we wish to encourage ongoing study of this important prophecy.”<sup>47</sup> Interestingly, while the SRC gave what might come across as blanket approval of the historic interpretation (as above), the Consensus Document proceeded to explore a number of fresh insights—meanwhile barely pointing out specific limitations in the historic interpretation.

## A. “Cleansed” or “restored” and who/what defiled the sanctuary?

In what may be the closest the Consensus Document comes to noting directly any limitation of the historic position, it observes that “[a]ccording to many older versions of the Bible, at the end of the 2,300 days the sanctuary is to be ‘cleansed,’” and then points out that the key Hebrew verb is *nisdaq* with the “basic idea . . . ‘make right,’ ‘justify,’ ‘vindicate,’ or ‘restore,’” with “‘purify’ and ‘cleanse’

. . . within its conceptual range.” While the historic interpretation had followed the KJV and a KJV concordance, giving the same focal verb, “cleanse,” in both Leviticus 16 and Daniel 8:14, the Consensus Document favors an updated interpretation of this key passage, using the verb “restore” and placing the villainous [trampling] horn of Daniel 8: 9–13 at center-stage:

In Daniel 8:14 it is evident that the word [*nisdaq*] denotes the reversal of the evil caused by the power symbolized by the “little horn,” and hence probably should be translated “restore.”<sup>48</sup>

Concession is made to the historic position with the words:

While there is, therefore, not a strong verbal link between this verse [Daniel 8:14] and the Day of Atonement ritual of Leviticus 16, the passages are, nevertheless, related by their parallel ideas of rectifying the sanctuary from the effects of sin.<sup>49</sup>

### Overview of a historic meeting

The Sanctuary Review Committee, convened at Glacier View Ranch, Colorado, August 10-15, 1980. The assignment of the committee was to examine the historic positions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church concerning the sanctuary of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary.

By WILLIAM G. JOHNSON

The roots of the conference reach back into the past century, to the days of the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. To our spiritual forefathers, crucified by the great disappointment of October 22, 1844, God gave light on the heavenly sanctuary. They came to realize that they had been right about the time had wrong about the nature of the event. Instead of Christ's returning to earth to cleanse it by fire, He had entered the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary to begin the work of judgment.

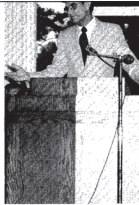
Two lines from the work of the committee are significant for subsequent developments. In its recommendations, the Daniel Committee called for further study in disputed areas, predicting that if this were not done, Adventist preaching on the sanctuary doctrine would become apologetic. Second, the major issue to emerge from the five years of discussion was the relation of the writings of Ellen White to the Bible in the development of doctrine and prophetic interpretation.

The crucial nature of those two items was demonstrated on October 27, 1979, when Dr. Desmond Ford, a Bible teacher at Pacific Union College on leave from Avondale College, Australia, gave a public lecture on the sanctuary doctrine. In his talk he raised many of the questions with which the Daniel Committee had struggled, and then set forth answers at variance with the church's historic interpretation. His address was received by many to challenge the established views on

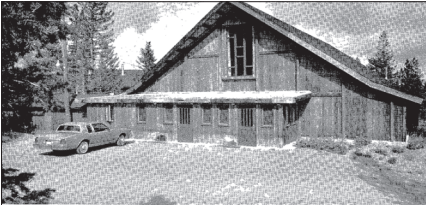
the meaning of Daniel 8:14, Hebrews 9 and 10, the Day of Atonement, the investigative judgment, and the role of the Ellen G. White writings in Seventh-day Adventist theology.

Two recordings of Dr. Ford's talk, circulated worldwide, led to much discussion, debate, and, at times, considerable perplexity. Thus, on November 28, 1979, at the request of the Pacific Union College administration, the college president and academic dean met with leaders of the General Conference at Washington and arrived at the decision announced on the back page of the December 20, 1979, Review. Dr. Ford was to be given a leave of absence to clarify and write out his views, which in due course would be considered by an appropriate body.

Dr. Ford moved to Washington, D.C., and spent the first six months of 1980 in research and writing. During this period he produced a document of six chapters and almost 1,000 pages, including appendices. This was to be the basis for understanding and discussing his views on the committee of 14 guided Dr. Ford as he was preparing his document. Copies were mailed to each member in July, 1980, with instructions that through study be given to



Neal C. Wilson speaks at the opening meeting.



The Sanctuary Review Committee met August 10 to 15 at Glacier View Ranch's auditorium, which is connected to the lodge by a covered walkway.

the meaning of Daniel 8:14, Hebrews 9 and 10, the Day of Atonement, the investigative judgment, and the role of the Ellen G. White writings in Seventh-day Adventist theology.

This committee of scholars was advisory in function. It dialogued with Dr. Ford, seeking to aid his ongoing task by pointing out areas of weakness in exegesis or argument, and suggesting needed clarifications and other source materials. No votes were taken; committee members reacted individually to Dr. Ford. The final draft of the document, written in view of the criticisms of this committee, was his own work and is not intended to reflect the views of the guiding committee.

As a member of this small committee, I was impressed by the fairness of the chairman and the ease and frankness of discussions. Areas of agreement and disagreement were identified; members were requested to state their criticisms in writing for Dr. Ford's benefit.

Dr. Ford's document in its final form became the basis for the work of the Sanctuary Review Committee. Copies were mailed to each member in July, 1980, with instructions that through study be given to



Committee Director, Neal C. Wilson, speaks at the opening meeting.

no matter how difficult the route. He made it clear that the conference was not a trial of Dr. Ford (who, though present, was not a delegate); rather, that the views of the Ford document called for study—open, fair, honest study. These views had to be tested by the Bible and the writings of Ellen White, and compared with historic interpretations of the church. Elder Wilson pointed out that our historic views were not on trial; the alternatives were on trial.

Then challenged and directed, the conference set to work. The format for the first four days of the session, Monday through Thursday, was essentially the same.

Each morning delegates studied in seven groups of about 16 members each. All groups studied the same issues, which focused in turn on the nature of Old Testament prophecy, the interpretation of Daniel 7 to 9, questions in Hebrews and Revelation, and the relation of Ellen G. White's writings to the Bible. (For a complete list of the questions, see page 11.) The questions were complicated and far-reaching. To be intelligent in them, delegates had to wrestle with the Bible texts in close and careful study; they even had to acquire a technical vocabulary.

Afternoons were given over to theory sessions. Each group reported its findings from the morning

deliberations and then general discussion followed. At the close of these plenary sessions, an hour was set aside for delegates to ask questions of Dr. Ford.

During evening sessions, the conference discussed several of the study papers prepared for it. Delegates heard Dr. William Shea explain his “Daniel and the Judgment,” Dr. Fritz Guy presented suggestions toward a theology of the sanctuary, and Herb Holst summarized historic backgrounds of the Ballenger teachings. Roy Adams, a student at Andrews University, also gave a synopsis of his doctoral dissertation on the sanctuary doctrine in Seventh-day Adventist history.

This general format was highly successful. From the first full day of the session, delegates expressed their convictions with vigor and forthrightness. There was wide, spread participation, an earnest seeking to learn and understand together. Furthermore, it was quickly apparent that the prayers of God's people were being answered as a spirit of love and unity took control of the conference.

**Results of the conference**

The results of the conference were both tangible and intangible.

Three statements emerged from the deliberations of the Sanctuary

Review Committee:

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On these terms, the defiling of the sanctuary was attributed to the workings of the evil trampling horn, with no mention of the confessed sins of God's people as in the historic interpretation. Placing responsibility for the disordering of the heavenly sanctuary upon the trampling little horn, the Consensus Document observed, leads to a "contextual problem" in view of the trampling horn's carrying out its nefarious work on earth, while the sanctuary it has left in need of "restoration and purification" is in heaven. The difficulty was dealt with by noting that "the attacks of the 'little horn' have a cosmic, as well as historical, significance." We may note that seeing a work of judgment of the trampling horn at the close of the 2,300 days puts the vision of Daniel 8 (and especially verse 14) importantly in parallel with the judgment scene of Daniel 7 and its boastful horn.<sup>50</sup>

Again, knowledge of the original language held by the linguists of the SRC, together with closer attention to the context of Daniel 8:14, allowed the Consensus Document to provide an important update to the original interpretation.

#### *B. In the judgment, do we face uncertainty or assurance?*

Earlier we noted that while the historic interpretation of Daniel 8:14 recognized the advocacy of Jesus in the meeting of our sin (as in 1 John 2:1, for example), it pointed to a judgment of our lives, without warning, on any given day, and it gave a reminder of the way the Israelites, on the Day of Atonement, were to afflict their souls. We may compare this with the assurance given in the Consensus Document: "For the believer in Jesus Christ, the doctrine of judgment is solemn but reassuring, because the judgment is God's own intervention in the course of human history to make all things right. It is the unbeliever who finds the teaching a subject of terror."<sup>51</sup>

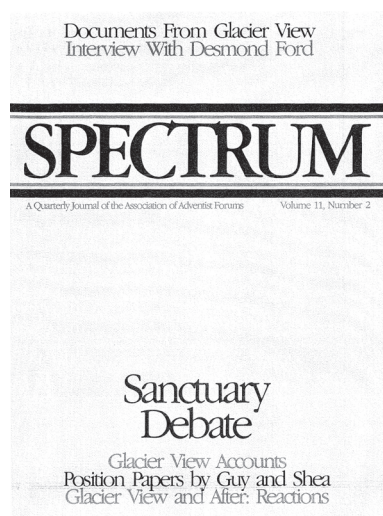
The Consensus Document adds further that "[f]or the child of God, knowledge of Christ's intercession in the judgment brings assurance, not anxiety." Referring to Romans 8:1 ("There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus"), it continues in similar

vein: "In the righteousness of Christ the Christian is secure in the judgment."<sup>52</sup>

The above positive note has been reinforced in a 2005 exposition on the beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists. After quoting Philippians 3:9, it affirms: "All who are united with Christ are assured of salvation" and goes on to refer to our personal response.

All who wish to retain their names in the Book of Life must make things right with God and their fellow man during this time of God's judgement.<sup>53</sup>

A further item remains for our present consideration in the outlining of updated interpretations of the sanctuary teaching by the large representative group of scholars and administrators that made up the Sanctuary Review Committee (SRC) meeting at Glacier View in August 1980. Again there is notable contrast with the historic interpretation.



*Spectrum* covered the Sanctuary Debate in November, 1980.

#### *C. The timing of Jesus's entry into the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary*

The first thing to note from the Consensus Document account of the activity of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary is that there is no suggestion made there of a prior work in the heavenly holy place—indeed, a heavenly holy place is not mentioned in the entire Consensus Document. Where, then, according to the SRC update, does Jesus carry out his high-priestly ministry on our behalf? Strange as it may seem, in view of the specificity of the historic interpretation on this point, the Consensus Document does not spell this out precisely. Instead, it quotes four passages from the book of Hebrews (KJV) as follows:<sup>54</sup>

... when [Jesus] had by himself purged our sins, [he] sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. (Hebrews 1:3)

Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast [sic], and which entereth

into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. (Hebrews 6:19, 20)

For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. (Hebrews 9:24)

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. (Hebrews 10:1)

The Consensus Document then lifts short phrases from these passages (as given following) to make its point concerning the completeness of our access to God. It goes on:

Hebrews stresses the fact that our great High Priest is at the very right hand of God (chap. 1:3), in ‘heaven itself . . . in the presence of God’ (chap. 9:24). The symbolic language of the Most Holy Place, ‘within the veil,’ is used to assure us of our full, direct, and free access to God (chaps. 6:19–20; 9:24–28; 10:1–4).<sup>55</sup>

While the immediate intention of this statement in the Consensus Document is to assure us of our total access to God through Jesus, our great High Priest, the description given provides something of a contrast to the positions taken earlier in the historic account. For example, as given above, this passage associates the expression “within the veil” with “the Most Holy Place.” Such a designation is in contrast to Branson’s claim (noted earlier) that this expression applied to the entrance curtain of the holy place where, the historic interpretation maintained, Jesus ministered from the ascension up until 1844. As well, if Jesus, in the first century at the time of the writing of the Book of Hebrews, is said to be ministering “within the [dividing] veil,” (that is, the veil between the holy place and the most holy place) then Hiram Edson’s graphic insight of October 23, 1844 has been bypassed.

The Consensus Document update goes further. Not only is the expression “within the veil” said to be “language of the Most Holy Place,” it is said, as well, to be “symbolic language” (emphasis supplied). With this in mind, we may go on to ask, symbolic of what?

As we have already discovered, the Consensus Document is reluctant to picture the high priestly ministry of Jesus in terms of heavenly compartments. As well, it makes no mention of the first apartment and a fleeting note only regarding the most holy place, and this latter with an intimation of symbolism. In place of describing what is taking place in the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, the Consensus Document refers to a “first phase of the heavenly ministry of Christ,” which includes “continually appl[ying] the benefits of His sacrifice for us.”<sup>56</sup> Likewise, this same SRC centerpiece refers to a “final phase of Christ’s ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, during which His work “is that of judgement, vindication, and cleansing.”<sup>57</sup> In this latter phase, the Consensus Document emphasizes that “while Christ is Judge, He is still our Intercessor.”<sup>58</sup>

At this point, it may be noted that the “updated” reference to *phases* in the place of sanctuary apartments was not an innovation of the SRC there at Glacier View, in August 1980. Four months earlier (April 1980), the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, in session at Dallas, Texas, adopted a doctrinal fundamental on the sanctuary that explicitly stated: “In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2,300 days, [Christ] entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry. It is a work of investigative judgment.”<sup>59</sup>

It is clear, of course, that the above use of “phases” terminology does not deny that Jesus’s high priestly ministry took place in heavenly counterparts of the rooms in the wilderness tabernacle; it does, however, within its own terms, bypass imposing earthly architectural specifications on the salvation-related procedures of Heaven.<sup>60</sup>

Predictably, the foregoing final form of the sanctuary fundamental passed at the Dallas General Conference session in April 1980, did not go through without question. A number of calls were made from the floor of the session “in favor of specifying the place (i.e., the apartment) in heaven where Christ ministers, as well as affirming a cleansing of the sanctuary in heaven.” These included speeches by senior session delegates such as “Edward

Zinke, assistant director of the Biblical Research Institute, Reginald Dower, the retiring secretary of the Ministerial Association, [and] William Murdoch, dean emeritus of the SDA Theological Seminary.” A General Conference vice-president, W. Duncan Eva, who had led out in the revision process from its earliest days, explained that “the paragraph was a Bible-based one and no different in this respect from the previous (1931) statement.” This carried the day, so that specifications of heavenly apartments and the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary were not included in the final form of the 1980 sanctuary fundamental.<sup>61</sup> By this means, the way was left open, in August 1980, for the Sanctuary Review Committee at Glacier View to confirm this significant doctrinal update already voted through four months earlier.

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### **In Search of Confirmation of the Enduring Validity of the Historic Interpretation of the Sanctuary Teaching**

As we have seen, the Consensus Document gives as an affirmation of the Sanctuary Review Committee “that our historic interpretation of Daniel 8:14 is valid.” Following *Merriam-Webster*, we can take it that *valid*, in this context, refers to a position or argument that is “reasonable” and “having a sound basis in logic or fact.” Further shades of meaning, “strong,” “capable of being justified,” are given by *Collins*. In view of the range of updates noted in the foregoing, we might ask: Valid in what way? The matter is considered following.

Clearly, if our present review has been conducted along sound lines, there are significant variations in the Glacier View Consensus Document from long-held historic positions on the sanctuary teaching. For example, from William Miller through to early Sabbatarian Adventists and to pioneering Seventh-day Adventists, the KJV translation of the pivotal verb in Daniel 8:14, “cleanse,” was fully accepted. By way of contrast, the Sanctuary Review Committee went to the original Hebrew *nisdaq* which, it observed, “probably should be translated [as] ‘restore’.” Along this line, it attributed the defiling of the sanctuary not to the accumulated confessed sins of God’s people (as in the historic interpretation) but to the depredations of the evil [trampling] little horn.

As well, we have noted that the historic position advised that God’s people could not know when their names might come up in judgment, with a reminder of the way

the Israelites, prior to the Day of Atonement, were to “afflict their souls.” With this we can compare the encouragement given in the Consensus Document for “the believer in Jesus Christ” to see “the doctrine of the judgment [as] solemn but reassuring” and to understand that “[i]n the righteousness of Christ the Christian is secure in the judgment.”

Perhaps the most surprising feature of the updated interpretation of the sanctuary doctrine in the Consensus Document (as already noted) is its bypassing of the original Hiram Edson insight regarding Jesus’s literal/actual movement on October 22, 1844, from the holy place to the most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary—there to engage in an “Investigative Judgement.”<sup>62</sup> As already indicated, the Consensus Document makes no mention of a heavenly holy place at all, and but one reference to the most holy place, where it is indicated that the expression “within the veil” is “symbolic language of the Most Holy Place,” and not (as in the historic account) as related to Jesus’s pre-1844 ministry in the holy place.

Such variations from the positions set up by the pioneers of the church, it should be recognized, are close to the heart of the early sanctuary teaching and far from peripheral. This being the case, it is evident that, for the SRC to regard the historic position as valid, it did not require long-standing doctrinal tenets to be confirmed case by case.

In what ways then might we consider the validity of the historic position to shine through in the SRC Consensus Document? Several options are raised following:

- In bonding the fulfilment of Daniel 8:14 and its 2,300 days with the declaration of the 490 years of Daniel 9:24–27, the historic interpretation was a valid means of bequeathing to Adventists an ongoing context for the greatest prediction of all time: the coming of an anointed Prince who would be “cut off” for others and return later to gather the cosmic family into one.
- The historic interpretation may be seen as valid in setting up a template, the elements of which later generations might regard as symbolic of Jesus’s phase-by-phase heavenly ministry.
- The historic interpretation was valid in making way for a later understanding of the parallel nature of the three symbolic visions (Daniel 2, 7 and 8) and the

two literal visions (Daniel 9 and 11/12) and, by this means, emphasizing God's commitment to staying by Planet Earth to the end.

- Overarching the above, the historic interpretation of the sanctuary teaching may be seen as a valid demonstration of the means that might be followed in the setting up of a newly conceived imaginative vision in the face of devastating disappointment.<sup>63</sup>

Along with all of the above, while offering important updates to historic interpretations of the sanctuary teaching, the Sanctuary Review Committee gave clear notice that its Consensus Document was not to be seen as a final word on the interpretation of Daniel 8:14 and related passages, but that further study was called for. With this attitude in mind, we may well look for further updates to be added in the future.

### Some Closing Observations

It is of interest to note the significance of the title *Consensus* Document for the leading article of the Glacier View consultation. This may be illustrated in the course of events that surrounded Question D, as listed for Tuesday, August 12: "Where does the Bible teach that in the services of the Hebrew sanctuary the offering of a sacrificial animal with confession of sin transferred sin to the sanctuary and defiled it?" (It may be recalled from earlier in the present article that the historic interpretation held that "[s]ins were conveyed into the sanctuary during the year by the blood of the personal sin-offerings offered daily at the door of the tabernacle.")

In point of fact, there is no record in the Consensus Document of an explicit answer to the above question—and this, quite evidently, because on the matter of the transfer of sin by way of sacrificial blood, there was no consensus across the Sanctuary Review Committee as

a whole. An important background comment on this matter was made in a personal letter written by one of the leading conveners of the conference, Richard Hammill, to highly regarded, and by then retired, Harry W. Lowe (1893–1990), who had not been able for health reasons to be in attendance at Glacier View:

We cannot find any compelling Biblical evidence [that the blood of a sacrificial animal defiles the sanctuary]. Since Ellen White placed so much stress on this, it does raise a question of the role of Ellen White as a final interpreter of the Bible. Most of the younger men (both administrators and scholars) did not stumble over this matter, but the older ones including some of the key leaders found this an almost insurmountable problem. They just could not see how Ellen White could be mistaken on a matter which they considered vital. Many of the others consider it not a core matter concerning sanctuary doctrine since the essential doctrine would stand if we conclude that it is sin itself that defiles God's sanctuary and not the confessing of it.<sup>64</sup>

The above instance of understandable generational difference may be taken as confirmation of the important consensus of the Sanctuary Review Committee on those matters that did appear in the final document, including the updating of positions held under the historic interpretations made up to a hundred years (and more) earlier.

Amongst the conspicuous achievements of the Sanctuary Review Committee was their coming through without notable threatening of what we have referred to as individual and corporate *imaginative vision(s)*—that is, the personal background against which we all live that gives

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Offered a secure atmosphere in which to work, our scholars, in whatever setting, are well placed to build upon the epochal findings of the Sanctuary Review Committee, and to lead us further into this important and sensitive field of study, whether the time it takes is short or long.



our lives meaning, hope, and purpose. Potentially, there were many administrator and scholar conferees at Glacier View who, as was noted at the outset, were open to “becom[ing] emotional and grievously troubled.” And, yet, evidently it did not take place—and this, though a number of historic sanctuary interpretations were passed by in the ongoing discussions. In the allotted five days, there may well have been more explicit doctrinal ground broken at an official level on the sanctuary teaching than in the previous one hundred years.

How could such a constructive outcome have been achieved? Careful reading of the Consensus Document suggests that, in the discussion groups, there were no front-on attacks directed against either the long-standing historic positions or against dissidents from the immediate or the distant past. Credit for this may be due in no small part to the wisdom of the conveners of the event in the wording of the research questions in an open, non-prejudicial, and non-confronting style. At the same time, the discussion groups were set up with scholars and administrators prayerfully facing the challenge of the various questions together—and together reaching consensus in their conclusions. As well, it is evident that, throughout, respect was shown for those who, in good faith, first formulated the terms of the earliest sanctuary teaching.

As already noted, there was clear indication in the Consensus Document that the Sanctuary Review Committee understood it did not have all the answers to the interpretation of the sanctuary-related prophecies of Daniel 7, 8, and 9, and, accordingly, advised further study along these lines. In this regard, no specific examples were given; however, something of the research task comes to mind. For example, the historic interpretation taught that it is the confessed sins of God’s people that have defiled the heavenly sanctuary, with these to be cleansed from the heavenly records commencing at the close of the 2,300 days. Now, with the prime culprit for this desecration named as the evil [trampling] little horn, and with the specified remedy (as in Daniel 8:14) for the defilement being the restoration of the sanctuary to its rightful state, we are in need of a fresh scenario.<sup>65</sup>

It is presently unclear from which direction such important additional research is likely to take place. For example, should clusters of biblical scholars in or across university schools/faculties of religion be encouraged to

work in this direction? Or should we look for initiative to be taken by a centralized body such as the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference? Could there be a place for the convening, by loyal bodies of Adventist laity (the Association of Adventist Forums comes to mind), of research groups of committed Adventist biblical scholars? Offered a secure atmosphere in which to work, our scholars, in whatever setting, are well placed to build upon the epochal findings of the Sanctuary Review Committee, and to lead us further into this important and sensitive field of study, whether the time it takes is short or long.<sup>66</sup>

Our stated purpose in the present discussion has been to inquire whether attempts have been made, at official church levels, to adjust/change the teachings supporting the sanctuary doctrinal pillar, and with what results. If the present discussion has moved along sound lines, we may answer affirmatively. In looking into the *QoD* discussions of the 1950s and the Glacier View deliberations of 1980, we have discovered a number of important updates. And such update/change has come through with minimal upset to individual and corporate imaginative vision(s). Viewed in the light of the furthering of the gospel commission, these changes may be seen as placing the church on vantage ground.

Through it all, I want to advocate that, as a prophetic movement, we owe a debt of gratitude to the *QoD* conferees of the 1950s and to the 114 stalwarts of the 1980 Glacier View convocation. They came up with adjustments to the historic interpretations of the Adventist sanctuary teaching and they did so with respect and consideration. And, in the process, their far-reaching findings of two score years ago (and more) have offered us the nucleus of a fresh corporate vision centered on the person of Jesus, our “anointed Prince.”

## Endnotes

1. W. B. Yeats (1865–1939): “He wishes for the cloths of heaven.”

2. Howard Jacobsen interviews Mary Midgley in the BBC production: “The Bible as History: Creation,” January 2010. (*Imaginative*, as used in the above context, has the sense of creative cognitive composition aimed at deepening understanding of reality, with parables a prime example. By way of contrast, *imaginary* may refer to objects/events unrelated to reality.)

3. M. Midgley, *The Myths We Live By* (London: Routledge, 2003), 1.

4. M. Midgley, *Evolution as a Religion* (London: Methuen, 1985), 13–15.

5. R. Hammill, Unpublished paper, “Reflections on the Adventist Typological Interpretations of the Mosaic Tabernacle and its Cultus” (January 1990), 22.

6. We do not need to be reminded of the command to love the Lord “with all your mind” (Mark 12:30). Helmut Thielicke (1908–1986) has pictured the situation like this: “Jesus Christ wants me totally. He wants me to belong to Him with more than my conscience, my emotions, and my anxieties: he wants my reason, my knowledge, and all the areas of my consciousness, as well. But if I have to repress or suppress anything that I as a scientist or historian know, if I run to meet him with a mind that is not awake and intact and able to say, ‘Here you have me with all I am and have, including my knowledge and my reason,’ then I do not belong to Him totally. At most I am placing at His disposal only a part of me—my religiosity or my pious feelings. Jesus Christ, though, wants all or nothing.” Helmut Thielicke, *How Modern Should Theology Be?* (Philadelphia: Collins Fontana Books, 1969), 15, 16.

7. It is understood that ultimate change to the church’s fundamental beliefs can only be made at convened, world-wide sessions of the General Conference. Updates discussed at other times may further the understanding of church doctrines but are to be regarded in no way as binding on the church.

8. Grammatically, the horn could be pictured as coming either from one of the four horns or from one of the four winds. Coming from one of the horns is preferred here in view of the incongruity of having a horn coming from a wind and of the angel’s interpretation in 8:22, 23.

9. While the term “historic” is widely employed in Adventist parlance and publications to describe long-standing doctrinal teachings, it may be pointed out that such usage is not close to leading dictionary specifications. Merriam-Webster, for example, defines “historic” as “famous or important in history” such as “historic battlefield.” For its part, Cambridge gives “important or likely to be important in history,” such as “historic day.” The term “traditional” (“used by the people in a particular group, family, society, etc., for a long time”—M-W) may be closer to the use understood by Adventists in referring to long-standing doctrinal teachings. However, in that the present paper is written for Adventists and “historic” is used consistently in a prominent Adventist source referred to in the present paper, this term is retained as communicating effectively in the present context.

10. See George R. Knight, *William Miller and the Rise of Adventism* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2010), 13.

11. Kai Arasola, *The End of Historicism: Millerite Hermeneutic of Time Prophecies in the Old Testament*, (University of Uppsala, c.1990), 35–41.

12. Knight, *William Miller*, 14.

13. Knight, 30–34.

14. Arasola, *End of Historicism*, 100.

15. Arasola, 52.

16. Knight, *William Miller*, 14–20.

17. It was discovered that, in adding 2,300 to 457 BC, they had not allowed correctly for crossing from BC to AD time—so that they were out by one year and the terminus year should be 1844 not 1843.

18. Hiram Edson is said to have written out the account by hand and this was not fully to appear in print until the publishing of the *Review and Herald* on June 23, 1921, pp. 4, 5. The piece is reprinted in Paul A. Gordon, *The Sanctuary, 1844 and the Pioneers* (Silver Spring, MD: The Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2000), 24, 25.

19. Arthur W. Spalding, *Captains of the Host: First Volume of a History of Seventh-day Adventists Covering the Years 1845–1900* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1949), 99.

20. Knight, *William Miller*, 261, 262.

21. See Knight, 264.

22. Highly gifted both poetically and musically, F. E. Belden was known to compose words and music for a hymn to the theme of a sermon while it was being preached.

23. William G. Turner, “Christ, Our Intercessor and Coming King,” *Australasian Record*, May 2, 1938, 2–4. William H. Branson made a related point: “a man’s being reckoned guilty or innocent will depend entirely upon whether he has kept the whole law.” “A Christian who through faith in Jesus Christ has faithfully kept the law’s requirements will be acquitted; there is no condemnation, for the law finds no fault in him. If, on the other hand, it is found that one has broken even a single precept, and this transgression is unconfessed, he will be dealt with just as if he had broken all ten.” *Drama of the Ages* (Warburton, Victoria, Australia: Signs Publishing Company, n.d.), 350.

24. *Bible Readings for the Home Circle: A Topical Study of the Bible, Systematically Arranged for Home and Private Study*, New, Revised, and Enlarged Edition (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2010 [1920]), 240.

25. The golden mercy seat was the lid of the ark, the box that carried a number of sacred items: the tables of stone on which the Decalogue had been inscribed; a pot of manna, commemorating the food provided six mornings in the week during the wilderness wanderings; and the budding rod of Aaron, giving God’s authentication of the high-priesthood of Aaron, the brother of Moses. Between the two golden angels situated at each end of the mercy seat appeared the light of the Shekinah, the representation of the presence of God.

26. William H. Branson, *In Defense of the Faith: The Truth about Seventh-day Adventists: A Reply to Canright* (Takoma Park, Washington, DC: 1933), 287.

27. See *Bible Readings for the Home Circle*, 241.

28. Acts 7:56.

29. Hebrews 1:3.

30. W. H. Branson was president of the General Conference from 1950–1954.

31. William H. Branson, *The Atonement in the Light of God’s Sanctuaries*. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, c. 1935), 40, 41.

32. It seems to have escaped Branson that Jesus, in the vision of Revelation 1, explains that “the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches” (Revelation 1:20), rather than the candlesticks in the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary.

33. Branson, *In Defense of the Faith*, 280, 281. Earlier, James White had taken the approach that Jesus could be in the presence of God while in the first apartment on the understanding that “God’s throne is above the cherubims, and His glory can be seen from either side of the second veil [sic].” *The Present Truth*, May 1850, quoted in Gordon, *The Sanctuary*, 55.

34. Three prominent church ministers who raised their voices against the historic interpretation of the sanctuary teaching are Albion Fox Ballenger (1861–1921), William Warde Fletcher (1879–1947), and Desmond Ford (1928–2019).

35. For the purposes of the present paper, the immediate post-war years have been chosen as a cut-off period for distinguishing between the historic interpretation of the sanctuary doctrine and later interpretations. This allows, from the mid-century, for the extended influence of an augmented body of Adventist scholars with advanced biblical training.

36. Walter Martin, *The Rise of the Cults* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1955), 12.

37. Frequently, the submissions were question clusters, rather than individual questions. This allowed for the inquirers to probe the issues more closely.

38. The events surrounding the *Questions on Doctrine* interchange are well covered in several sources: T. E. Unruh, “The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955–1956” in *Adventist Heritage* 4 (Winter, 1977), 35–46; Walter Martin interview, *Adventist Currents* (July 1983), 15–29; *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, Annotated Edition with Notes with Historical and Theological

Introduction by George R. Knight (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2002), xiii–xxxvi.

39. *Seventh-day Adventists Answer* (known generally by its shorter title, *Questions on Doctrine* or *QoD*) (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1957), 267. (Emphasis in the original).

40. *Questions on Doctrine*, 227.

41. *Questions on Doctrine*, 276.

42. By 1988, William Holladay had translated and edited Koehler and Baumgartner's 1971 *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), with *shabua'* given somewhat flexibly as "unit (period) of seven:—I. seven days, **a week** Dn 9:27" (358). Similarly, Douglas Stott's 2004 translation of Botterweck, Ringgren and Fabry's 1993 *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* Vol. XIV (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans) gives "'unit of seven, week,' . . . a denominated [designated/named] abstraction deriving from the cardinal number" (341). Still more recently, *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, ed. David Clines (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011) offers "**week, period of seven days**" and, specifically related to Daniel 9, "**period of seven years**, i.e. seventh part of a jubilee" illustrated as "*from the issuance of the word . . . until (the time of) the anointed leader is seven periods of seven years* Dn 9:25" (226). (Bold print in each of the above quotations is in the original.)

43. H. Ross Cole, "The Shabuiim of Daniel 9:24–27—Weeks, Sevens or Weeks of Years" in *Davaria* (Pacific Adventist University, 2014, 2[1]), 62–69. (See <http://www.pau.ac.pg/davaria>).

44. Before we leave the findings and arguments of *QoD*, an observation may be made regarding the objections that surfaced concerning certain elements of the book's theology. We do well to ask if the meaning of the key Hebrew term *shabua'* was amongst the matters objected to by Milian Lauritz Andreassen (1876–1962), Adventist theologian and former Washington seminary professor (1938–1949). In fact, he disapproved of "only those sections that dealt with the atonement and the related subject of the human nature of Christ." *Questions on Doctrine*, xxvi.

45. The immediate catalyst for the convening of this unprecedented gathering was a Forum presentation by influential Australian biblical scholar, Dr Desmond Ford, on October 27, 1979, at Angwin, California.

46. "Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary" *Ministry*, October 1980: 16-ii (that is, page 16, column 2).

47. "Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary," 18-iii.

48. "Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary," 18-ii.

49. "Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary," 18-ii.

50. "Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary," 18-ii, iii.

51. "Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary," 18-iii.

52. "Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary," 19-i.

53. Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe: A Biblical Exposition of Fundamental Doctrines*, 2nd edition (2005), 362.

54. "Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary," 17-iii.

55. "Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary," 17-iii.

56. "Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary," 17-iii.

57. "Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary," 18-i.

58. "Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary," 17-iii.

59. "Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary," 16-i.

60. Still earlier, Arthur Whitefield Spalding (1877–1953) had emphasised the symbolic nature of the sanctuary and its rituals: "The two apartments, the holy and the most holy, and all the furniture in the earthly sanctuary were symbolic of the work of the heavenly sanctuary." "We speak of all this in the language of men; for only so,

by symbol and speech, could God convey any idea to men of the great work of the atonement and judgment. . . . the holy place and the most holy—not rooms as we conceive them but the ineffable abode of the great God and His ministering spirits." Arthur W. Spalding, *Captains of the Host* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1949), 101, 103.

61. Lawrence Geraty, a participant in the drafting process of the range of fundamentals both before and during the Dallas General Conference session, gives a revealing account of the stages through which the formative documents passed. See "A New Statement of Fundamental Beliefs," *Spectrum* 11, no. 1 (1980).

62. Ten years after the Glacier View conference, Richard Hammill, one of its conveners, expressed his disapproval of using the Mosaic sanctuary as "a prefiguring or a predetermining" of the heavenly sanctuary. Further, he argued convincingly that Moses on the mountain was shown not the heavenly sanctuary itself or a model of it, but a blueprint or an architect's drawing. He concluded that "the architecture and services of the Mosaic tabernacle are in no way definitive for the make up or service of the heavenly sanctuary introduced in the New Testament Book of Hebrews." He claimed, as well, that the "Adventist teaching of the investigative judgement and of the final eradication of sin from the universe are not dependent on the existence of two divisions or two holy places in the heavenly sanctuary." Hammill, "Reflections," 15–17, 20.

63. Significantly, in its turn, the Glacier View Sanctuary Review Committee, while bypassing central elements of the early sanctuary teaching, proceeded to bring together the beginnings of a new imaginative vision firmly based on authentic translations of the original languages and on faithful attention to actual context.

63. Richard L. Hammill, letter to Harry W. Lowe, September 18, 1980 (dictated August 20, 1980).

65. For example, what might this sanctuary restoration in Daniel 8:14 involve—both in heaven and on earth? And what was to be the fate of the [trampling] little horn at the close of the 2,300 days? Has it already taken place—or is it still future, as for the judgment of the [boastful] little horn of Daniel 7?

66. Looking back to Glacier View from a 1990 vantage point, Richard Hammill was not optimistic of a speedy consummation of the research assignment in his own day, advising that "[i]t is inappropriate . . . to talk in terms of trying to get our church to revise its official statement on [*sic*] sanctuary doctrine." He raised, in this context, the call for further work to be done by our biblical scholars who "need to probe more deeply into the intricacies of Daniel 8 and 9." R. Hammill, *op cit.*, 22.



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